

Stressful work associated with atrial fibrillation risk

Having a stressful job is associated with a higher risk of a heart rhythm disorder called atrial fibrillation, according to research. The most stressful jobs are psychologically demanding but give employees little control over the work situation – for example, assembly line workers, bus drivers, secretaries and nurses. **The study found that being stressed at work was associated with a 48% higher risk of atrial fibrillation, after adjustment for age, sex and education.** Dr Eleonor Fransson, study author and associate professor of epidemiology, School of Health and Welfare, Jönköping University, Sweden, said: 'We need people to do these jobs but employers can help by making sure staff have the resources required to complete the assigned tasks. Bosses should schedule breaks and listen to employees' ideas on how the work itself and the work environment can be improved.'

Meanwhile, a 14-year study into the impact of work on health has found that stressful jobs are more likely to lead to premature death among men with heart problems, reports **Personnel Today**. Doctors found that men with diabetes, heart disease or who had previously suffered a stroke were 68% more likely to die over the course of the study if they had a demanding job, while women suffered little or no risks. The study tracked more than 100 000 people from Finland, France, Sweden and the UK. At the start, each person completed a questionnaire about their lifestyle, work and health. By the end of the study, 3 841 participants had died. Once health and lifestyle factors had been taken into account (such as obesity or smoking), **they discovered that men with cardiometabolic disease that had experienced 'job strain' still had a 68% greater risk of premature death.** The report's authors are now urging employers to consider whether workers might be vulnerable to stress and how this can be managed.