

## Cost of overachieving: stress, depression

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STRESS, depression and alcohol abuse are 'the curse of the strong'. The high-priced overachievers pay the going 110 per cent in all one of the most important causes of stress.

• A key measure of job stress – lack of support from co-workers and supervisors – is also related to depression and can lead to alcohol abuse.

The statistics for men and work stress are particularly shocking. One in three use alcohol to relieve work stress, while 17 per cent have been to a doctor about stress levels and more than 25 per cent suffer from exhaustion as a result of stress.

While 'the Priory' (the Priory Hospital, Britain) might have a reputation for helping celebrities with their addictions issues, the reality is that these types of hospital provide a wide range of service to professionals who have taken the brave decision to seek help for their mental health problems.

The main irony surrounding mental illness is that the sufferer is seen as weak by others, and by themselves.

Yet many mental health issues are an affliction of those who are too capable – people who are strong, diligent and reliable and have a strong conscience and sense of responsibility, but who are sensitive, vulnerable and whose self-esteem is easily dented.

Strong people go on and on, striving way beyond the point that the body is designed for. Eventually the wheels begin to fall off and symptoms appear; yet those who are strong can't stop – they keep on going until eventually the fuse blows and they are in crisis.

If you are in meltdown, be as kind to yourself as you are to others. Recognise that you need to make some positive changes in your life that may be difficult at first.

• Re-examine your financial commitments; what lifestyle elements do you need to maintain and what can you relinquish?

• Eat healthily. So many office workers exist on rubbish and wonder why, after snacking on salty and sugary foods all day, they fall ill.

• Exercise at least four times a week: this can be as simple as going out for a twenty-minute walk at lunchtime.

• Reduce your alcohol consumption.

• Ensure that you get eight hours sleep at night.

• With thanks to Dr Tim Cantopher of the Priory Hospital in Britain, for excerpt from article that appeared in the February 2008 issue of *Accountancy* magazine.

aspects of their lives, particularly at work.

People in high-stress jobs run twice the risk of suffering severe depression or anxiety as those

in lower stress occupations.

• Time pressure: Working to deadlines in an environment where failure is publicly visible – is

## Warning signs to look for

### Heart attack warning signs

- UNCOMFORTABLE PRESSURE, fullness, squeezing or pain in the centre of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with light-headedness, fainting, sweating, nausea, or shortness of breath.



### Stroke warning signs

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

**Not all of these signs occur in every attack. If you notice one or more of these signs, don't wait. Get medical help.**

## Gym has your health at heart

THE Heart & Stroke Foundation becomes involved in many healthy lifestyle initiatives but has, since its inception, developed and currently has in place a Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Rehabilitation (CDP&R) programme.

This programme operates through our **Gym with a difference**.

The specific planned programme is aimed at people who have or have had angina, angioplasty, heart surgery, a heart attack, heart failure, a stroke or are at special risk of the foregoing.

The programme consists of:

- Entry and exit treadmill stress testing
- Approximately 45 minutes of regular prescribed, personalised and monitored exercise three times a week
- Lectures and group discussions on healthy

heart and stroke matters

- Dietary and psychological counselling as and when required
- Determination and subsequent tracking of serum cholesterol
- Regular blood pressure monitoring.

It is also recommended that, for very good medical reasons, most individuals should have a full medical examination before they begin to undertake this exercise programme. Effectively all individuals with one or more significant risk factors and those over the age of forty must have a full medical.

Any person who feels that they could benefit from the programme is most welcome to join. However, you will need to be referred to us by your medical practitioner.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please call Catherine Charles on 437-3312.

# Control of tobacco timely

THE Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados applauds Prime Minister the Honourable David Thompson for removing the duty-free allowance enjoyed by people travelling to Barbados with manufactured tobacco products and increasing the duty levied on cigarettes by 100 per cent.

The evidence is quite clear about tobacco use: it kills people and harms almost every organ of the body, causing many diseases whilst compromising the smoker's health in general. Even though about ten per cent of the population smokes, the issue of secondhand smoke exposure poses a serious health hazard for the majority. Every credible medical and scientific organisation in the world, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United States Surgeon General, and National Environment Protection Agencies, agrees that second-hand smoke exposure causes illness and death to non-smokers.

Barbados is a party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), signifying that Barbados agrees to be bound by the obligations under the FCTC in efforts to implement tobacco control measures aimed at protecting present and future

generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure.

Newly appointed project officer – tobacco control of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados, Wayne Hunte, said that the organisation sees the new increases in taxation as a good measure to reduce the demand for tobacco, and that it compliments the Bloomberg Caribbean Project on Tobacco Control which seeks to ensure the implementation of picture-based health warnings on all tobacco products sold in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Hunte noted that research has shown that health warnings with pictures on cigarette packets are a very effective way of reducing smoking and stopping potential first time smokers from starting.

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados is part of a regional consortium of Non-governmental organisations that has been awarded a grant by the Bloomberg Global Initiative to implement this project and the Foundation pledges its support to the Government of Barbados, all social partners and stakeholders in promoting the health and well-being of the Barbadian people.

## GO FOR THE GOOD STUFF

LEAVE OUT THE SWEETS, THE FRIED FOODS, THE FAST FOODS.



Eat fruit, fibre and vegetables  
Every day

## GO FOR THE GREENS

### BE HEART SMART

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