

CHS 278/EHS M270

Work and Health

Spring 2009

Everyone hears about “stress” at work, but where does it come from, what health impacts does it create and what can be done about it?

People develop a wide variety of illnesses during their working lives, manifested in time lost from work, disability, physical incapacity, psychological distress and ultimately morbidity and mortality. How these manifestations are connected to work is a critically important issue for those in the health professions, public health, psychology and business management.

In this course, physical and psychological health outcomes are explored in the context of the disciplines of social epidemiology, occupational health psychology and an emerging occupational cardiology which focus on the role of psychosocial factors in the workplace. These factors arise from the nature of the work activity or how it is organized, e.g., output demands placed on the employee, number of work hours, individuals' control over work tasks, schedules and security, etc. Theoretical models are presented, while empirical evidence is examined and balanced with practical exercises for measuring and assessing psychosocial work stressors. We will also discuss how contextual factors, such as gender, race/ethnicity and social class, lead to or interact with working conditions to create ill health. We will explore how work stressors can be ameliorated by reorganizing work processes and how the health effects of work stressors can be reduced through individual – based behavioral programs.

- Explore **physical and psychological health outcomes** that result from the organization of work and work-related stress.
- Understand how **work-related psychosocial stressors** result from work organization and impact worker health.
- Learn how to **measure workplace stressors and assess health outcomes**.
- Discuss how gender race/ethnicity & social class **influence work, stress, and health**.
- **Explore current interventions** to reduce workplace stress.
- Hands on **practicum** using latest questionnaires.

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