

Workplace Stress Contributes to Cardiovascular Disease



Researchers from the University of California, Irvine and SUNY Downstate Medical Center have developed a model that demonstrates stressful employment factors are contributing toward the worldwide epidemic of cardiovascular disease. The article titled "[Globalization, Work and Cardiovascular Disease](#)" is published in the *International Journal of Health Services*.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) accounts for approximately 30 percent of all deaths worldwide. Despite the fact that mortality rates from CVD have been showing a decline in most developed nations, there are some risk factors such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes that are still increasing.

During this study, the researchers investigated the social causes of CVD, especially the effect of the work environment and the mechanisms of psychosocial job stressors. They believe that these stressors can trigger chronic biologic responses such as hypertension and can also promote unhealthy behaviours which can lead to an increase in the risk of CVD.

Researchers demonstrate how economic globalisation especially influences the labour market and work organisation. They highlight how job characteristics such as long work hours, unreasonable demands, low job control, lack of appreciation, job insecurity, unsafe worksite and other similar elements can all cause workplace stress and contribute to cardiovascular disease.

"Given the high costs of medical treatment and the economic impact on employers and society of ill health, lost productivity, and sickness absence, it is in the interest of all to seriously consider improving work organisation," said Landsbergis, an associate professor in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences in the School of Public Health at SUNY Downstate.

The study authors recommend changes to the workplace by eliminating hazardous work characteristics, limit psychosocial on-the-job stressors, establish weekly and yearly work hours, improve economic security etc.

With technological advancements, many companies now realize the benefits of creating a modern and innovative workplace by allowing employees to work flexible hours, using virtual offices, freelancers and [co-working spaces](#), and by implementing [worksite lifestyle intervention](#) by providing employees health services such as office gyms, fitness monitors, sit-to-stand workstations and so on. These measures are important and could potentially reduce workplace stressors for employees.

"We conclude from more than 30 years of epidemiological research that CVD is a disease of modern industrial society and not the natural result of aging," said Schnall, who is with UCI's Center for Occupational and Environmental Health and a clinical professor of medicine and public health. "It is related to forms of production that emerged with industrialisation and that have expanded with economic globalisation: long work hours, repetitive work, high demands, lack of control, long hours, and job insecurity."

Source: [International Journal of Health Services](#)

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