[IMAGE]

Longer Hours, Shorter Life

If you consistently work overtime, you're probably aware of the strain it can put on your health and family or social life. During Japan's economic boom in the 1980s, an increase in deaths related to long hours and less sleep was reported. Now a study in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* may provide proof that overtime work and long hours lead to heart attacks.

To determine the relationship between hours worked, hours slept, and heart-attack risk in Japanese men, 40- to 79-year-olds who had suffered a heart attack were compared to men of the same age who had not. From 1996-1998, the men were interviewed to gather data on work and lifestyle factors.

Longer hours at work, less sleep at night, and fewer days off were all linked to a higher risk of heart attacks, with combinations of these factors and recent occurrences further increasing risk. Men who slept five hours or less per night at least two days each week had two-to-three times the risk for a heart attack compared to men sleeping more; men who worked over 60 hours per week doubled their risk for a heart attack, compared to those working 40 hours or less weekly.

If you regularly work long hours and lose sleep as a result, ask yourself: Is my career really worth it? Not only will overworking cause you to neglect your family or those close to you, it might shorten your life.

Reference:

Liu Y, Tanaka H. Overtime work, insufficient sleep, and risk of non-fatal acute myocardial infarction in Japanese men. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 2002:59, pp. 447-451.

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