
Cardiovascular Risk Profiles Vary by Profession



New research presented at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology/Lifestyle 2016 meeting shows that workers age 45 years or older in sales, office-support or service occupations have more risk factors for heart disease and stroke as compared to workers in management or professional jobs.

The research found wide variation in the cardiovascular risk profiles based on profession. Despite the fact that nearly 88 percent of workers 45 years and older did not smoke and 78 percent had ideal glucose levels, only around 41 percent could be classified as having ideal cardiovascular health on five other measures.

The study was conducted with 5,566 male and female employees who had no history of heart disease or stroke at the beginning of the study. The findings show that transportation/material moving workers had the highest smoking rate among participants (22 percent); 68 percent of sales, office and administrative support employees had poor eating habits; 69 percent of sales employees did not have ideal total cholesterol; 82 percent of office and administrative support workers did not have ideal scores for physical activity. 79 percent of food preparation and serving employees had a poor diet quality; 90 percent of protective service workers were likely to be overweight or obese and 77 percent did not have ideal cholesterol levels or blood pressure (35 percent).

Overall, it was observed that management/professionals had better cardiovascular health than other categories. One third of these employees had ideal body mass; 75 percent were at least moderately active and only 6 percent were smokers. However, 72 percent of white collar employees in business and finance had poor eating habits.

The researchers evaluated the study participants on seven modifiable risk factors by using the American Heart Association's "Life's Simple 7". Participants were rated as ideal, intermediate or poor. Ideal scores were achieved if the employees achieved high ratings without any medication (blood pressure lower than 120/80 mm Hg; total cholesterol was below 200 mg/dL; and/or blood glucose was lower than 100 mg/dL while fasting or 140 without fasting). In addition, a BMI of 25 and intense, break-a-sweat activity four or more times a week was also considered ideal.

See Also: ['Life's Simple 7' Programme Reduces Risk of Heart Failure](#)

"The lower the number of ideal cardiovascular risk factors, the easier it becomes to predict their future health ills, including premature death, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease," said Captain Leslie MacDonald, Sc.D., lead researcher and senior scientist in the U.S. Public Health Service, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, of the Centers for Disease Control.

However, these ideals were difficult to achieve among older workers. Workers received top marks if they met four out of five goals which included:

- consuming 4.5 or more cups of fruits or vegetables daily;
- 3.5 ounces of fish at least twice a week;
- less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium a day;
- 450 or fewer calories a week in sugary foods; and
- three or more servings (each equivalent to one ounce) of whole grains daily.

MacDonald also explains that some workers have more barriers than others such as long work hours, low job control, inflexible work schedules, workplace demands, job stress etc. But trying to attain better cardiovascular health should always be a priority. "It's important to take small steps and not get overwhelmed or discouraged," MacDonald said.

Employees can do so by taking small steps such as going for a walk during lunch break, parking farther from destination, taking the stairs instead of the elevator etc.

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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