

*M Kivimaka et al. Work and Stress. March (2001) Vol. 15#1 p 3.*

Associations between shift work and poor general health continue to be proposed. It is argued that shift work could be the cause of ill health, opposing this is the argument that people who elect to undertake shift work may be predisposed to certain kinds of ill health.

This study aimed to establish whether shift work was associated with poor health habits such as fatty diets, smoking, alcohol consumption and inactivity.

2795 female nurses were asked to complete a questionnaire; 2299 responded. 506 were career-long shift workers and 183 career-long day workers.

Shift workers were shown to smoke more and are more often overweight.

Alcohol and activity were equal.

Smoking disparity increases with age. Up to 2 pack years by age 45. Body mass index disparity also increases with age being one unit at the age of 45, there being no disparity among the young.



### **Comment**

The authors concluded that shift work leads to bad health habits, assuming initial equivalence has always been the case (which they do not know).

Risk of coronary heart disease increases by 5% with each unit of BMI.

Marital status was not determined. Health habits are influenced by culture.