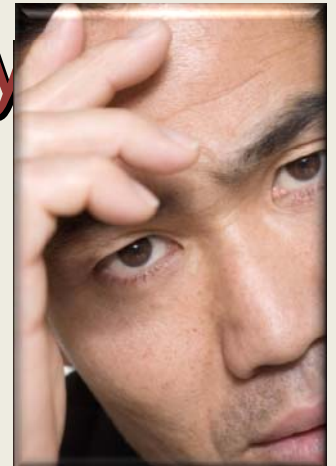




UK National Work-stress Network Annual Conference November 2009

Stress – the 21st Century
Epidemic





No one should leave work
at the end of the day, less
healthy than they were
when they arrived
Work should be health-
enhancing

TUC Vision



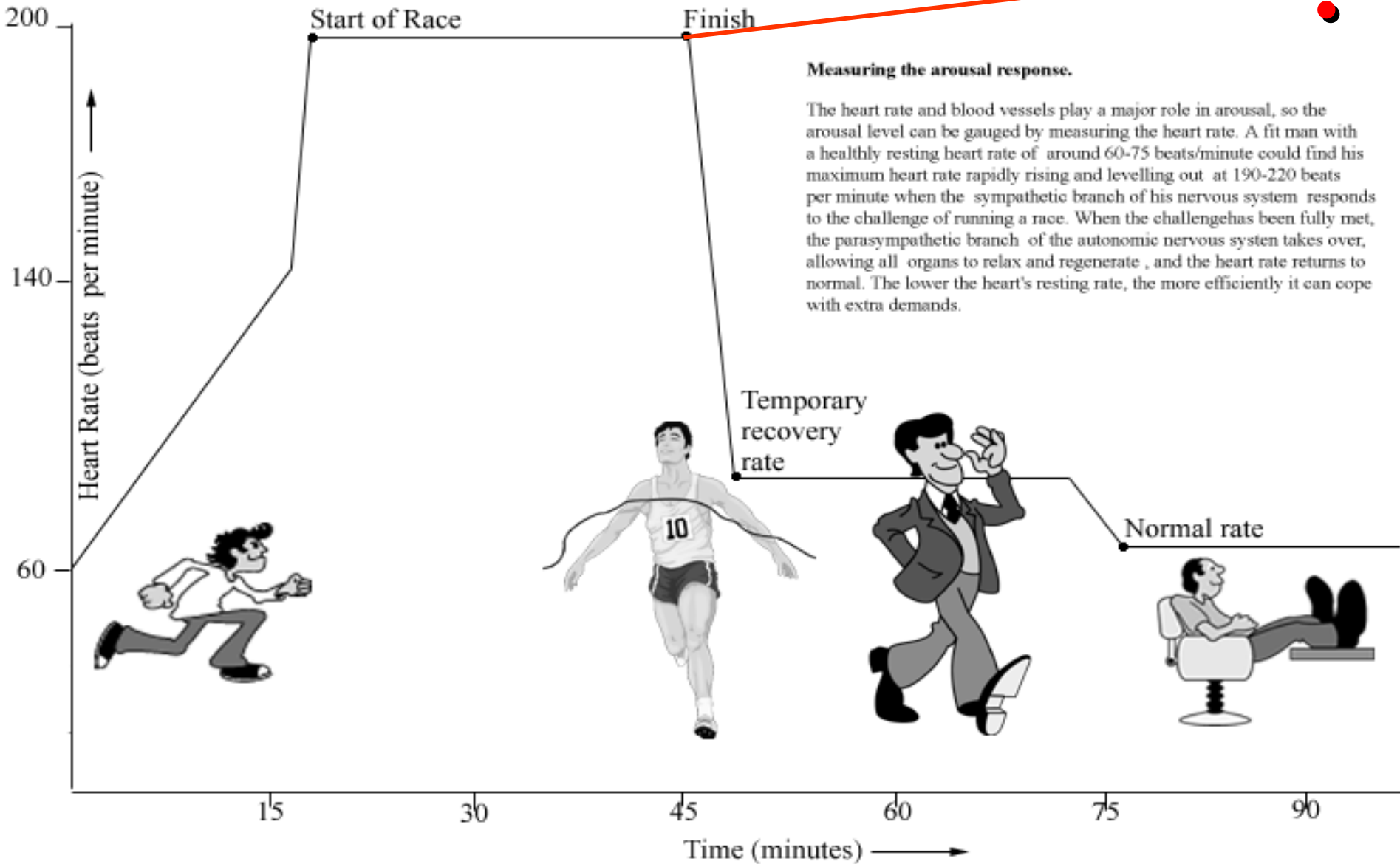
Definition of Stress

HSE definition

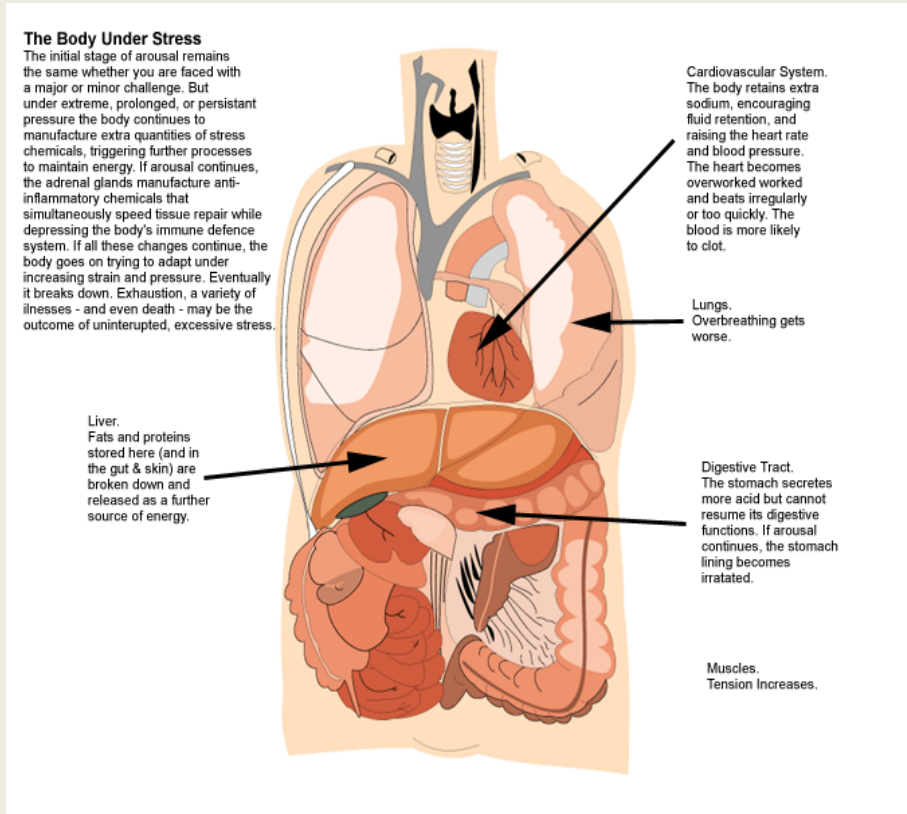
*“the adverse reaction people have to **excessive pressures** or other types of demand placed upon them”*



Who's winning the race?



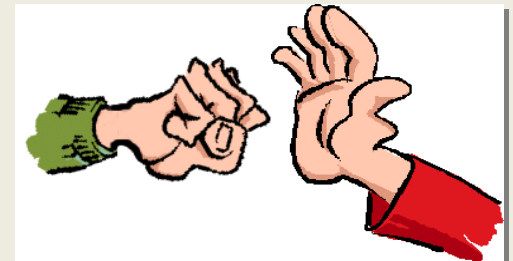
The body under stress...



- No respite? = Excessive hormone output
- **Adrenalin** - Heart rate, muscle tension, breathing
- **Noradrenalin, Cortisol, Thyroxin** – increase blood sugars, energy, quick reactions
- **Endorphins** – natural pain killers
- **Cholesterol** – repairs damaged cells, clotting agents
- Chronic release is harmful, **auto immune system** lowered
- Cardiovascular illnesses, digestive complaints, respiratory problems
- Psychological illnesses, Migraines, PMT, Cancers.....
- **Premature death?**

Pressure can be enjoyable...

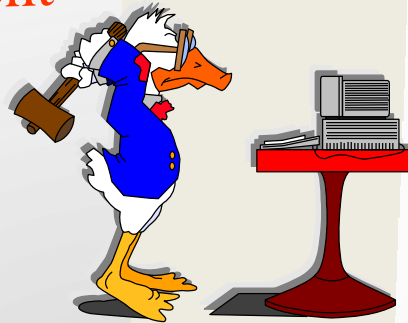
- Proportionate to need
- Action is possible
- Individual capacity is sufficient
- Duration is limited
- Reward is available
- There is no such thing as 'good stress'
- But what happens if pressures are uncontrollable?



What causes stress?

Home effects

Moving House
Mortgage etc
Grief and bereavement
Divorce
Pregnancy & Birth
Teenage troubles
Family stress
In-laws and Parents
And More!



Work effects

Change
Lack of control
Excessive demands
Insufficient information
Job insecurity
Performance pressures
Anxiety and fear
Bullying managers,
colleagues and clients
Boredom
Environmental factors

Recognising stress - here are some symptoms

Behaviour

- Irritability
- Indecision
- Loss of sense of humour
- Feelings of anger
- 'Rushing' from one thing to another
- Withdrawn/ feeling of being victimised
- Feeling unable to cope
- Tearfulness
- Lack of interest in doing things after work
- Constant tiredness

Physical

- Loss of appetite/craving for food under pressure
- Indigestion/heartburn
- Constipation/diarrhoea
- Insomnia
- Tendency to sweat/Nervous habits
- Headaches/Cramps muscle spasms
- Nausea, Breathlessness
- Fainting spells
- Loss of libido
- Eczema
- Cardio-vascular illness and cancers

Do you recognise any of this in yourself or others?

What to do?

- Relax
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Prioritise
- Be assertive
- Take time out
- *Have a laugh!!*



But, coping strategies alone are not the solution

TUC Safety Representative Surveys

Stress Listed	66%	56%	58%	61%	60%
Stress Factors	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
Workload	74%	80%	79%	76%	73%
Staffing Cuts	53%	50%	49%	57%	58%
Change	44%	52%	47%	53%	50%
Long Hours	39%	41%	37%	34%	35%
Bullying	30%	28%	27%	33%	40%

What are the costs of workplace stress?

- CBI 2004 survey of 500 firms, found the average private industry worker took 7.2 days off sick per year.
- Annual incidence of stress-related mental health in 2007, estimated by HSE research at 5,270 cases is almost certainly an underestimate
- Self-reported incidences of depressive illness continue to rise annually as reported by occupational physicians
- 13 million days a year, work-related stress is the biggest occupational cause of lost working days across the economy
- Over half a million individuals in Britain experience work-related stress at levels which make them ill
- Nationally private sector believes sick-leave costs £1.75 billion with the loss of at least 25 million working days in a year.
- *What impact is this having?*
- *What action is being taken to reduce this drain on the workforce and the economy?*

NICE Information November 2009

- NICE advice and data to employers on the need for their vigilance over Stress-related illness
- 13.7 million working days lost each year due to work-related mental health conditions including stress, depression and anxiety which are currently estimated to cost UK employers around £28.3 billion per year at current pay levels.
- By following the recommendations an average organisation of 1000 employees can expect to save an estimated £250 000 a year, due to reduced absenteeism and increased performance.

NICE Information November 2009

NICE recommends employers in organisations of all sizes:

- **Promote** a culture of **participation, equality** and fairness based on open inclusion.
- **Create** an awareness and **understanding of mental wellbeing** reducing the potential for **discrimination** and **stigma** related to mental health problems.
- **Ensure** systems are in place for **assessing and monitoring the mental wellbeing** of employees so that areas for improvement can be identified and risks caused by work and working conditions addressed.
- Where reasonably practicable, provide employees with opportunities for **flexible working** according to their needs and aspirations in both their personal and working lives.
- **Strengthen the role of line managers** in promoting the mental wellbeing of employees through **supportive leadership style and management practices.**

Hazards Campaign estimates of deaths due to Work-Related illness

Up to 50,000 killed by work related illness

- Includes **18,000** by work-related cancer at 12% (8-16%) at least 5,000 due to asbestos cancers
- **Heart Disease – 20%** of deaths work-related due to stress, long hours, shift work = up to **20,000**
- Respiratory Illness -15-20% of obstructive lung disease = about **6,000**
- Other diseases inc. restrictive lung diseases = about **6,000**
- **Giving Total of up to 50,000 per year-**
- HSE headline figs **228** killed by work!! [2007-08]
- **About 100-250 suicides**

HSE and Stress

- 1990s – urgent pleas for HSE Action on Stress
- Mid 1990s formal consultation exercise
- 75%+ said we want ACoP, Regulation, Enforcement and HSE Action
- HSE said “we need more evidence...”
- No action taken – further investigations
- Management Standards introduced November 2004 – 9 years down the line
- Lack of action led to ‘Willing 100’ Campaign encouraging major public and private sector employers to run with them

HSE Stress Management Standards

- **Demand** – including workload, work patterns and environment
- **Control** – how much say a person has in the way they do their work
- **Support** – includes sponsorship, encouragement and resources provided by the organisation and colleagues
- **Relationships** – including with all levels of co-employees, managers etc
- **Role** – relating to all aspects of job requirements
- **Organisational Change** – structural and organisational changes

HSE and Stress

- **Relationships Standard** – deals with how workers and managers inter-relate
- Bullying, harassment etc
- ***Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviours.***
- ***The Standard is that:***
 - employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
 - systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.
- We find that workplace harassment and bullying continues unabated and much general ignorance of the Management Standards

HSE and Stress

- On line assessment tool enables assessment of issues in the workplace
- Traffic Light outcomes identify internal hotspots
- TU Branch internal simple audits
- Raise and H&S Committee
- Joint surveys
- Get everyone on board, and that means **EVERYONE!**

HSE and Stress

- What's in the armoury?
- Inspection – but recent staffing reductions have created problems
- Improvement Notices and Prohibition Notices
- Enforcement on failure to risk assess and to hold specific Stress Policy
- Collective Action by Trades Unions as necessary
- *What will happen with a change of Government?*

Legal Obstacles and Hurdles

- How easy is it to take a case to Employment Tribunal and to Court?
- Unfair, Constructive Dismissals and Discrimination cases in Employment Tribunal
- PI cases are tied to High Court, Appeal Court and Lords' previous judgements

Hatton [et al] Cases [2002]

Among the 16 key point from this case the following a specific hurdles that apply

- Foreseeability of the condition emerging and based on knowledge of the employer about the employee's background health
- Impact of the workload and whether it is abnormally high
- Prior signals from the employee that show vulnerability
- Indications of impending harm must be plainly obvious
- Employer only in breach of duty if he has failed to take any actions
- Assessment of damages will take into account any pre-existing conditions

Barber vs Somerset CC

His absence was certified by his doctor to be due to stress and depression. The senior management team should have made enquiries about his problems and seen what they could do to ease them, in consultation with officials at the Local Council, instead of brushing him off unsympathetically or sympathising but simply telling him to prioritise his work.

The matter to be considered was:-

- whether the onus should be on the employee to alert the employer or whether the employer should be proactive and take steps to prevent injury
- Where no complaint has been made about work pressures, it is likely that a case will fail

Legal Hurdles?

- **Stress case legal challenges are not easy, nor is a positive result a foregone conclusion.**
- **The courts will examine every case for evidence of foreseeability of a clinically defined health condition being created by work actions and demands.**
- **Where there is no such evidence, then cases are unlikely to succeed.**
- **Trade unions and solicitors will often assess the viability of a case, which may lead to disappointment on the part of the client. It is as well, perhaps, to seek further opinion, but be aware that no case is easy to pursue.**

Conclusions

- Stress and Mental Health are **major problems** which need to be tackled
- ALL Directors, Managers and Employers **must** exercise their duty of care to ALL employees
- Responsibility for tackling them is shared – Government, Healthcare Professionals, Directors, Line Managers, Trade Unions, Branch Officials, Employees
- We seek a **Caring Supportive Culture** with **Dignity in the Workplace, backed up by strengthened enforceable sanctions against employers who fail in their duties to protect workers**

Stress – still a killer in the workplace



- Regular E-Newsletters on line
- Information Pack
- Join the Steering Group?
- **Annual Conferences planned for November 2010 and 2011**
 Grateful thanks to NASUWT for its continued support
- Hazards Conference July 2010 Keele University
- EWHN Conference September 2010, Leeds University

www.workstress.net

And finally

In order that people may be happy
in their work, these three things
are needed ...

they must be fit for it;
they must not do too much of it;
and
they must have a sense of success in it.



www.workstress.net