

Work-related stress linked to increased blood fat levels

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Spanish researchers have studied how job stress affects cardiovascular health. The results, published in the '*Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*', link this situation to dyslipidemia, a disorder that alters the levels of lipids and lipoproteins in the blood. Credit: SINC

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Experts have been saying for years that [emotional stress](#) is linked to the risk of suffering cardiovascular disease as a result of unhealthy habits such as smoking, an unsuitable diet or leading a [sedentary lifestyle](#), among other factors.

Now, a study conducted by the Sociedad de Prevención de Ibermutuamur, in collaboration with experts from the Virgen de la Victoria Hospital (Malaga) and the Santiago de Compostela University, analyses the relationship between job stress and different parameters associated with how [fatty acids](#) are metabolised in the body.

The study, published recently in the *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, was conducted on a sample population of more than 90,000 workers undergoing medical check-ups.

"The workers who stated that they had experienced difficulties in dealing with their job during the previous twelve months (8.7% of the sample) had a higher risk of suffering from dyslipidemia," Carlos Catalina, [clinical psychologist](#) and an expert in work-related stress, told SINC.

Dyslipidemia is a lipoproteins' metabolic disorder that can manifest itself in an increase in total cholesterol, low-density lipoproteins (LDLs) and triglyceride levels, in addition to a drop in high-density lipoproteins (HDLs).

Changes in the lipid profile

Specifically, in the study the workers with job stress were more likely to suffer from abnormally high levels of LDL cholesterol (the so-called 'bad' cholesterol), excessively low levels of HDL cholesterol (the 'good' cholesterol) and positive atherogenic indices, i.e. potential [artery blockage](#).

"One of the mechanisms that could explain the relationship between stress and [cardiovascular risk](#) could be the changes in our lipid profile, which means higher rates of atheromatous plaque accumulation (lipids deposit) in our arteries," Catalina concluded.

More information: Catalina-Romero, C. et al. The relationship between job stress and dyslipidemia, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 2013; 41: 142-149.

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