**Health alert for stressed teenagers: Youngsters who suffer condition found to be far more likely to have high blood pressure in later life**

* **Stressed teens have 40% heightened risk of high blood pressure as adults**
* **Experts looked at the records of 1.5m men conscripted to Swedish army**
* **Study suggests that susceptibility to stress is linked to blood pressure problems even when weight or family medical history is taken into account**

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Teenagers who become stressed easily are more likely to suffer high blood pressure in later life, medics have found.

Those who are the most susceptible to stress and anxiety at the age of 18 have a 40 per cent heightened risk of blood pressure problems by the time they are middle aged.

Experts looked at the records of 1.5million men, gathered when they were conscripted to the Swedish army at the age of 18.

The study, published in the British journal Heart, suggests that susceptibility to stress is linked to blood pressure problems even when weight or family medical history is taken into account.

None of the conscripts had high blood pressure when they began their stint in the military, but each was assessed by trained psychologists for their levels of stress resilience as part of their application process.

Stress resilience was measured by an interview, lasting 20 to 30 minutes, and designed to find out how well the conscript would cope with the psychological demands of military service, including armed combat.

Between 1969 and 2012, some 93,000 of the conscripts were diagnosed with high blood pressure.

The average age of the men at the end of the monitoring period was 47, and the average age at diagnosis was 49.

Men who scored in the bottom 20 per cent of stress resilience had a 40 per cent increased risk of the high blood pressure than those with in the highest 20 per cent of stress resilience

Compared with men of normal weight and high stress resilience scores in their youth, those who achieved low scores and who had a high weight at the age of 18 were more than three times as likely to have high blood pressure in later life.

The authors, from the Stanford University in the US and Lund University in Sweden, wrote: ‘If confirmed, this knowledge may help inform more effective prevention interventions by addressing psychosocial risk factors and stress management across the lifespan.’

It is estimated that one in four adults in England have high blood pressure.

It can increase a person's risk of heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease, stroke or dementia.

While previous research has linked elevated stress levels to high blood pressure, it is thought that this is the first study to link low stress resilience in early adulthood to hypertension in later life.