Stressed-out teenagers risk future health

**Researchers looked at data on 1.5 million young men conscripted into the Swedish military at age 18**

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**Researchers looked at data on 1.5 million young men conscripted into the Swedish military at age 18** Image Source/Corbis

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Teenagers who suffer from stress are 40 per cent more likely to have high blood pressure by the time they reach their late 40s than their relaxed peers.

The increased risk of future high blood pressure rises to 250 per cent for stressed teenagers who are also overweight, according to the study.

Researchers looked at data on 1.5 million young men conscripted into the Swedish military at age 18 — 97 per cent of the male population between 1969 and 1997 — tracking them until 2012.

Conscripts were assessed by psychologists as part of a two-day medical, with scores between one and nine on the stress resilience scale.

None had had high blood pressure diagnosed when they joined the military. Those who scored in the bottom fifth on stress resilience tests when first assessed were 40 per cent more likely to have high blood pressure diagnosed by the study’s end, at an average age of 49.

The study is the first to link low stress resilience in early adulthood with the risk of high blood pressure in later life.

Experts believe that complex mechanisms link low stress resilience and the development of high blood pressure.

Theories include exaggerated blood pressure responses to stressful situations causing damage to arteries over time. The study is published today in the journal [*Heart*](http://heart.bmj.com/).