

Increased risk for Coronary Heart Disease in blue-collar workers at a military industrial plant in Greece?

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KEY WORDS

Coronary Heart Disease; risk factors; occupation

SUMMARY

Objective: To test the hypothesis that blue-collar workers have a higher prevalence of risk factors for Coronary Heart Disease than white-collar workers. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study of 262 employees (208 males, 54 females, mean age: 50,65 years) was made of a Greek military industrial plant. Blood samples were taken and analyzed for lipids, lipoprotein levels and glucose levels; arterial blood pressure and body mass index (BMI) were also recorded. Smoking habits were ascertained by the use of a self-administered questionnaire. **Results:** White-collar workers had significantly higher mean levels of total and LDL cholesterol than blue-collar workers. No significant differences were found regarding arterial blood pressure, BMI, glucose, triglycerides and HDL cholesterol levels. Both groups reported similarly high rates of smoking. Multivariate analysis confirmed an independent association of abnormal levels of total and LDL cholesterol with white-collar occupation. **Conclusion:** These findings partly contradict the current pattern of CHD risk factors in Western workforces. Possible interpretations, as well as the limitations of the study, are discussed.