

Job Stress Plays Major Role in Workers' Health

LONDON—Job stress is more likely to cause eyestrain among people who use computers all day than poor lighting or long hours, according to new research.

One in three complaints about eye strain blamed on computer monitors is actually about dissatisfaction with working conditions, according to the study, published in the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

Problems with colleagues, lack of support from bosses and supervisors and lack of job satisfaction are all likely to cause more reports of visual problems.

Workers who feel supported by their colleagues and valued by their bosses are a third less likely to complain about eye problems such as blurred or double vision.

Researchers from the University of Sassari in Italy surveyed more than 200 bank workers about eyestrain and their working conditions.

They found that a third were suffering from asthenopia (eyestrain) three or more times a week,

and 13 percent had symptoms every day.

The bank workers were then asked about the way they felt about their jobs, including whether they had conflicts with colleagues, stresses about their role at work, low self-esteem or feelings that their skills were being under-used.

People who suffered from these psychological problems were significantly more likely to complain about eyestrain, the researchers found.

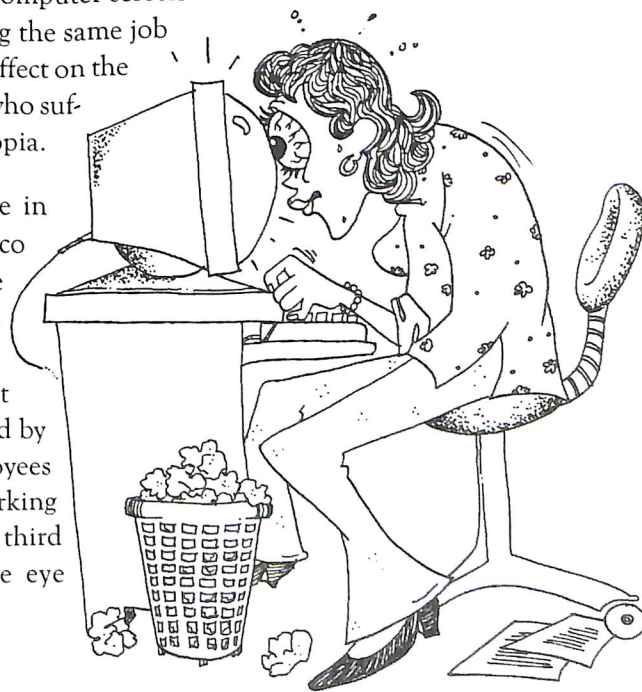
Surprisingly, poor lighting, long hours staring at a computer screen or years spent doing the same job had no significant effect on the number of people who suffered from asthenopia.

But loud noise in the office and tobacco smoke were more likely to lead to visual problems. Workers who felt they were supported by their fellow employees and had better working conditions were a third less likely to have eye strain.

Report author Dr. Francisco Mocci said: "It has to be recognised that work stress can produce both physical and emotional complaints.

"Job demands—physical and psychological—influence the severity and frequency of health complaints of [computer] operators. The expression of these complaints may be exacerbated by perceived high job demands, boring or repetitive job activity and poor support from colleagues and supervisors."

Source: *Manila Bulletin*, 25 March 2001



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