

Career Issues From American Police Beat



*Cynthia
Brown
Publisher
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Shift Work Sleep Study Shows Risks

With the near-constant threat of terrorism, active shooters and good old-fashioned crimes of all types, it might be hard for cops to keep tabs on all the threats to their safety and well being. And as far as threats go, sleep-related health issues probably aren't going to keep too many public safety professionals up nights.

But a recent medical study on the adverse health effects of shift work should be of serious interest to anyone that doesn't have the luxury of working regular hours.

A new study finds that their schedule may cause cops to develop metabolic syndrome, a cluster of symptoms including high blood pressure, insulin resistance and high triglycerides. The syndrome advances the development of such conditions such as stroke, cardiovascular disease, and Type 2 Diabetes.

The research, published in the current issue of Archives of Environmental & Occupational Health, focused on 98 police officers who were part of the Buffalo Cardio-Metabolic Occupational Police Stress study, which began in 2003.

The participants had their blood pressure checked, took a blood test and had their waistlines measured. They also filled out a questionnaire focusing on lifestyle choices such as sleep habits, and physical activity, as well as things like smoking and drug and alcohol use.

Researchers discovered that in general, those on afternoon and midnight shifts were younger than those working during the day.

Overall, 30 percent of the police officers on the night shift had metabolic syndrome.

In the general population, that number was 21 percent according to the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey. The younger officers on the night shift (average 36.5 years) also had higher rates of metabolic syndrome than age-matched men and women in the general population, who came in at 24 percent.

According to the results of the study the waist circumference was larger and HDL "good" cholesterol levels were lower among night shift cops compared to the general population and to officers working day and evening shifts.

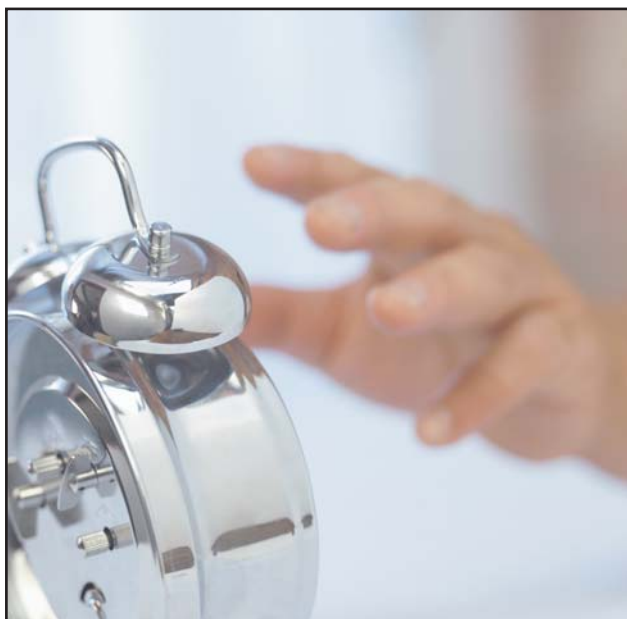
Officers working nights who got less than six hours of sleep had higher averages of metabolic syndrome factors than day shift workers did.

"One potential explanation for this unusual finding is that midnight shift officers were most likely to be sleep deprived because of difficulties associated with day sleeping," said John Violanti, the study's lead author, in a news release.

The research associate professor at the University of

Buffalo's department of social and preventive medicine added, "Sleep debt has been shown to have a harmful impact on carbohydrate metabolism and endocrine function, which could contribute to metabolic disorders."

In the study, the authors wrote, "Information gained through this study may be useful to aid further investigation of not only police officer health, but also the health of those in other first-responder occupations." ●



A carload of hunters, looking for a place to hunt, pulled into a farmer's yard. The driver went up to the farmhouse to ask permission to hunt. The old farmer said, "Sure you can hunt here, but would you do me a favor? That old mule standing over there is 20 years old and sick with cancer, but I don't have the heart to kill her. Would you do it for me?"

The hunter said, "Sure," and headed for the car. While walking back, however, he decided to pull a trick on his hunting buddies. He got into the car and when they asked if the farmer had said OK, he said, "No, we can't hunt here, but I'm going to teach that old cuss a lesson."

With that, he rolled down his window, stuck his gun out and blasted the mule. As he exclaimed, "There, that will teach him!" a second shot rang out from the passenger side, and one of his hunting buddies shouted, "I got the cow!"

IRS TAX TIP: TT-2010-02

Five Filing Facts for Recently Married or Divorced Taxpayers

If you were married or divorced recently, there are a couple of things you'll want to do to ensure the name on your tax return matches the name registered with the Social Security Administration.

Here are five facts from the IRS for recently married or divorced taxpayers. Following these steps will help avoid problems when you file your tax return.

1. If you took your spouse's last name or if both spouses hyphenate their last names, you may run into complications if you don't notify the SSA. When newlyweds file a tax return using their new last names, IRS computers can't match the new name with their Social Security Number.
2. If you were recently divorced and changed back to your previous last name, you'll also need to notify the SSA of this name change.
3. Informing the SSA of a name change is a snap; you'll just need to file a Form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card at your local SSA office.
4. Form SS-5 is available on SSA's Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov, by calling 800-772-1213 or at local offices. It usually takes about two weeks to have the change verified.
5. If you adopted your spouse's children after getting married, you'll want to make sure the children have an SSN. Taxpayers must provide an SSN for each dependent claimed on a tax return. For adopted children without SSNs, the parents can apply for an Adoption Taxpayer Identification Number – or ATIN – by filing Form W-7A, Application for Taxpayer Identification Number for Pending U.S. Adoptions with the IRS. The ATIN is a temporary number used in place of an SSN on the tax return. The W-7A is available on IRS.gov, or by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

LINKS:

- Social Security Administration (www.socialsecurity.gov/)
- Form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card (www.socialsecurity.gov/online/ss-5.html)
- Form W-7A, Application for Taxpayer Identification Number for Pending U.S. Adoptions (www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw7a.pdf)