

Working conditions can explain educational differences in heart disease mortality

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Researchers from the Institute of Environmental Medicine at Karolinska Institutet have found that low influence and opportunities for development at work (job control) and heavy physical workload are

important explanatory factors for educational disparities in all-cause and heart disease mortality.

[The study](#) is published in *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment, and Health*.

Educational disparities in mortality are well known, but the mechanisms are not fully understood. This study was able to account for a large variety of factors in youth which could potentially explain selection into education and occupation and later health outcomes.

First author Melody Almroth, [researcher](#) at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, explains, "Even after considering a wide range of sociodemographic, behavioral, and health related factors, poor working conditions were important in explaining educational disparities in mortality."

The study was based on a cohort of 46,565 men who were conscripted into the Swedish military around age 18 in 1969/1970. These individuals were tracked over time with regard to all-cause and [heart disease mortality](#). Using regression models, the researchers estimated educational differences in mortality and the explanatory roll of different factors. The change in hazard ratio (HR) after adjusting for physical workload and job control around age 55 highlighted the impact of these working conditions.

"The results show us that increasing job control and reducing physical [workload](#) could reduce deaths and improve educational inequalities," says Melody Almroth.

More information: Melody Almroth et al, The role of working

conditions in educational differences in all-cause and ischemic heart disease mortality among Swedish men, *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.5271/sjweh.4158](https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.4158)

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