



## Job-Related Health Issues That Affect Employees Working in Pharmaceutical Marketing

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### Abstract

Marketing representatives play a critical role in a pharmaceutical organization in the development and sustainability of their business through helping in selling of products and services. It is not an easy job. The Medical Marketing representative is a high-risk job with immense stress and negative consequences for individuals. It requires more skills, wider knowledge and emotional stability than the other profession. Due to extensive traveling, wandering and waiting time, target issues, work-life balancing problems and lack of job security the medical representative feels exhausted.

In India, the pharmaceutical industry is growing tremendously for the past few years. This industry is highly competitive in nature. It increases the need for the marketing representatives and also their roles and responsibilities simultaneously. The cut-throat competitive scenario in the market increases the pressure of achieving targets to pharmaceutical sales which ultimately induced their job stress and other health issues. So, the pharmacy institution must provide more attention to prevent and reduce the burnout of the marketing representatives, otherwise the institution will lose its reputation.

**Keywords:** occupational risks; pharmaceutical marketing force; road traffic accidents; violence; workplace stress; Burnout; Frustrating; Medical Representatives; Stress and Work-Life Balancing Problems; stress management Violence; Well-being.

### Introduction

The core business of every pharmaceutical company is manufacturing, marketing, and distribution of pharmaceuticals products. But the sales lead of the products is mostly generated by the contribution of marketing representatives. The pharmacy companies are

not directly floating their advertisements on various channels. They have to depend solely on direct sales. Similarly, the pharmacy companies do not target the customer or consumer; rather they target the reference person i.e., the medical practitioner. It is so

because medical representatives are the key personnel employed in promoting their products. (Huda, 2017, p. 51)

Marketing representatives play a critical role in the development and sustainability of their business through the increase in selling of products and services. Pharmaceutical marketing representative profession is a high-risk sector for job stress with negative consequences for individuals. This field is always based on the target-driven performance incentives and involves extensive traveling. The company retains only those who achieve the target and their salary in always depends upon their performance. It increases the stress level of the employee. The nature of work is changing at whirlwind speed. (Prince et al., 2003)

This field is most suitable for aggressive, extrovert, result-oriented persons, who like extensive traveling and meeting people. However, it is not an easy job. The pharmacy industry retains the medical representatives one who achieves the target. If the medical representatives achieve the target the company promotes them, increase salary and allowances. On the other hand, if the medical representatives are not achieving the target the company takes. It increases the stress level of the medical representatives. Apart from that the pressure of achieving targets is

resulting into the work induced stress. The continuous stress leads to the employee burnout. Burnout possesses a threat to the health of workers and in-turn to the health of the organization. The burned employee feels a lack of control over their environment has unclear expectations placed on them and lacks of social support. It reduces the employee's productivities, increases the absenteeism and turnover. (Hemamalini & Vijaya, 2015)

### **Occupational risks**

There are several risks to consider when assessing the job-related health problems associated with the pharmaceutical marketing professionals. The most predominant issues can be categorized as follows: cardiovascular disease; extensive traveling leading to accidents; work induced stress; wandering and waiting time; anxiety due to lack of job security; adjusting family/personal obligations; pressure of achieving targets.

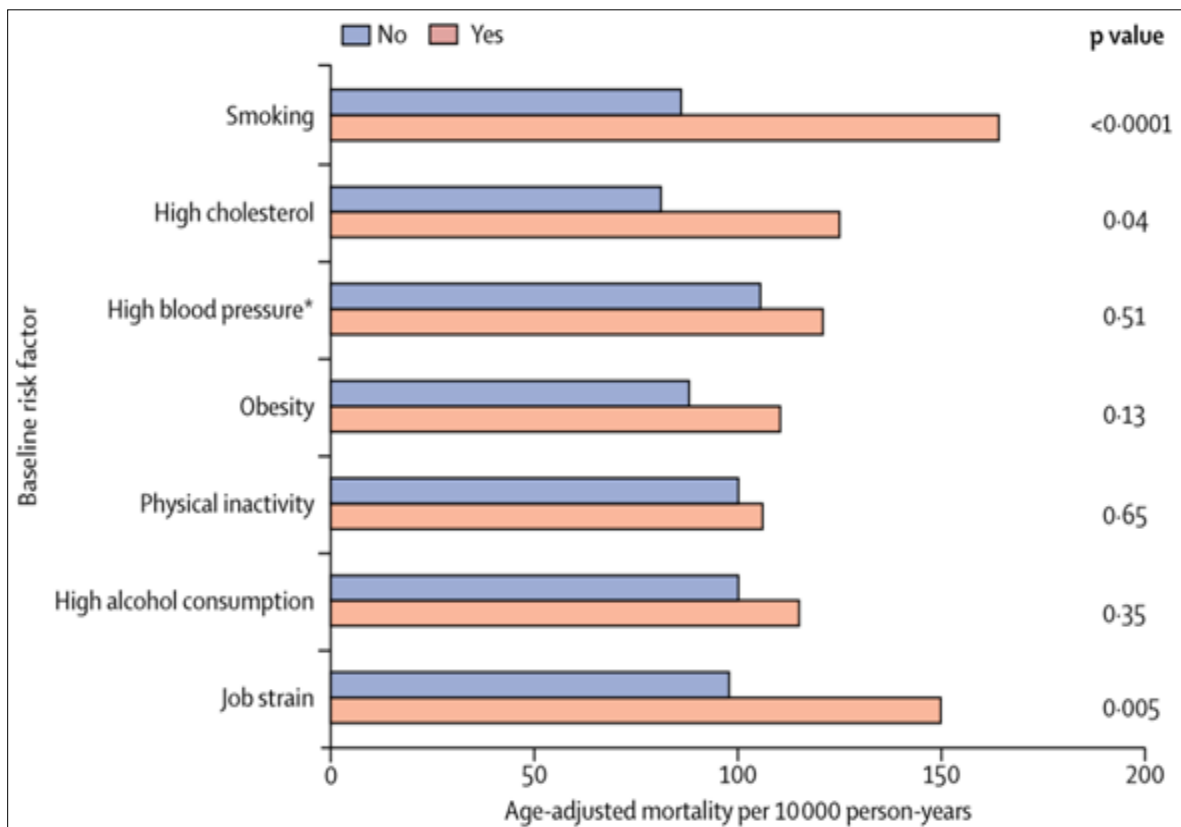
### **Cardiovascular disease**

There is a potential risk of cardiovascular disease in a pharmaceutical marketing job due to the potential for long working hours, high stress levels, and sedentary work environments. (Sugiyama et al., 2020, p. 1)

Long working hours have been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Studies have shown that individuals who work more than 55 hours per week have a higher risk of developing heart disease compared to those who work fewer hours. This is due to a combination of factors, such as increased stress levels, poor diet and exercise habits, and lack of sleep. Chronic stress can lead to the release of hormones such as cortisol, which can increase heart rate and blood pressure. This can put additional strain on the cardiovascular system and

increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Furthermore, long working hours may lead to sedentary behaviour and reduced physical activity, which can also contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease. It is important for individuals to prioritize their physical and mental health and take steps to manage their workload and stress levels in order to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease. (Richards and Rundle, 2011, p. 361)

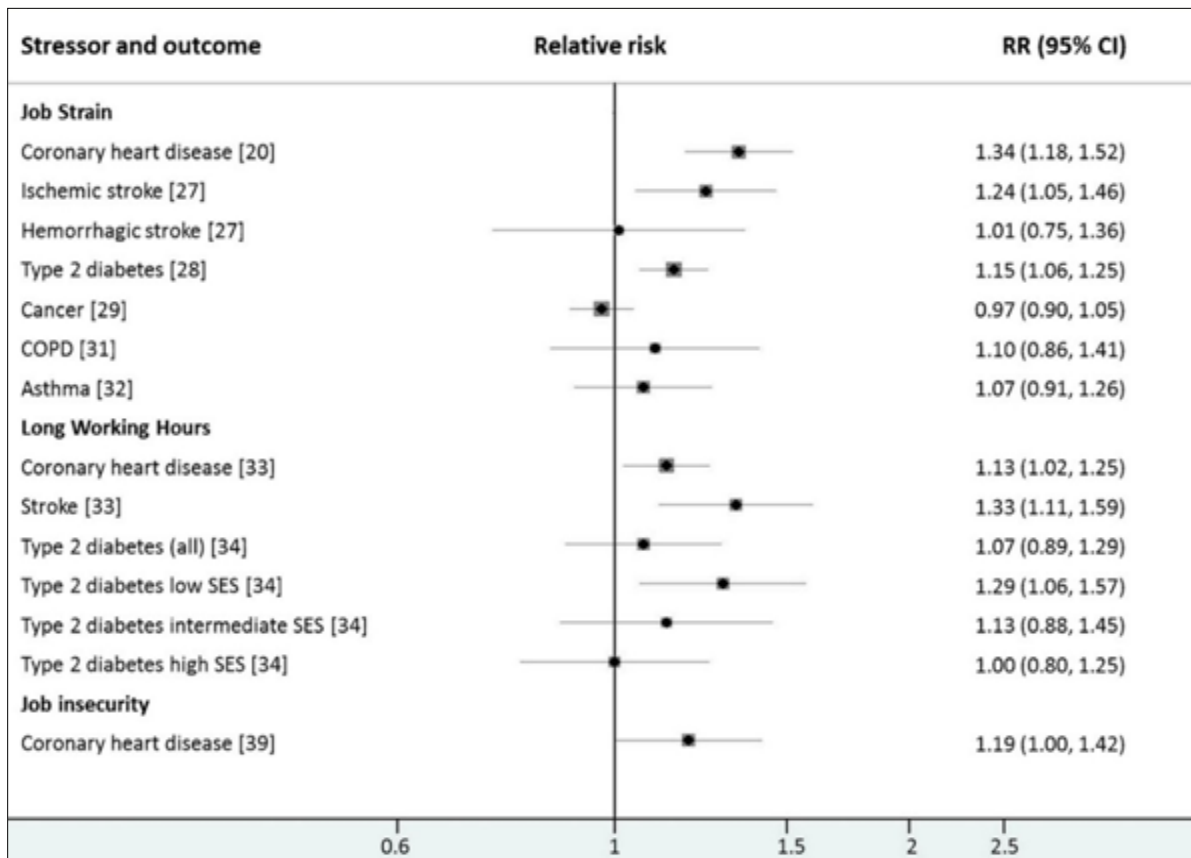


**Figure No.1: Mortality in men with cardiometabolic disease by job strain and lifestyle factors**

Source : (“Work stress and risk of death in men and women with and without cardiometabolic disease: a multicohort study | Elsevier Enhanced Reader”, p. 710)

A sedentary work environment, such as a typical office setting, can contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease. Prolonged periods of sitting can lead to reduced physical activity and increased risk of obesity and other chronic health conditions. In the field of marketing, employees may spend long hours sitting at a desk working on computers, which can lead to a sedentary work environment. To reduce the risk of

cardiovascular disease, it is important for individuals in marketing and other sedentary occupations to incorporate regular physical activity into their daily routine and take breaks to stretch and move throughout the day. Employers can also implement strategies to promote physical activity among their employees, such as providing access to on-site fitness facilities or offering wellness programs. (Sugiyama et al., 2020, p. 1)



**Figure No.2: Associations of work stressors with cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions**

Source: (Kivimäki and Kawachi, 2015, p. 3)

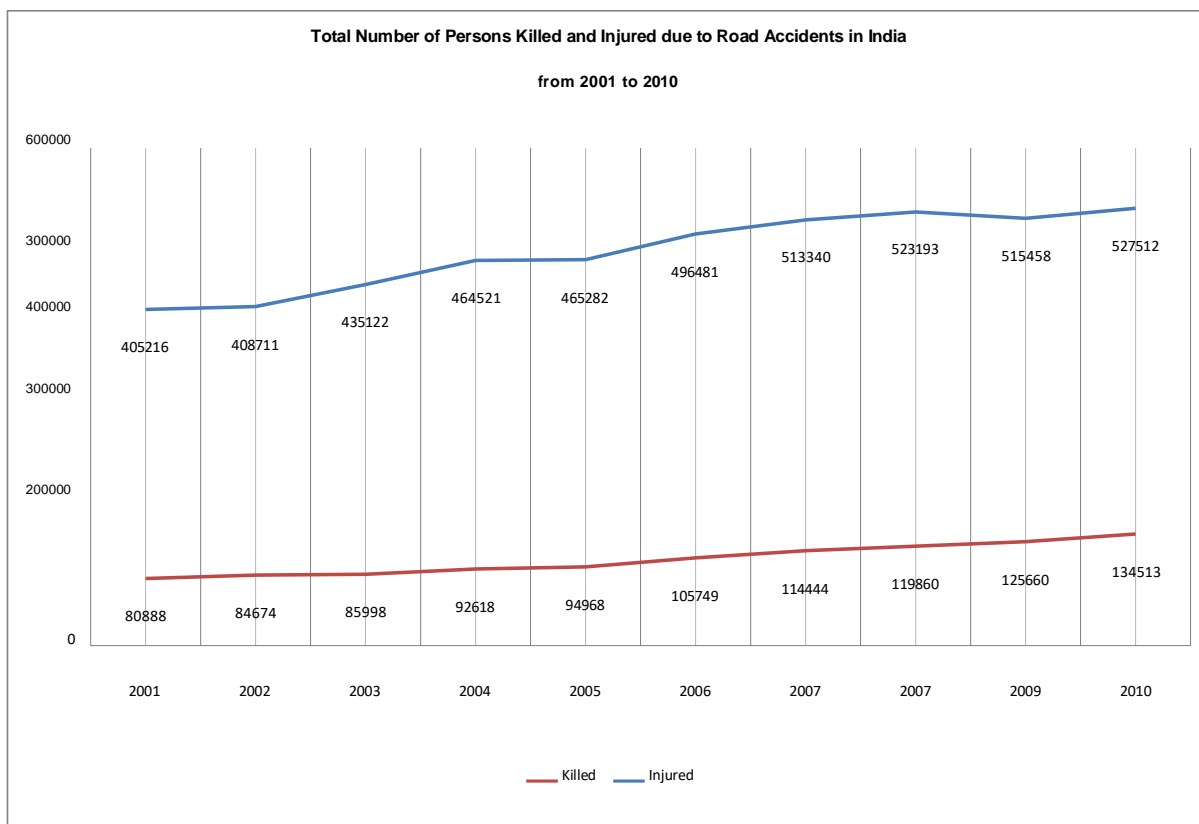
**Extensive travelling & accidents:**

Generally, the medical representatives are travelling from one location to another location. The medical representative spends

on average more than a third of their working day on the road, in normal weather (J and Pandiarajan, 2015, p. 202).

Professional drivers make a significant contribution to road traffic accident statistics at an extraordinary human and financial cost. There is compelling evidence that company car drivers are at increased risk of accidents compared to the general population. One study found company car drivers to be 49% more likely to be involved in an accident. The annual risk of dying in a road accident for drivers who average >25 000 miles per year is 1 in 7000, a figure comparable with coal mining and worse than the construction industry (Harris et al., 2003, p. 379). So how does driver stress affect the health and safety of the professional driver? Greater

traffic congestion and time pressures predicted aggression, irritability, frustration, and negative mood. The acute and chronic nature of daily work strain and driving events leads to heightened psycho-physiological responses. Drivers often experience symptoms of driver stress such as worry, irritation, and anxiety. The cognitive interference model for adverse effects of stress has been formulated from extensive research on test anxiety. (Taylor and Dorn, 2006, p. 375) With repeated exposure to stressful driving contexts over the course of a journey, fatigue symptoms may develop. (Taylor and Dorn, 2006, p. 375)



**Figure No.3. Road accidents fatalities in India**

The reasons for the high accident rate in company drivers are varied. Research indicate

that it was due to strong demands on time, which ultimately affected decision-making

regarding speeding and overtaking. However, some research found that the increased accident liability of company car drivers extended to non-work driving and they concluded that the increased risk was due to 'driving style' rather than increased time pressures. This increased risk varies and is dependent on the type of vehicle and also the purpose for which the vehicle is used. (Harris et al., 2003, p. 379)

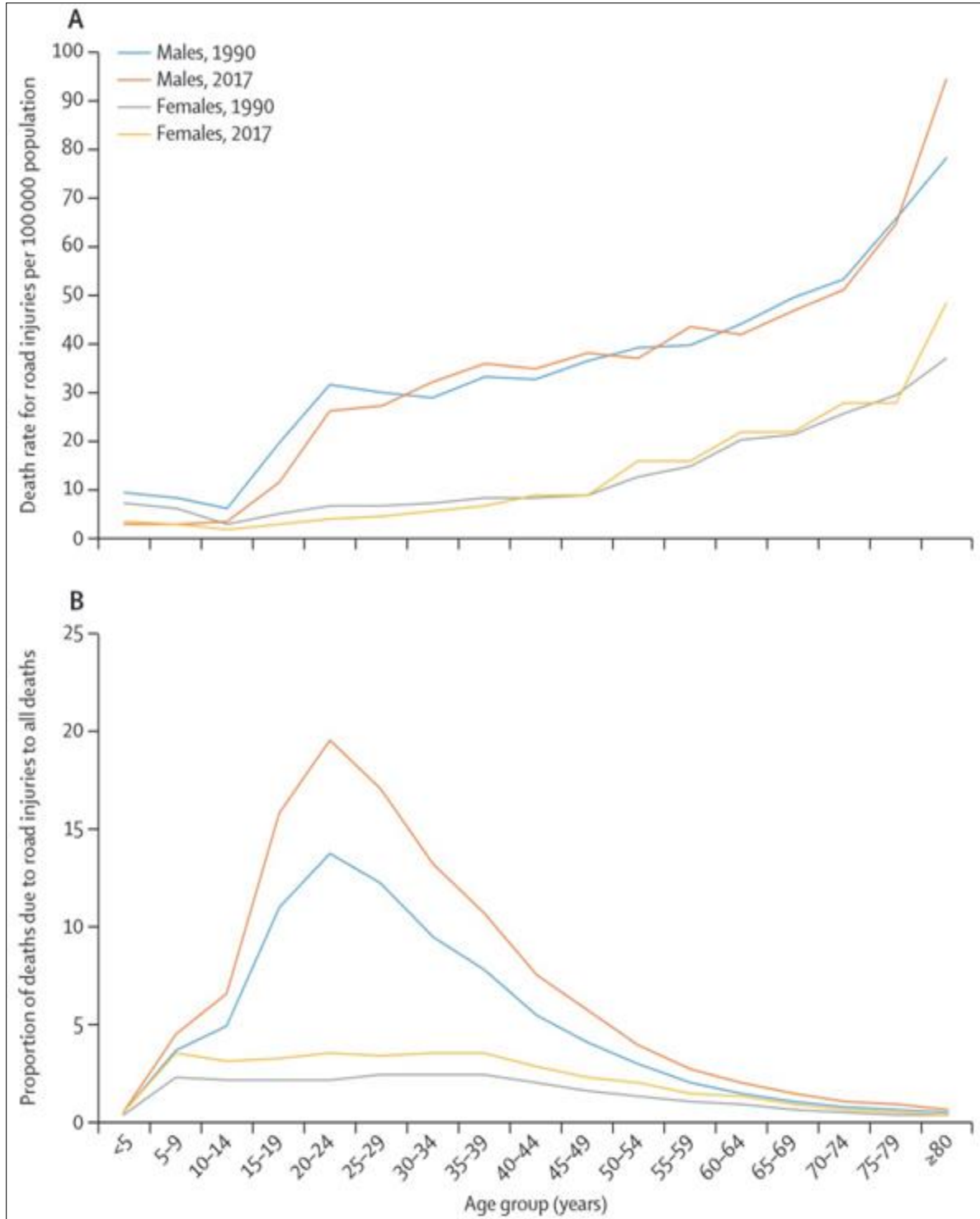
There are specific considerations for how transport issues can affect patients health and quality of life and can contribute to disease, and the effects of specific diseases or symptoms on patients' ability to travel, including impairments that restrict walking and diagnoses preventing driving. (Van Schalkwyk and Mindell, 2018, p. 6)

One study found longer car use to be related to higher risk of cardiovascular disease as a cause of death. Six out of six cases examining relationships of car use duration with obesity related outcomes reported significant detrimental associations. However, car use frequency was associated with obesity outcomes in only one out of four cases. Findings were mixed or null for other cardiovascular disease risk markers (blood glucose, blood lipids, blood pressure and composite risk indices. Studies examining effect modification by gender and age found associations of car use with obesity to be more pronounced in men and working-age adults, relative to women and older adults." (Sugiyama et al., 2020, p. 1)

Business travel may have detrimental health consequences because it increases job strain, defined as an increase in psychological job

demands and a decrease in job decision latitude. Be it because of travel delays or being placed under the schedule of the meeting, conference, or sales appointment the employee travels to, business travel often removes the control of the workday from the employee thus reducing job decision latitude. Job strain has been shown to be significantly associated with cardiovascular disease risk factors such as higher systolic and diastolic blood pressure and cholesterol. Frequent business travel may also cause increased psychological stress. A study by the World Bank found an excess of insurance claims for stress related disorders among travellers, with increasing claims seen with increasing travel. A second World Bank study found that almost 75% of the staff reported high or very high stress related to business travel. Frequent flying and longer trips were associated with higher stress-related effects. Chronic stress appears to be associated with a dietary preference for energy-dense foods and, particularly among men, with weight gain. This suggests another mechanism through which business travel may affect diet and in turn health. (Richards and Rundle, 2011, p. 361)

research suggest that individuals who travel extensively for work are at increased risk for health problems and should be encouraged to monitor their health. The mechanisms through which business travel is associated with health require further investigation so that appropriate occupational health prevention programs may be developed. (Richards & Rundle, 2011)



**Figure No.4: Age-specific death rate for road injuries (A) and the proportion of deaths due to road injuries to total deaths in each age group (B) in India.**

### **Work induced stress**

The pharmaceutical industry is known for its high levels of stress and demanding work environment. This can lead to burnout among employees, which is characterized by feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced effectiveness at work. Burnout can have serious consequences for both physical and mental health, including increased risk of cardiovascular disease, depression, and anxiety. (Tello et al., 2022)

The Medical Sales representative profession is a high-risk sector for job stress with negative consequences for individuals. This field is always based on the target-driven performance incentives and involves extensive traveling. The company retains only those who achieve the target and their salary in always depends upon their performance. (Tello et al., 2022)

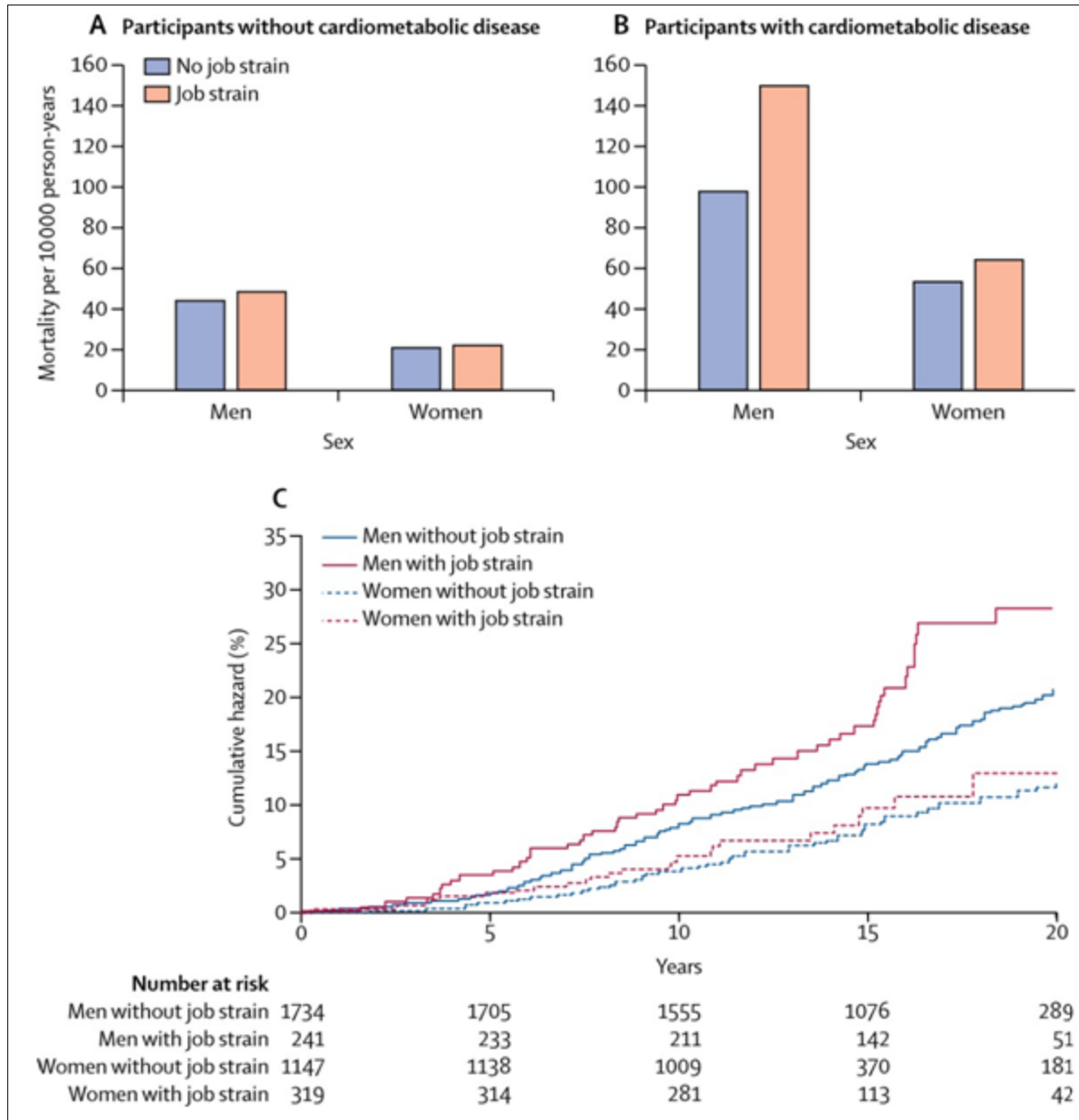
In most of the time medical representatives are unable to achieve the target. It increases the stress level of the medical representatives. Apart from that the pressure of achieving targets is resulting into the work induced stress. (J and Pandiarajan, 2015, p. 198)

one study found that organization can reduce role conflict & role ambiguity by adopting a specific role strategy and the expectations of the medical marketing representatives to be

compared with their actual roles job profile and working hours need to be considered in the context of the well-being of the medical representatives. Pharmaceutical Companies are a typical marketing industry dealing with mainly medical professionals, for marketing different pharmaceutical products companies require more and more skilled competent representatives to develop good rapport with their direct customer. The workplace for medical representatives has become a high stress environment in many organizations cutting across industries. Hence it was felt pertinent to study the effect of stress among medical representatives in Coimbatore city, Tamilnadu, India (KALYANASUNDARAM, 2019, p. 1)

The influence of work-related stress on employee health, job satisfaction, performance, and turnover are potential problems for all employees, but its effects are particularly damaging to an organization when managers are involved. Unmanaged stress can produce a set of dysfunctional outcomes including physical problems (e.g., high blood pressure and ulcers), psychological problems (e.g., depression and job dissatisfaction), and behavioural problems (e.g., absenteeism, low performance, and increased turnover). (Howell et al., 1987)





**Figure No.5: Job strain and age-adjusted mortality Job strain and mortality in participants without (A) and with cardiometabolic disease (B) at baseline**

According to Banu et al. (2015), Workplaces that help worker prospering and grant with timing for expert recovery are key for building a reasonable workforce where specialists don't turn out to be isolated and ill suited. Not the least bit like "involved" experts who show work energy, union,

responsibility, and an impression of sensibility, "separated" workers will commonly be drained (every so often, mentally, and inside), cynical (concerning fundamental method for managing acting). in places, the managers, and co-workers), and a misfortune of credibility (not feeling like their

work or their undertakings).” (Tello et al., 2022, p. 875)

Job satisfaction and its relationship to work stress has been examined in a number of studies . The linkage of role stress and job satisfaction has also been investigated in a number of marketing studies involving industrial sales people . Recent research has found that work stress increases and job satisfaction decreases dramatically at the middle management level when compared with either lower positions within the

organization or with top management. One reason suggested for this is middle managers’ greater responsibility for dealing with “people problems.” This is relevant particularly to middle managers in marketing. They not only deal with people inside the organization but also must be concerned with customers outside the organization. This job characteristic adds a unique stress producer to marketing jobs. Certain characteristics such as high” (Howell et al., 1987, p. 71).

**Table.01. Opinion about the Workplace Stress in Medical Representatives**

Sl. No.	Emotional Demands	Always		Often		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		Mean	Std. Dev.
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1	My work put me in emotionally disturbing situations	21	9.3	91	40.4	21	9.3	76	33.8	16	7.1	2.89	1.181
2	My work demands emotional control	19	8.4	102	45.3	88	39.1	12	5.3	4	1.8	2.47	0.796
3	I have emotional involvement in my work	25	11.1	71	31.6	94	41.8	14	6.2	21	9.3	2.71	1.057
4	My work bar my fair opinion	26	11.6	75	33.3	37	16.4	75	33.3	12	5.3	2.88	1.154
5	I have a constraint to hide my feelings	23	10.2	31	13.8	144	64.0	13	5.8	14	6.2	2.84	0.912

**Wandering and waiting**

In the pharmaceutical industry selling through a sales force is an approved, governed and widely accepted undisputed means of pharmaceutical marketing adopted by all the pharmaceutical companies and major national markets. Despite the growing use of new technologies like e-detailing being introduced in the pharmaceutical industry, personal selling remains a core activity. (Gupta & Pangal, n.d.) performing critical tasks to maintain the leads in the sale such as .Making regular visits to

assigned physicians. Developing a good relationship with physicians, targeting physicians well, all these works require lot of Wandering and waiting. The relationship of Sales executives with physician is of prime importance. It's important the sales representative builds a good rapport with his doctors. There are medical representatives who doctors find friendly and treat them well while there are also others whom doctors do not entertain much and worst are also insulted, they are asked to leave samples with the receptionist causing a major loss to the

company. This in turn causes frustration to the medical representative too. This in turn have a negative impact on mental health of the marketing professionals as well. (Kalyanasundaram, 2019)

#### **Anxiety due to job insecurity:**

Sales and marketing representatives in the pharmaceutical industry are extremely liable to attain their target sales allotted to them within the stipulated time. They are play various roles in their job such as coverage of wide geographical sales, communicate medicine information, attracting target customers, explaining details of medicine and on time delivery of medicines. Employees might lose their job if these goals aren't met. Hence, they must have adequate knowledge about the latest medicines and its usage. As the role of the pharmaceutical sales representatives are not end with marketing of medicines, they are also play a vital role in the promoting the business of a company which they concerned. (Impact of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among the Pharmaceutical Sales Representatives, n.d.)

The present study identified that the factors influencing job stress among the sales representatives in pharmaceutical industry such as job nature, work relationships, roles and responsibilities, lack of career development, and organizational structure and climate. Hence, the results also identified that job stress decrease the job satisfaction of sales representatives. ("Impact of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among the Pharmaceutical Sales Representatives", p. 3762)

Job satisfaction is very important in that its absence often leads to lethargy and reduced organizational commitment. Lack of job satisfaction is a predictor of quitting a job). Satisfaction on a job might be motivated by the nature of the job, its pervasive social climate and extent to which workers peculiar needs are met. Working conditions that are similar to local and international standard and extent to which they resemble work conditions of other professions in the locality. Other inclusions are

the availability of power and status, pay satisfaction, promotion opportunities and task clarity. If any employee is not being motivated by the factors, quitting tendency is observed" (Alam, 2012, p. 127)

job satisfaction is a regulating factor for job stress. During the no-classical period (1920-1950), theories supported the fact that job satisfaction of employees directly affected employees' productivity. They believed that there was a cause-effect relationship between satisfaction and productivity. Job stress is a harmful physical and emotional response that happens when the job requirements mismatch with the capabilities or needs of the employees (U.S., 1999). Hence, unclear job assignments, lack of promotion, lack of training, job insecurity are also creating stressful condition. The working atmosphere of sales representatives is high stress-based environment in many pharmaceutical companies (Priya Kalyanasundaram, 2017). Sales representatives are facing high level of stress due to various job-related factors such as heavy workload, tight deadline, mobility nature of work, unattainable targets, long working hours and work pressure. High level of job stress leads to job dissatisfaction among the sales representatives (Impact of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among the Pharmaceutical Sales Representatives", p. 3759)

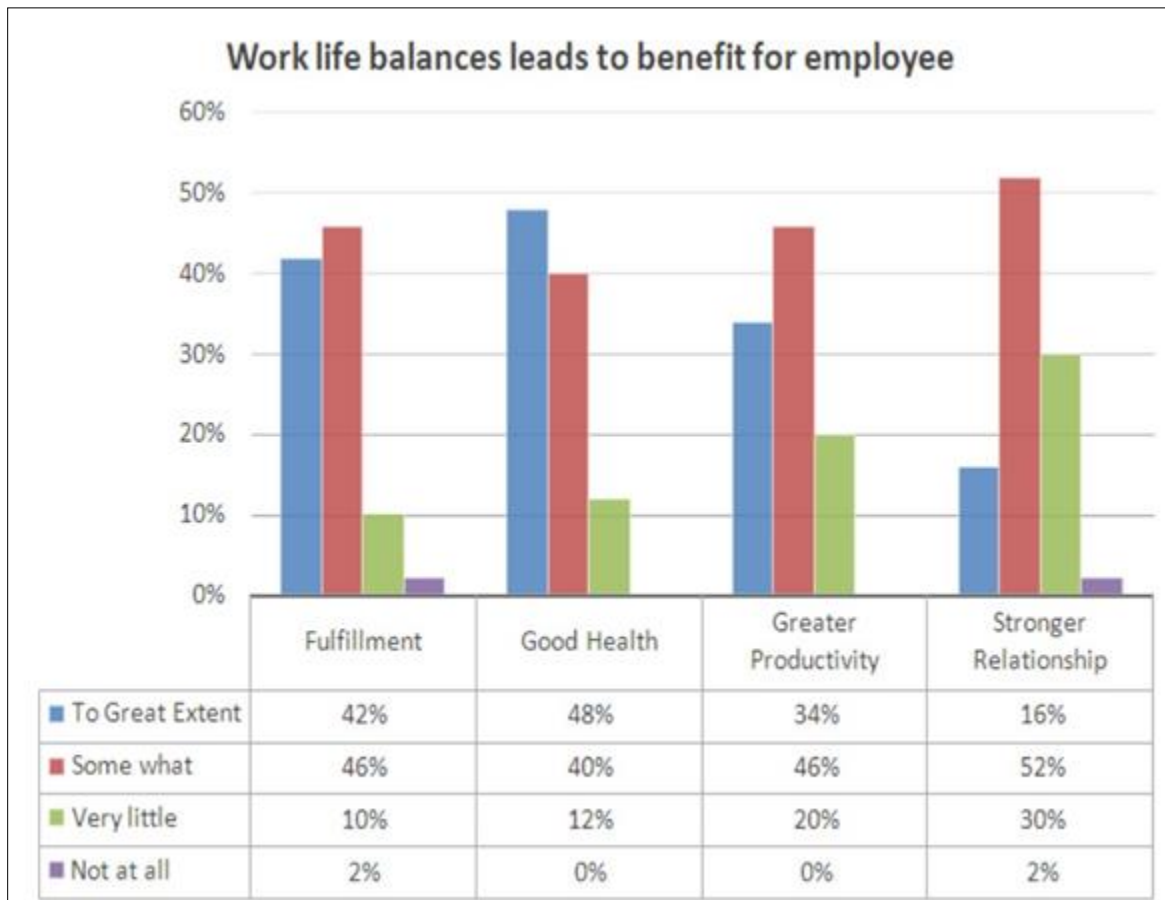
#### **Mental Health & work life balance:**

Work life, while maybe not sensibly balanced, prompts a level of physical and mental stressors, like smartness, agitating, fear, low strength, feebleness to rest, nonappearance of rest, making you considerably more introduced to various issues, different psychosomatic issues, burnout, low feasibility, high expert turnover, security possibilities, extended separate from cases, hypertension, ulcers, cerebral anguish and different psychosomatic issues. (Tello et al., 2022, p. 874)

In the current globalized era, an increasing number of firms in the services sector require

employees to work longer, frequently interact with customers and work across varied time zones. This has resulted in dilation of the boundary between work and family. This review explores the meaning, antecedents, consequences and moderators of work - family balance from conflict as well as enrichment perspectives. Further, the paper discusses the role of turn over intentions which have given

mixed results in different settings. The review also focuses on the role of individuals' personality dimensions such as core self-evaluation which are yet to gain prominence in work-family studies but are important enough to invite further research. The paper finally suggests the development of an integrated framework to understand the concept of work - family balance. (Jain & K. Nair, 2013)



**Figure No.6: Work-life balance leads to benefit for employee.**

Keeping a work-life balance isn't as particularly key as it shows up. In the corporate world, change is unavoidably certain. The impact of globalization has moreover propped these changes. The corporate world is the exemplification of deficiencies, piles of liabilities, and long

working hours. These advancements in the environment upset the balance between the home and work-life of the trained professionals. The rising test and mentioning of the overall people have also disturbed the situation. Everything adds up to the burnout. (Tello et al., 2022, p. 874)

Quality of work life is a commitment of an organization to improve the working condition and wellbeing of their employees. Existing studies found a strong correlation between QWL and organizational productivity and employee's job satisfaction (Huda, 2017, p. 47)

All the relevant studies have found that the combination of paid work with the responsibilities of being a principal carer exacerbates reported time pressure, and it is women with young children who are the most likely section of the population to complain that they have simply "no time" for themselves (Daly, 1996; Menzies, 2005; Shaw et al., 2003). It should be noted, however, that in the UK and The Netherlands, Cousins and Tang (2004) have found that men are more likely than women to complain about work-family conflict (which is different than, and not necessarily related to, time pressure). (Roberts, 2007, p. 6)

### **Conclusion**

There are many potential occupational health issues associated with being a member of the marketing representative in a pharmaceutical industry, including the following:

- Cardiovascular disease, due to sedentary work environments and potential for long working hours.
- Extensive long travelling time among the pharmaceutical marketing representatives

lead to increased risk of road accidents and cardiovascular diseases.

- The pharmaceutical marketing profession is a high-risk job with immense stress with lot of negative consequences on health.
- Large time is wasted in wondering and waiting. This can lead to frustration and feelings of isolation.
- Companies generally measure performance on specific metrics. employees might lose their job if these goals aren't met. so, there is a lack of job security.
- Work-life balance has become a major issue in marketing job resulting in a situation of conflict in home as well as workplaces.

### **Result**

In order to prevent or mitigate these potential health issues, it is important for employees working in pharmaceutical marketing to take a proactive approach to their health and well-being. This may include practicing stress-management techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, and exercise, to help reduce the effects of stress and burnout. Incorporating regular physical activity into the daily routine can help to combat the effects of a sedentary lifestyle, and employees should make an effort to get enough sleep each night in order to avoid the negative consequences of sleep deprivation.

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