

## Six percent of Spanish workers have high cardiovascular risk

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6 percent of Spanish workers have high cardiovascular risk. Credit: SINC

The first study into the prevalence of overall cardiovascular risk in the Spanish working population (ICARIA) shows that 6% of workers have a high risk (8% on men and 2% in women). This prevalence increases with age in both sexes, and is highest in the farming sector, followed by construction, industry and services.

"In [Spain](#), approximately one million [workers](#) have a high level of [cardiovascular risk](#), but only a minority of these people classify themselves as at risk", Miguel Ángel Sánchez Chaparro, coordinator of the ICARIA study and a researcher at the University of Malaga (UMA), tells SINC. "These figures show that most of them are probably unaware of their risk level".

The study, published in the journal *Nutrition, Metabolism & Cardiovascular Diseases*, reveals that 6% of workers have high overall cardiovascular risk (8% of men and 2% of women), while for 1% the risk is moderate. In addition, the prevalence of high risk increases with age in both sexes, and is highest in the farming sector, followed by construction, industry and services.

The ICARIA study is the first piece of research to establish this risk in all of Spain's autonomous regions, industrial sectors and jobs. It was carried out between May 2004 and June 2005 among more than 300,000 apparently healthy workers, with an average age of 36.

Among other conclusions, the study indicates a higher prevalence of high cardiovascular risk among blue collar workers than in white collar workers, in both sexes.

"The differences we found are related to the greater prevalence of risk factors in these sectors of activity and could help to set priorities for prevention", says Sánchez Chaparro.

The authors stress the importance of stratifying global cardiovascular risk, which could help contribute to more efficient prevention of cardiovascular disease, above given that these measures apply to people who are mostly young and healthy, and who do not usually visit health services.

### The importance of examinations

Traditionally, general medical examinations carried out by prevention services have helped to detect cardiovascular risk factors in tandem with the health services. However, until now the way in which these acted to prevent cardiovascular disease was unstructured, and there were no clearly-defined objectives.

"The number of workers taking part in these annual checks provides a unique opportunity for acting to prevent [cardiovascular disease](#)", Eva Calvo Bonacho, co-author of the study and head of the Healthcare Projects Department at Ibermutuamur comments. "The results obtained will allow preventive, therapeutic, rehabilitative and individual monitoring recommendations to be made".

**More information:** Sánchez-Chaparro MA, Calvo-Bonacho E, González-Quintela A, Cabrera M, Sáinz JC, Gelpi JA, et al. "High cardiovascular risk in Spanish workers". Nutr Metab Cardiovasc Dis 2011 21:231-236.

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