

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210522-working-hours.html>

The World Health Organization (WHO) and International Labour Organization have issued a stark warning about the danger of overworking. They said working long hours is causing the premature death of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. The two organizations analysed the link between loss of life and working long hours. Their findings were sobering. Around three-quarters of a million workers die early after suffering strokes and heart attacks as a result of working over 55 hours a week. Most of these deaths were in people aged 60 to 70 who had worked at least 55 hours between the ages of 45 and 74. The researchers discovered that men accounted for 72 per cent of the deaths.

The WHO study revealed that people who work at least 55 hours a week have a 42 per cent increased risk of stroke, and a 19 per cent increased chance of heart disease. Researchers analysed data from workforces in 154 countries. They looked at data collected from 1970 to 2018. The WHO Director-General said: "No job is worth the risk of stroke or heart disease. Governments, employers and workers need to work together to agree on limits to protect the health of workers." The WHO said over nine per cent of workers overwork. It warned that the situation is worsening, saying: "The pandemic is accelerating developments that could feed the trend towards increased working time."

Sources: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/17/success/who-long-hours-intl-scli-wellness/index.html>
<https://www.cnet.com/health/working-too-much-can-kill-you-who-study-finds/>
<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-long-working-hours-killing-745-000-people-a-year-who-study-finds-12308976>

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. stark | a. A sudden disabling attack or loss of consciousness caused by an interruption in the flow of blood to the brain. |
| 2. premature | b. Happening or done before the usual or proper time; too early. |
| 3. analysed | c. A relationship between two things or situations, especially where one thing affects the other. |
| 4. link | d. Severe or unpleasant. |
| 5. suffering | e. Supplied or made up a specified amount or proportion. |
| 6. stroke | f. Examined in detail for purposes of explanation and interpretation. |
| 7. accounted for | g. The state of feeling pain, distress, or hardship. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 8. revealed | h. A point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass. |
| 9. workforce | i. Sufficiently good, enjoyable, or successful to repay any effort, trouble, or expense. |
| 10. worth | j. Increasing in amount or extent. |
| 11. limit | k. Made previously unknown or secret information known to others. |
| 12. pandemic | l. The people engaged in or available for work, either in a country or area or in a particular company or industry. |
| 13. accelerating | m. A general direction in which something is developing or changing. |
| 14. trend | n. Of a disease that is over a whole country or the world. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210522-working-hours.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The International Health Organization issued a stark warning. **T / F**
2. The WHO said working long hours caused the early death of millions. **T / F**
3. The WHO looked at the link between the loss of hours and a long life. **T / F**
4. Over 70% of the deaths caused by working long hours were men. **T / F**
5. Working over 55 hours a week carries a 19% increased risk of a stroke. **T / F**
6. Researchers looked at data from workforces in 154 countries. **T / F**
7. The WHO said the working week should be limited to 35 hours. **T / F**
8. COVID-19 is making this situation worse. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. issued | a. grim |
| 2. stark | b. possibility |
| 3. premature | c. made up |
| 4. findings | d. shift |
| 5. accounted for | e. early |
| 6. revealed | f. safeguard |
| 7. risk | g. released |
| 8. agree | h. disclosed |
| 9. protect | i. concur |
| 10. trend | j. conclusions |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. a stark warning about | a. chance of heart disease |
| 2. causing the premature | b. result of working over 55 hours |
| 3. the link between loss of | c. accelerating developments |
| 4. heart attacks as a | d. the danger of overworking |
| 5. men accounted | e. together to agree on limits |
| 6. a 19 per cent increased | f. life and working long hours |
| 7. No job is | g. increased working time |
| 8. workers need to work | h. for 72 per cent of the deaths |
| 9. The pandemic is | i. worth the risk of stroke |
| 10. feed the trend towards | j. death of hundreds of thousands |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210522-working-hours.html>

1. What kind of warning does the article say the WHO issued?
2. What does the article call the WHO's findings?
3. What two things did the WHO say people die from?
4. When did 60- to 70-year-olds work more than 55 hours a week?
5. What percentage of the reported deaths were in men?
6. What do people who overwork have a 19% increased risk of?
7. In what date range did the WHO look at workforce data?
8. What did the WHO say governments and workers have to agree on?
9. How many workers did the WHO say overwork?
10. What did the WHO say is fuelling a trend towards longer working hours?

WORKING HOURS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'work'?
3. How many hours a week do you work?
4. Should there be a limit on the number of hours people work?
5. How dangerous is overworking?
6. Have you ever overworked?
7. Why do some people work such long hours?
8. What do you think of working 55 hours a week?
9. Who do you know that works long hours?
10. Should companies be fined if their workers overwork?

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WORKING HOURS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'hours'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. How would you feel if you worked 55 hours a week?
15. What happens to someone's health when they work too hard?
16. Do you think there should be a 4-day week?
17. How has the pandemic affected working conditions?
18. Would it be better for people to work from home?
19. What advice do you have for people who overwork?
20. What questions would you like to ask the researchers?