# Global, regional, and national burdens of ischemic heart disease and stroke attributable to exposure to long working hours for 194 countries, 2000-2016: a systematic analysis from the WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury -- Communications Kit

***This kit includes:***

* *Suggested* [*Tweets*](#_Tweets) *you can adapt*
* *Infographics you can use on Twitter*
* [*Quote cards*](#_Quote_Cards_for) *for use on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn or Instagram*

[**Article link**](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160-4120(21)00220-8)(Article will go live at this link on 16 May 2021, 23.59 CET)

Published systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the effect of long working hours on

* [ischaemic heart disease](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412019331642?via%3Dihub)
* [stroke](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412019332118?via%3Dihub)

***\*\*Begin tweeting and sharing after 17 May 2021, 00.01 CET\*\****

## Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ilo) have jointly produced the first estimates on the loss of life and health from ischemic heart disease and stroke associated with working long hours. These are WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-related Burden of Disease and Injury. WHO and ILO were supported in this estimation by a Technical Advisory Group of individual experts.

Two systematic reviews and meta-analyses of the latest existing bodies of evidence were conducted, with Working Groups of individual experts, specifically to provide the evidence base for this study. These found sufficient evidence that working 55 hours/week or more is associated with a higher risk of both ischemic heart disease and stroke, compared to working standard hours of 35-40 hours/week.

**Top line survey findings:**

* Globally, an estimated 479 million workers (9% of the population) were exposed to long working hours in 2016.
* The number of people exposed to long working hours has increased since 2000, putting more of the population at risk of work-related disability and death due to these cardiovascular diseases.
* Long working hours (≥55 hours/week) led to 745,000 deaths from ischemic heart disease and stroke in 2016 – a 29% increase since 2000.
* From 2000 to 2016, the numbers of deaths from heart disease from working long hours increased by 42%, and numbers of deaths from stroke by 19%.
* This work-related disease burden is particularly large in men, people living in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions, and middle-aged or older workers.
* Exposure to long working hours is the occupational risk factor with the largest burden of disease studied to date by WHO and/or ILO.

**Implications of the global COVID pandemic and the future of work**

* Research suggests exposure to long working hours is likely to increase as a result of emergencies and economic recessions. Teleworking, for example, has increased as a result of the global COVID pandemic, and that could lead to increases in the number of hours worked; and increased job insecurity in some sectors could result in the same.
* New ways of organizing work are also likely to increase the prevalence of working long hours. For example, the gig and platform economies, where workers pick up jobs in an irregular and insecure way, is likely to grow and may result in longer hours for workers.

**What can be done about this?**

Governments, employers and workers can take the following actions to protect workers’ health:

* Governments, in consultation with employers and workers, can introduce, implement and enforce laws, regulations and policies that ban mandatory overtime and ensure maximum limits on working time.
* Bipartite or collective bargaining agreements between employers’ and workers’ associations can arrange working time to be more flexible, while at the same time ensuring that maximum limits are not crossed.
* A healthy and green recovery from the labour consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic could include sharing of working hours between workers to ensure that numbers of hours worked do not climb above 55 or more per week, to prevent increased risk and burden of cardiovascular disease.

## Tweets

**Tweet tagging @WHO, @ilo, medical peers, professional societies, researchers or national leaders**

*\*\*You can add quote cards or infographics as pictures.\*\**

*\*\*Please use the hashtag #WorkersHealth, so that others may see and retweet your posts.\*\**

**Sample Tweets:**

**Tweet 1**

@WHO and @ilo estimate 9% of all people in the world worked 55 hours or more per week. This puts them at increased risk of heart disease and stroke

Find out more <https://bit.ly/3blEyBc> & <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

*#WorkersHealth*

**Tweet 2**

Working 55 hours or more per week increases the risk of heart disease by 17% and stroke by 35% [https://bit.ly/2Pi4hCI](https://bit.ly/2Pi4hCI%20) & <https://bit.ly/2PlfKBy>

Find out more <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

*#WorkersHealth*

**Tweet 3**

@WHO and @ilo estimate that working 55 hours or more per week led to 745,000 deaths from heart disease and stroke in 2016

Find out more <https://bit.ly/3blEyBc> & <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

*#WorkersHealth*

**Tweet 4**

Heart disease and stroke caused by long working hours are particularly high among:

* the Western Pacific & South-East Asia regions
* people aged 60-74 years
* men

More here <https://bit.ly/3blEyBc> & <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

*#WorkersHealth*

**Tweet 5**

Long working hours can cause cardiovascular deaths and disability. Actions are needed to ensure numbers of hours worked are healthy

Find out more <https://bit.ly/3blEyBc> & <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

*#WorkersHealth* @WHO @ilo

**Tweet 6**

Long working hours increase cardiovascular deaths

#COVID19, teleworking & the gig economy could increase this burden

Find out more <https://bit.ly/3blEyBc> & <https://bit.ly/2R1t6DT>

#WorkersHealth @WHO @ilo

**To tag individual experts that participated in the study:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expert** | **Twitter handle** |
| Dr Maria Neira | @DrMariaNeira |
| Dr Frank Pega | @Frank\_Pega |
| Dr Natalie Momen | @NatalieMomen |
| Prof Frida M. Fischer | @FridaFischer |
| Prof Lode Godderis | @lode\_godderis |
| Prof Tracey Woodruff | @TraceyJWoodruff |

## Infographics

## Please find the infographics [here](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17yqseXzueeFaYuL1eML1GSSAX6PM3M2n?usp=sharing) in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish

*\*\*Tag researchers, medical peers, or professional associations when you tweet!\*\**

## Quote Cards for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn & Instagram

## Quote cards for the quotes below can be found at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/hirid9qnr93aoke/AAAGtQL5sBYnorO-7h-avQwYa?dl=0>

## *\*\*Their format means that the quote cards are best on Twitter, but they can be used on other social media as well. When you use a quote card, be sure to include the link to the article (*<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160-4120(21)00220-8>*) in the text of the tweet or post itself! The cards themselves will not link to the article.\*\**

*"The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way many people work. Teleworking has become the norm in many industries, often blurring the boundaries between home and work. In addition, many businesses have been forced to scale back or shut down operations to save money, and people who are still on the payroll end up working longer hours. No job is worth the risk of stroke or heart disease. Governments, employers and workers need to work together to agree on limits to protect the health of workers.”*

**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization**

*"Working 55 hours or more per week is a serious health hazard. It’s time that we all, governments, employers, and employees, wake up to the fact that long working hours can lead to premature death."*

**Dr Maria Neira, Director, Environment, Climate Change & Health, World Health Organization**

*“Long working hours are responsible for 745,000 people dying from heart disease and stroke per year. This is one-third of all work-related deaths, making long working hours the risk factor with the largest estimated such burden.”*

**Dr Frank Pega, Technical Officer, Environment, Climate Change & Health, World Health Organization**

*“Cardiovascular diseases caused by long working hours disproportionately affect people living in the Western Pacific & South-East Asia, people aged 60-74 years and men. Actions need to be targeted to protect these workers in particular.”*

**Professor Sergio Iavicoli, Secretary-General, International Commission on Occupational Health**

*“Work intensification is the new normal for many. These new estimates show that working 55 hours or more a week is common & increasing. Current and new ways of working, including the gig economy and teleworking, will further this upward trend.”*

**Professor Frida M. Fischer, Professor, University of São Paulo, Brazil**

*“Our working group of 21 experts from 10 countries from around the globe found 37 studies on the effect of long working hours on ischemic heart disease. This huge body of evidence was by consensus rated as sufficient evidence for harmfulness & showed an increased risk of ischemic heart disease of 17%.”*

**Dr Jian Li, Professor, University of California, Los Angeles, United States of America**

*“A group of international experts comprehensively reviewed the evidence base & agreed that it is strong*

*enough to conclude that working 55 hours or more per week is harmful to health: the practice increases*

*stroke risk by 35%.”*

**Chevalier Professor Alexis Descatha, Professor, University & Hospital of Angers, France**

*“Working long hours causes stroke & heart disease directly, through increased stress, & indirectly, through adverse health behaviours. This explains the higher risks found in the systematic reviews among those working 55 or more hours a week.”*

**Professor Lode Godderis, Professor, University of Leuven, Belgium**

*"Demonstrating that long working hours contributes to heart disease is an outstanding example of how systematic review methods can lead to vital new discoveries. It is a landmark achievement in occupational and environmental health research."*

**Dr Paul Whaley, Systematic Reviews Editor, Environment International, Lancaster University, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

*“Our finding that long working hours increase ischemic heart disease risk is ground-breaking. Studies like this cannot happen without good science and rigorous systematic review methods. This type of evidence is critical to decision-making and protecting public health.”*

**Professor Tracey J. Woodruff, Director, Program on Reproductive Health & the Environment, University of California, San Francisco, United States of America**