

national

Stress could kill you

Doctor warns to relax

United Press International
MILWAUKEE — The car had a flat tire. You were late for work. The bank just called to say you are \$152.10 overdrawn in your checking account.

Those daily pressures could be killing you. Overreacting to such stress could make you a prime candi-

date for illness or sudden death, says Dr. Robert S. Eliot, the man one medical journal calls the "high priest of stress management."

He has been there. At age 44, Eliot suffered a heart attack. It came while he was in the middle of a lecture on how to prevent heart attacks.

He has since made a complete recovery, but the trauma made him rethink his own life. He is now a consultant to various governments and top business firms as well as chairman of the Department of Preventive and Stress Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center at Omaha.

Stress is the disease of the 1980s and research indicates it is probably a strong contributor to a wide range of illnesses, he said while in Milwaukee recently.

It apparently depends on whether people are hot or cold reactors, he said.

Take being a city editor for a daily newspaper — "one of the hottest jobs we tested." On the outside, the editor is cool and unruffled, handling one problem after another. Inside, the stress is causing his body to go bananas, Eliot said.

"His heart is working as hard as if he were running up three flights of stairs," he said. "His blood pressure is up. The resistance against his pumping heart has tripled. It is like driving 55 miles per hour with the brakes on."

Awareness of stress is one way to protect yourself, Eliot said. "If you are a 'hot reactor,' you must recognize that you can be productive without being self-destructive," he said.

Eliot said there are an estimated 40 million Americans who have high blood pressure, and stress is probably a precipitating and sustaining factor.

Russian researchers told Eliot they feel there is more stress in the world today than ever before.

Instant communication, the nuclear potential for energy or war, international economics and changing social roles may be causing "circuit overloads" for many people, Eliot said.

Women have had the most trouble the past 15 years, he said, "especially the wife of a blue collar worker."

He explained: "She entered the work force to help pay the bills. She has to work, and has two or three children and an un-supportive boss. She faces three times the risk of sudden death as another woman her same age."

"If she loses a close friend or parent, the risk becomes seven times what it would be."

However, the doctor said, he is optimistic the United States is ahead of the rest of the world in recognizing the dangers of stress, and Americans are pragmatic enough to do something about it.

Eliot tells his patients and audience to stop smoking, start a regular exercise program, drink moderately and watch their diets.

But the key is still attitude, he said.

"Ask yourself if it is so important to you that it is worth dying for," he said.

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Surgeon praises drug

United Press International
SEABROOK ISLAND, S.C. — A California surgeon credits a drug discovered in Switzerland for the dramatic turnaround in the success of combined heart-lung transplants.

Dr. Bruce A. Reitz, lead surgeon of the Stanford University transplant team, predicted a slow increase in the bold triple-organ operations for people dying of both heart and lung disease.

The Stanford team, which also has led the world in transplanting hearts, has performed six heart and lung transplants since last March. Four patients are doing well, one died and the sixth is in stable condition after receiving a new heart and two lungs last Wednesday.

Only three heart and lung transplants had been attempted earlier around the world and the longest survivor lived 23 days.

Reitz said the drug cyclosporin A is responsible for the new success. The drug suppresses one key segment of the body's immune system and keeps natural body defenses from rejecting the foreign organs.

He said the drug does not knock out all the body's defenses against disease as some earlier agents did, so the possibility of infection is much less and the ability of the wound to heal is not hindered.

Cyclosporin A was discovered in 1976 by a Swiss pharmacologist. It is produced from a fungus and Reitz said the big problem now is there is not enough of the drug available to all the transplant surgeons who want to try it.