Rail traffic noise and sleep disturbances

Tonje Veronika Antonsen¹; Geir Aamot²; Bente Oftedal³; Norun Hjertager Krog³; Jorunn Evandt³; Gunn Marit Aasvang³

¹Cancer Registry of Norway
²Norwegian University of Life Sciences
³Norwegian Institute of Public Health

Corresponding author’s e-mail address: jorunn.evandt@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: There is an ongoing increase in transportation by railway. This could impact on sleep due to more noise emission during night-time.

Objectives: The aim of the study was to investigate the association between nocturnal rail traffic noise (train, tram and subway) and self-reported sleep disturbances.

Methods: We used data from the population-based Health and Environment in Oslo (HELMILIO) study (n=13 019) of adults, only including individuals living within 700 meters to a railway (n=6426). Railway noise (Lnight) at the most exposed façade was assessed using the Nordic Prediction Method. We used logistic regression adjusting for potential confounders.

Results: Positive, however, not statistically significant associations were shown for difficulties falling asleep (odds ratio [OR] = 1.04; 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.99–1.08), and waking up to early (OR = 1.02; 95% CI: 0.98–1.07) per 5-dB increase in noise level.

Conclusions: Rail traffic noise was only weakly associated with self-reported sleep disturbances. Still, the positive effect estimates indicate that sleep may be affected by rail traffic noise to some degree in the beginning and the end of the night.