

Kamarck, T.W., Muldoon, M.F., Shiffman, S., Sutton-Tyrrell, K., Gwaltney, C. & Janicki, D.L. (in press). Experiences of demand and control in daily life as correlates of subclinical carotid atherosclerosis in a healthy older sample. Health Psychology.

Abstract

Daily experiences of psychological demand and control were examined as correlates of carotid artery atherosclerosis in a sample of healthy adults (ages 50-70). Ambulatory blood pressure (ABP) was explored as a potential mediator of any observed effects. 337 participants collected ABP and recorded their daily experiences, using electronic diaries, over two 3-day periods. Mean intima-medial thickness (IMT) was assessed in the carotid arteries using B-mode ultrasound. Participants who experienced greater “Task Demands” during daily life demonstrated larger carotid IMT, after adjustment for demographic covariates. This association was not limited to those who were employed, nor to ratings taken in the workplace. The association appeared to be mediated, in part, by higher daytime systolic blood pressure among those reporting high Task Demands. Previous findings linking job stress with cardiovascular disease may reflect the broader impact of daily psychological demands, not necessarily linked solely with the work environment.