

*Peer-Reviewed**Observational study**People*

Mentally tiring work may increase diabetes risk in women

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Women who find their jobs mentally tiring are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, according to a study published in the [European Journal of Endocrinology](#). The study findings suggest that mentally draining work, such as teaching, may increase the risk of diabetes in women. This suggests that employers and women should be more aware of the potential health risks associated with mentally tiring work.

Type 2 diabetes is an increasingly prevalent disease that places a huge burden on patients and society, and can lead to significant health problems including heart attacks, strokes, blindness and kidney failure. Numerous factors can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes including, obesity, diet, exercise, smoking or a family history of the disease. A recent review suggested that work-related stress might be associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in women, but more investigation is needed.

In a French study, Dr Guy Fagherazzi and colleagues from the Centre for Research in Epidemiology and Population Health at Inserm, examined the effect of mentally tiring work on diabetes incidence in over 70,000 women, during a 22-year period. Approximately 75% of the women were in the teaching profession and 24% reported finding their work very mentally tiring at the beginning of the study. The study found that women were 21% more likely to develop type-2 diabetes if they found their jobs mentally tiring at the start of the study. This was independent of typical risk factors including age, physical activity level, dietary habits, smoking status, blood pressure, family history of diabetes and BMI.

Dr Guy Fagherazzi comments, “Although we cannot directly determine what increased diabetes risk in these women, our results indicate it is not due to typical type 2 diabetes risk factors. This finding underscores the importance of considering mental tiredness as a risk factor for diabetes among women.”

Dr Guy Fagherazzi states, “Both mentally tiring work and type 2 diabetes are increasingly prevalent phenomena. What we do know is that support in the workplace has a stronger impact on work-related stress in women than men. Therefore, greater support for women in stressful work environments could help to prevent chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes.”

The team now plans to study how mentally tiring work affects patients with diabetes, including how they manage their treatment, their quality of life and the risks of diabetes-related complications. This research may help to identify new approaches that could help improve the lives of patients living with diabetes.

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1. The study, "[Mentally tiring work and type 2 diabetes in women: a 22-year follow-up study](#)" was published on 13 March 2019.
2. [European Journal of Endocrinology](#) (EJE) is the official clinical journal of the European Society of Endocrinology, publishing high-quality original research and review articles on all aspects of clinical and translational endocrinology from around the globe. *European Journal of Endocrinology* is published by [Bioscientifica](#).
3. At the [European Society of Endocrinology](#) (ESE), we are working together to develop and share the best knowledge in endocrine science and medicine. ESE represents a community of over 20,000 European endocrinologists, enabling us to inform policy makers on health decisions at the highest level through engagement in advocacy efforts across Europe. It is by uniting and representing every part of the endocrine community that we are placed in the best possible position to improve life for the patient.