

Call for workers to rise up

November 29 2017

A James Cook University study has found nearly three quarters of office workers believe there is a negative relationship between sitting down all day at work and their health - and that bosses are crucial to helping solve the problem.

PhD candidate Teneale McGuckin is a lecturer in Sport and Exercise Science at JCU. She surveyed 140 [office workers](#) on what they thought was the relationship between sitting time and health.

"One hundred people said that more sitting time worsened their health. Back complaints were the most common worry, then neck aches and loss of [muscle tone](#). People also talked about [weight gain](#) and that sitting down all day reduced their motivation."

Ms McGuckin said that science supported the view that sitting is bad for you.

"Increased sitting time has been associated with an elevated risk of [cardiovascular disease](#) and reduced life expectancy. Links to weight gain, some cancers, type 2 diabetes, and [breathing difficulties](#), have also been identified."

The office workers were also asked what they thought could be done about the problem and suggested a variety of behaviour change strategies.

These included alarms or alerts to prompt standing, or computer

software which freezes the computer for a selected period of time, standing in meetings or in the lunchroom, and standing desks.

"But whatever the strategy used, the focus groups said it needed to include education on the benefits and it needed buy-in from management. People said the breaks have to be seen as a normal activity and there shouldn't be criticism if they are away from their desks," said Ms McGuckin.

She said that it was plain a 'one size fits all' approach would be unlikely to succeed due to personal preferences.

"Interventions have to include a variety of strategies that are individually tailored and in which the people involved have the opportunity for input. If people feel they have control of the situation in this way, the strategy is more likely to work."

Provided by James Cook University

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