

Bored to death? It's possible

February 9 2010, by Lin Edwards

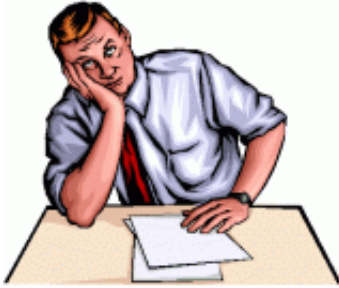


Image credit: David Giacalone

(PhysOrg.com) -- Scientists from the University College London in the U.K. have found that living a life of boredom can kill you.

The scientists, Annie Britton and Martin J. Shipley of the Department of Epidemiology and [Public Health](#), studied the data recorded in a survey of over 7,500 civil servants between the ages of 35 and 55, carried out between 1985 and 1988 about their level of boredom. They then investigated to find out whether the respondents were still alive (in April 2009).

The original survey found that 10 per cent of the respondents reported having been bored within the previous month, with women reporting being bored more than twice as often as men. Younger workers and people with menial jobs were also high in the boredom scales.

They found that those who had said they had high levels of boredom

were 37% more likely to be dead by the end of the period than those who did not report being bored. The researchers said this may be due to people who regularly feel bored being more prone to being unhappy and feeling unmotivated and unfulfilled, and this can lead to them adopting unhealthy habits such as smoking, drugs, or drinking. These unhealthy habits would increase their risks of dying from conditions such as [stroke](#) or heart disease. Shipley said the heart disease results provide enough evidence to say there is a link between the disease and boredom.

Martin Shipley, co-author of the paper, which is published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, said the study suggests people with menial jobs or who are bored at work should try to find interests outside work and avoid turning to drinking and smoking and other unhealthy habits to relieve the boredom.

More information: Bored to death? Annie Britton, Martin J Shipley, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, [doi:10.1093/ije/dyp404](https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyp404)

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