

## Monthly Newsletter

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### Time Urgency and Impatience: The Real Heartbreakers

If you pound the steering wheel when stuck in traffic or become angry when a slow moving train detains you at the railroad crossing, you may be traveling down the fast lane to high blood pressure and cardiac disease. Recent research at Northwestern University suggests that people who are chronically impatient or feel constantly pressed for time are more likely to develop dangerously elevated blood pressure levels as they age. “The higher the sense of urgency, the higher the risk of developing hypertension,” says one of the study’s lead authors, Dr. LiJing Yan.

Many of these TUI individuals (time urgency/impatience) also demonstrated an additional risk factor of being a “Type A” personality, with hallmark traits that include competitiveness, hostility, tenseness, and aggressiveness in all aspects of their lives.

The research team studied 3,000 men and women between the ages of 18 to 30 who initially registered normal blood pressure readings. These subjects voluntarily completed questionnaires at the start of the project and over the course of the 15-year longitudinal study. They were asked to rate how well statements such as “eating too quickly,” “usually feeling pressed for time,” or “often feeling time pressures at the end of the work day” described their personalities. Six per cent (180) of the subjects felt that all three statements described them very well, placing them in the highest level of TUI.

Overall, 14.3 % of the entire group developed high blood pressure by the 15<sup>th</sup> year. In the highest TUI group, however, 18% had developed high blood pressure while only 10% of the lowest TUI group exceeded normal BP readings. And when researchers adjusted the data to control for factors such as age, race, gender, body mass index and alcohol intake, they found that people with the highest TUI scores were more that *twice* as likely to develop high blood pressure than those with the lowest scores.

Subjects in the higher TUI groups also demonstrated a tendency toward other poor health behaviors such as smoking, drinking, high hostility and a lessening circle of friends. Commenting on this phenomenon, Dr. Daniel Fisher, a cardiologist at New York University Medical Center says, “People need to realize that the risk factors for heart disease often travel together. People running around like crazy are more likely to be living a less than ideal lifestyle. They may be smoking or not eating properly or not getting enough rest or exercise.”

“Studies like this are important because they raise awareness and dealing with stress or TUI early in life may help reduce the risk of catastrophic coronary risk later in life,” Dr. Fisher adds.

Your Employee Assistance Program is a great place to start “reinventing” your outlook on life especially if you match the TUI or Type A profiles! For the sake of your health and happiness, consider giving us a call 24/7 at **800-252-4555**.