

Work-related stress is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes

August 8 2014

Workplace stress can have a range of adverse effects on health with an increased risk of cardio-vascular diseases in the first line. However, to date, convincing evidence for a strong association between work stress and incident Type 2 diabetes mellitus is missing.

Risk of diabetes about 45 percent higher

As the team of scientists headed by Dr. Cornelia Huth and Prof. Karl-Heinz Ladwig has now discovered that individuals who are under a high level of pressure at work and at the same time perceive little control over the activities they perform face an about 45 percent higher risk of developing [type 2 diabetes](#) than those who are subjected to less stress at their workplace.

The scientists from the Institute of Epidemiology II (EPI II) at the Helmholtz Zentrum München (HMGU) in collaboration with Prof. Johannes Kruse from the University Hospital of Giessen and Marburg examined data prospectively collected from more than 5,300 employed individuals aged between 29 and 66 who took part in the population-based MONICA/KORA cohort study. At the beginning of the study, none of the participants had [diabetes](#), while in the post-observation period, which covered an average of 13 years, almost 300 of them were diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. The increase in risk in work-related stress was identified independently of classic risk factors such as obesity, age or gender.

Holistic prevention is important – also at the workplace

"According to our data, roughly one in five people in employment is affected by high levels of mental stress at work. By that, scientists do not mean 'normal job stress' but rather the situation in which the individuals concerned rate the demands made upon them as very high, and at the same time they have little scope for maneuver or for decision making. We covered both these aspects in great detail in our surveys," explains Prof. Ladwig, who led the study. "In view of the huge health implications of [stress](#)-related disorders, preventive measures to prevent common diseases such as diabetes should therefore also begin at this point," he added.

Environmental and lifestyle factors play a key role in the development of widespread diseases in Germany such as [diabetes mellitus](#). The aim of the Helmholtz Zentrum München, a partner of the German Center for Diabetes Research (DZD), is to develop new approaches to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of the most [common diseases](#).

More information: Huth, C. et al. (2014), Job Strain as a Risk Factor for the Onset of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: Findings From the MONICA/KORA Augsburg Cohort Study, *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 10.1097/PSY.0000000000000084

Provided by Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres

Citation: Work-related stress is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes (2014, August 8) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

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