

Editorial

Don't Work Yourself to Death-Karoshi and Work Stroke Due to Overwork

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Editorial

Karoshi: The occupational sudden death

During late 1970's, Japan witnessed a new and grave hazard called "Karoshi" among the working population. Karoshi is term used in social medicine, which means death due to overwork. Death of a 29-years-old male worker in the shipping department in 1969 was the first reported case of Karoshi. In the 1980's, several young professionals in Japan suddenly died without no past history any of illness at a young age. It was found that, stroke and Heart attack due to stress are the prime cause of karoshi deaths [1].

Why worry about the wear and tear of life?

100 years ago, in an atherosclerosis article by William Osler quoted that the primary cause of myocardial infarction was stress due to overwork. A modern study of work-related determinants of cardiovascular diseases proves that there is a strong association between etiology of myocardial infarction and Osler's theory [2].

Long working hours

Working more than 10 hours for at least 50 days per year is considered long working hours [3]. The working time is one of imperative facet of the work atmosphere. Long working hours is a well-known risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. A review study provides data about the adverse effects of long working hours on physical health [1]. Recent research proves that cardiac arrhythmia strikes 40% more in those working long hours than those employees who work standard hours [4]. Latest study on the relationship between long work hours and stroke reveals that people under 50 years of age have a possible connotation flanked by stroke and long work hours for 10 years (Figure 1) [3].

Prevention is better than cure

Karoshi and work stroke are social issues. Reducing work stress should be done by supportive and integrative effort of the government, employers, and the employees. Each employee should be

provided with a stress free working atmosphere by following various techniques such as stress management and smoking cessation. They should be regularly screened for stress related medical disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia, treatment should be provided for the same. Various mindfulness techniques can be practised by the employees to relieve from work stress. Exercise of healthy work and life style is the prime need of the hour.



Figure

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