

Sitting is the new smoking

A recent study suggested that sitting for prolonged periods increases risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer and death, even among people who exercise regularly. Count this as another potent risk factor like smoking, high blood pressure and obesity.

Researchers conducted a systematic review of published research to evaluate the association between adults' sedentary time and health outcomes independent of physical activity.

Evidence showed that prolonged sitting is independently associated with negative health outcomes and mortality. But the health effects of prolonged sitting were most pronounced in people who never exercise or do so only occasionally. It seems that we continue to do things that are unhealthy, perhaps because they are not our natural state. We are not by design "sitters". We are naturally designed to be mobile, to lift, to carry and manipulate objects with our hands. Society in the technological and industrialized world has created jobs and furnishings that cater to mental work and sedentary activities. We spend far too much time sitting and far too little time in physical activity. The data and common sense both suggest that this is a negative trend regarding our health.

The obvious cure for this risk factor is movement and the avoidance of sitting. Spend more time standing and moving around and less time in your chair. Take work breaks as often as your job allows and do something physical. Arrange to do some or all of your work standing. Do what you can to avoid those hours in the chair and you will live longer and will have covered more ground in the bargain.

Editorial: EZHA agrees with the point of this article. However, the authors draw their conclusion by analyzing bits and pieces of other author's studies. Although this is not the strongest way to get scientific results we believe the conclusion is correct and will be better supported as research from the large number of people tracking their activity through wearable devices is collected.

Bibliography

Ann Intern Med. 2015;162(2):123-132. doi:10.7326/M14-1651 Aviroop Biswas, BSc; Paul I. Oh, MD, MSc; Guy E. Faulkner, PhD; Ravi R. Bajaj, MD;