

Hi All,

Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life. That's a good thing. We are already in the second month of 2009, we have a new president and it is a glorious day (if you want it to be). I hope the year has started out in a good way for you but if not, how can you make it **THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE?** Don't just skim over this without really thinking about it.

What are you going to do to make this **THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE?** Hint: decide right now that it is going to be **THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE!** Once you have given your mind the task and your heart the emotional connection to this outcome, your mind won't stop until it figures out how to make this happen.

Remember, nobody on their death bed ever thinks "boy, I really should have worked more hours." **THE BEST YEAR OF YOUR LIFE** is going to include your family and personal relationships, emotions, health, love, joy, happiness ... Start the process of creating an **EXTRAORDINARY LIFE!**

If you need help, call us at (847) 537-2225

Let Stern Chiropractic help guide your family to an EXTRAODINARY LIFE of Health and Happiness in 2009.

I hope you have enjoyed our newsletter. If you know someone this may help, please share it. This smallest act of sharing can have profound effects for generations to come.

Long Working Hours in Middle Age May Impair Cognition

January 19, 2009 — Middle-aged workers who consistently work overtime appear to be at risk for mild cognitive impairment (MCI), researchers report.

In a prospective study of middle-aged British civil servants, those who typically worked more than 55 hours a week scored worse on a vocabulary test and showed a greater decline in reasoning ability than their colleagues who worked 35 to 40 hours a week.

Since MCI predicts dementia and mortality, identifying risk factors for the condition in middle age is important, the researchers, led by Marianna Virtanen, PhD, from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, in Helsinki, write.

"This study suggests that in addition to traditional risk factors for cognitive decline, such as biological age and disease, work-related factors, such as overtime, might contribute to cognitive decline," Dr. Virtanen told *Medscape Psychiatry*.

The study is the first to show this association in a large sample of diverse middle-aged employees who were followed for several years, she added.

"I would recommend that people keep their working hours reasonable," she said.

The study was published online January 6 in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Working Longer Not Necessarily Smarter

Working overtime is common, the researchers note. For example, in Europe in 2001, an estimated 12% to 17% of employees worked overtime. However, long work hours have been linked to adverse health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, fatigue, and depression.

Working long shifts is known to impair cognition, but little is known about how overtime, as opposed to shift work, affects cognition.

To examine the association between long working hours and cognitive function in middle age, investigators analyzed 1997–1999 baseline data and 2002–2004 follow-up data from 2214 British civil servants who participated in the Whitehall II study.

The participants, 1694 men and 520 women, had a mean age of 52.1 years at baseline.

At baseline and at 5-year follow-up, participants were tested on 5 aspects of cognitive function:

- Short-term verbal memory.
- Verbal and mathematical reasoning.
- Vocabulary.
- Phonemic fluency.
- Semantic fluency.



Participants were divided into 3 groups on the basis of self-reports on the length of their typical workweek, including work they brought home:

- 35 to 40 hours: 39% of participants.
- 41 to 55 hours: 53% of participants.
- More than 55 hours: 8% of participants.

Compared with employees who worked a standard 35 to 40 hours per week, those who accumulated 15 to 20 or more overtime hours every week were more likely to be married men with a higher education level, a higher job level, and a higher income. They also slept fewer hours and had greater psychological distress and alcohol consumption, but they did have greater social support.

Working more than 55 hours per week was associated with worse baseline and follow-up performances on vocabulary testing, with a decline in performance on the reasoning test over the 5-year period.

The researchers found a dose-response pattern between the 3 ranges of working hours and the vocabulary and reasoning measures.

The associations were robust after adjustment for 20 potential confounding factors, including age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, income, physical disease, psychosocial factors, sleep disturbance, and health-risk behaviors.

Working longer hours was linked to worse vocabulary scores in men but not in women. However, larger sample sizes are needed to confirm this sex difference, say investigators.

The effect of long working hours on cognitive function had an effect size equivalent to smoking. Further research is needed to identify potential factors behind these associations and to examine the generalizability of the study findings, the authors write.

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