

# Late nights can lead to higher risk of strokes and heart attacks

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New research from Warwick Medical School published today in the *European Heart Journal* shows that prolonged sleep deprivation and disrupted sleep patterns can have long-term, serious health implications. Leading academics from the University have linked lack of sleep to strokes, heart attacks and cardiovascular disorders which often result in early death.

Professor Francesco Cappuccio from the University of Warwick Medical School, explained: "If you [sleep](#) less than six hours per night and have disturbed sleep you stand a 48 per cent greater chance of developing or dying from heart disease and a 15 per cent greater chance of developing or dying of a stroke.

"The trend for late nights and early mornings is actually a ticking time bomb for our health so you need to act now to reduce your risk of developing these life-threatening conditions."

Professor Cappuccio and co-author Dr Michelle Miller, from the University of Warwick, conducted the research programme which followed up evidence from seven to 25 years from more than 470,000 participants from eight countries including Japan, USA, Sweden and UK.

Professor Cappuccio explained: "There is an expectation in today's society to fit more into our lives. The whole work/life balance struggle is causing too many of us to trade in precious sleeping time to ensure we

complete all the jobs we believe are expected of us."

He added: "But in doing so, we are significantly increasing the risk of suffering a stroke or developing cardiovascular disease resulting in, for example, heart attacks."

Dr Miller explained further: "Chronic short sleep produces hormones and chemicals in the body which increase the risk of developing heart disease and strokes, and other conditions like [high blood pressure](#) and cholesterol, diabetes and obesity".

But Professor Cappuccio did warn of the implications of going too far the other way, as sleeping overly long – more than nine hours at a stretch – may be an indicator of illness, including cardiovascular disease.

"By ensuring you have about seven hours sleep a night, you are protecting your future health, and reducing the risk of developing chronic illnesses. The link is clear from our research: get the sleep you need to stay healthy and live longer."

Provided by University of Warwick

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