



FONDAZIONE  
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## Press release

### Jobs that increase cardiovascular risk, truck drivers at the top of the list

Palermo, 24 January 2017 – A healthy lifestyle, low stress and control of body weight, cholesterol and blood pressure. These are the main recommendations for reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases according to the cardiologists who attended the conference entitled “From scientific research to clinical practice” organised in Palermo by the Department of Science for the Promotion of Health, School of Medicine, University of Palermo, and promoted by the Fondazione Internazionale Menarini. “Furthermore, we mustn’t forget the family history: if a close relative under the age of fifty has suffered a cardiovascular event such as a heart attack or a stroke, the risk increases, as explained in the new European Guidelines for cardiovascular prevention”, warns Salvatore Novo, Director of the Cardiology Division of the “P. Giaccone” University Hospital of Palermo and Chairman of the congress. “In addition, psycho-social factors must not be overlooked either, such as stress at work, or having an anxious or depressive personality”. In fact, a study published by the US Centre for Disease Control, which analysed the data of 66 thousand workers in 22 different professional categories, demonstrated how some jobs are more harmful than others for the health of the heart. “The enemies of the heart are sedentary and repetitive jobs. In this sense, the American study place truck drivers at the top of the list of the workers most at risk”, continues Novo. “The lack of movement gives rise to weight gain, also favoured by incorrect nutrition, meals eaten too quickly and too rich in fats. Stressful or depressing work is also harmful because it alters the sleep and waking patterns, the hormone secretion systems, and in the majority of cases, also the rhythm regarding blood pressure during the daytime”.

The new European Guidelines recommend keeping the maximum level of cholesterol under control, especially the LDL cholesterol, which in the general population must be lower than 115 mg/dl. “Attention however; in subjects who have already suffered from a cardiovascular event, the LDL cholesterol must not exceed 70 mg/dl”, reminds Novo. “Instead, as far as the blood pressure is concerned, the recommended levels are 140-90 for everyone, with a greater tolerance for elderly subjects (who can arrive at a maximum of 160) and greater restrictions for diabetics (130-85)”.

Cardiovascular prevention translates not only into health for the citizens, but also into savings for the health system. "The need to focus attention on lifestyles is more important than ever within a context of persistent economic crisis and the increase in life expectancy, with all the ensuing consequences linked to the growth of chronic diseases and a rise in costs for the welfare-health systems all over the world", declares Novo.

"It is an economic situation that imposes priority choices, however the cardiologists are asking for the situation of the country to be taken into account without damaging disciplines such as cardiology that has made an 80% contribution to the result of prolonging life expectation by 7 years over the last 30 years, and which cannot be subjected to a linear cut. We must not forget that it is necessary to think not only of the present time, but also and above all, of the future, because we build our tomorrow today, and faced with the situation of 1 child in 3 being overweight or obese, we cannot but ask ourselves whether instead of simply saving money we should perhaps invest in prevention".

A message that also addresses the population, reluctant to change lifestyle and get treatment when it is necessary, so much so that the numbers of those who require treatment and do not seek it are extremely high. "A year after suffering infarction, one patient in four abandons the cholesterol-reducing therapy, in this way considerably increasing the risk of complications (by as much as 50% in some cases) that can contribute towards a second heart attack", concludes Novo.

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