

Men More Prone to Maladies When Mad

If you're a male who has trouble controlling your temper, you might find yourself in the hospital the next time you get angry. After interviewing people who had been seriously injured, a University of Missouri-Columbia researcher has discovered that anger can increase the chances of an injury significantly, especially for men.

The study is being published in the January/February 2006 issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

A research team led by Dr. Dan Vinson, a professor of family and community medicine, interviewed people who had been injured and asked them to describe their emotions 24 hours before the injury and then the moment before the injury occurred. Patients described themselves using different words such as: excited, alert, irritable, angry and hostile. Vinson found that greater degrees of anger were associated with greater risk.

"What we found is that people who describe themselves as feeling 'irritable' have a 30 percent increased risk for getting injured, while those who are feeling hostile are doubling the risk of injury," Vinson said. "What was surprising was that anger was not associated with any kind of traffic accident. We were only able to find a correlation between anger and sports injuries and assaults."

Vinson said the lack of correlation between anger and traffic injuries meant that even though people may get angry when they drive, their deliberate actions do not cause traffic accidents. An earlier study in Finland also came to the same conclusion.

The MU researcher did find that, compared to women, men were much more likely to injure themselves if they were angry. If men described themselves as being hostile, angry or mad at themselves, their risk of injury doubled. Vinson estimated that at least 10 percent of emergency room cases could be avoided if people did not take action when they were angry.

"If you're feeling really angry, it could start you on a downward spiral and will increase your probability of getting hurt, sometimes drastically," Vinson said. "We live in a very angry society and this information suggests that the risk of injury will grow. It's important that doctors begin to recognize when their patients have injured themselves because of anger and start mentoring them on how to manage their anger better."

Source: University of Missouri

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