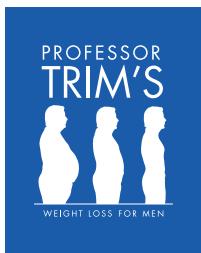


Worker's bellies could be lowering your company's bottom line

...and it's not just from over-eating the canteen food!



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The nation's bellies have reached alarming proportions, with more than 60% of working men now being classified as overweight or obese. While this has been a source of mirth in the past, new research from a number of different fields show it now needs to be taken more seriously - before it affects the nation's corporate bottom line in increased costs of absenteeism¹, lost productivity², accidents and injury³ and costs of stress anxiety and depression⁴.

The costs of obesity in the workplace have been difficult to gauge until now. But recent data show an 8-10% increase in absenteeism, up to 10-fold increased risk for traumatic workplace injury, greater risks for stress and associated metabolic diseases, and the dangers and costs of depression with excessive body fat. This all points to a high, but avoidable, workplace expense which could make a fat worker 10% more costly than a lean one.

Absenteeism and loss of productivity, particularly because of daytime sleepiness caused by sleep apnea at night, have been the big workplace health costs. In some countries (ie. Canada) this has even led to heavy-duty equipment operators being refused licences because of increased accident risk. Now, recent work with workers in the UK over 14 years shows that stressed workers have a higher rate of a combination of disorders known as the

metabolic syndrome (high blood fats, sugars and blood pressure), and that the overweight and obese have even higher rates. Researchers at the University of Columbia have found that obesity and depression are also related and this increases the risk of heart disease and heart attack on the job.



Despite the importance of weight management, there are still few effective ways of coping with this in the workplace. GutBusters (now Professor Trim's), the world's first and an Australian owned company, has been one of the few organisations to have success in large national and international organisations like BP and BHP. Programs aimed at long-term weight loss and workplace health improvement are now available in customised form.

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