



Stress of police work increases heart risk

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The stress of working the so-called Thin Blue Line might explain why police officers have a higher risk of developing heart disease, U.S. researchers suggest.

University at Buffalo (N.Y.) researchers determined that underlying the higher incidence of sub-clinical atherosclerosis -- arterial thickening that precedes a heart attack or stroke -- may be the stress of police work that can mean interacting with the public in tense situations and encountering danger with little warning.

"We took lifestyle factors that generally are associated with atherosclerosis, such as exercise, smoking, diet, etc., into account in our comparison between citizens and the police officers," John Violanti, who has been studying the police force in Buffalo for 10 years, said in a statement.

"These lifestyle factors were statistically controlled for in the analysis. This led to the conclusion that it is not the 'usual' heart-disease-related risk factors that increase the risk in police officers. It is something else. We believe that 'something else' is the occupation of policing."

The study is published in the June issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

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