

Night Owls and the Risk of Stroke: Why Does Staying Up Late Harm Your Heart?

Staying up late increases the risk of stroke and cardiovascular disease by 16%. Much of this risk stems from smoking, eating late at night, and lack of sleep. People who stay up late need to proactively change their lifestyles to protect their hearts.

The latest study of 322,000 adults has confirmed that night owls have poorer cardiovascular health and face a significantly higher risk of death from cardiovascular events compared to early risers.

1. Scientific evidence from massive data banks.



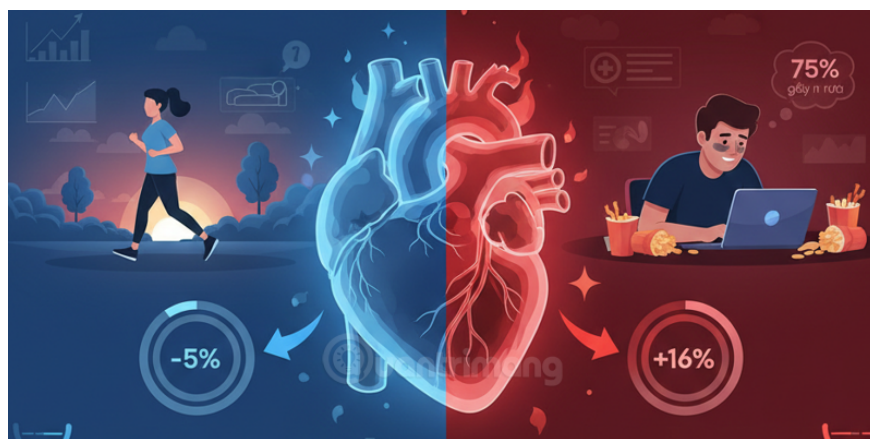
A groundbreaking study recently published in *the Journal of the American Heart Association (JAHA)* analyzed data from **the UK Biobank**. Researchers tracked over **322,000 people** (aged 39–74) for nearly **14 years** to

understand their "chronotype"—their natural sleep patterns.

The results show that:

1. **Health risks:** True "night owls" have a **16%** higher risk of heart attack or stroke compared to those with neutral hours.
2. **Poor health indicators:** The group that stayed up late was **79%** more likely to score low on overall cardiovascular health (according to *the Life's Essential 8*- point scale) .
3. **Gender difference:** Notably, women who stay up late tend to experience stronger negative effects than men.

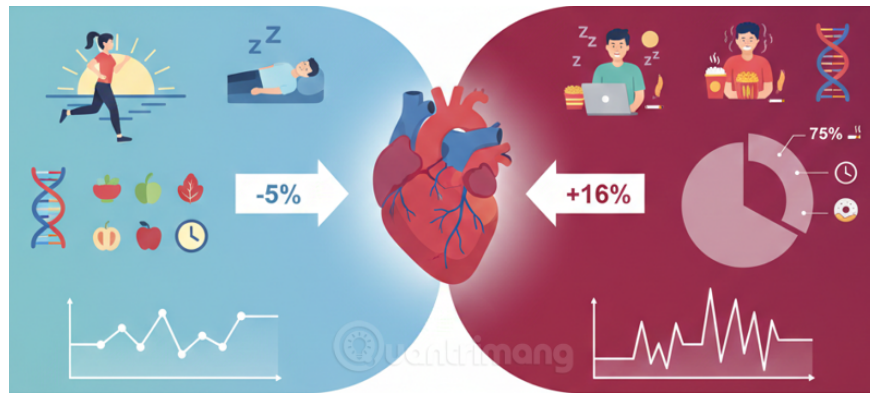
2. Lifestyle: The real "culprit" accounting for 75% of the risk.



Upon further analysis, scientists discovered that staying up late doesn't directly "kill" the heart; rather, it's the habits formed from staying up late that are the root cause. Approximately **75% of cardiovascular risk** in people who stay up late is explained by:

1. **Nicotine use (34%):** "Night owls" tend to smoke more to stay awake.
2. **Poor sleep quality (14%):** Going to bed late is often accompanied by shallow sleep and fragmented sleep.
3. **Blood sugar disorders (12%):** Eating at night puts pressure on insulin metabolism.
4. **Diet and obesity (22%):** The habit of skipping breakfast but consuming excess calories at night leads to a high BMI.

3. Biological nature: When genes are "out of sync" with society.



Staying up late isn't just a preference; it's in your **genetic code** . There are hundreds of genetic variations that control your 24-hour circadian rhythm.

The phenomenon of "Social Jet Lag"

This is a conflict between the body's internal biological clock and the societal work schedule.

1. **Stress hormones:** In people who stay up late, **cortisol** levels (the hormone that wakes the body) rise later in the morning, causing them to feel tired at the start of the day.
2. **Nighttime blood pressure:** Normally, blood pressure decreases during sleep. However, in "night owls," the "fight-or-flight" system is overactive, causing blood pressure to remain high throughout the night, damaging blood vessels over time.

Molecular metabolic disorders

These "clock genes" also control how the body breaks down fats and sugars. Disruptions to the circadian rhythm lead to increased **triglycerides** (a type of blood fat) and cause insulin resistance, creating conditions for atherosclerotic plaques to build up on artery walls.

4. Solution: Reversing the risks for night owls

If you're genetically a night owl, you don't necessarily have to develop heart disease. The key lies in **proactively managing lifestyle factors** .

1. **Strict sleep hygiene:** Try to maintain a consistent bedtime as much as possible, and avoid strong blue light for an hour before bedtime.
2. **Eliminate nicotine and snacking:** Absolutely no smoking and minimize snacking after 10 PM.
3. **Compensatory exercise:** Increase physical activity during the day to help the body relieve oxidative stress.
4. **Regular check-ups:** Regularly monitor blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels to intervene with medication if necessary.

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