Stress Research Institute
— a knowledge center in the area of stress, sleep and health
Stress Research Institute

"The developments in society over the past 20 years has meant a significant change in the work environment with high demands on individual responsibility, expectations of constant accessibility, flexible work-hours and fuzzy borders between work and private time. The result has been a significant increase of stress-related illnesses including fatigue and burn-out syndrome, which has become a growing problem in more and more professions."

Professor Torbjörn Åkerstedt, Director, Stress Research Institute

The Stress Research Institute is a knowledge centre in the area of stress and health. The Institute is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Stockholm University, and conducts basic and applied research on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary methodological approaches. The mission is to study how individuals and groups are affected by different social environments, with particular focus on stress reactions and health factors. The long-term objective of the research is to contribute to improved public health.

Swedish stress research has long been at the front line internationally, and the Stress Research Institute was first to produce facts of how psychosocial stress effects the stress hormones - in the mid-fifties newly identified - adrenaline och noradrenaline. The Institute has also participated in the development of the "Karasek" Demand/Control/Support-model, which explains work-related stress. A lot of the pioneering research concerning stress and health related to sleep, tiredness, resilience, shift-work and the "burnout" syndrome was made at Stress Research Institute.

Research methods
The main objective of the Stress Research Institute is to produce world-leading research on stress and resilience in a wider sense. This includes the whole chain of social and psychological structures, biological mechanisms and long-term health consequences. The target of the research is to study the relationship between psychosocial habitats and people’s physiological responses with effects on both physical and mental health and to clarify the effect of prolonged excessive energy mobilization with the risks of ill health. The research at the Institute is mainly focused on biological indicators on long-term strain, e.g. the balance between mobilization of energy and anabolism and so-called disturbances of regulations.

To understand the mechanisms behind these relationships, some studies specifically focus on the physiological stress reactions in the brain and heart as well as in endocrinology and immunological systems. The research projects conducted by the Stress Research Institute includes experimental studies in laboratory environment, studies under field conditions, and epidemiological surveys. The measurement methods used are mainly physiological and medical supplemented by psychological and sociological. In our epidemiological studies we collect psychosocial survey data which are linked to data from administrative records.

Research themes
The Stress Research Institute has three research divisions with different content, themes and projects - Division of Epidemiology, Division of Biological Psychology and treatment research and Division of Psychoneurology. The common questions are about the causes, mechanisms and outcomes of stress, as well as about interventions against negative stress and treatment of stress related illnesses, which also include method development. Current research themes are:

- stress causes, mechanisms and effects,
- organization of working life and leadership,
- psychobiological mechanisms and subjective health,
- sleep, fatigue and recovery,
- Working hours, shift work and fatigue,
- prevention and treatment of stress and sleep problems,
- brain, immune system and behavior.
Research Laboratory
The Stress Research Institute has its own psychophysiological laboratory, which consists of a sleep laboratory, which has access to electro-physiological equipment to record the variations in wakefulness, sleep patterns, heart rate, blood pressure and breathing. There are two noise- and temperature controlled bedrooms and two test-rooms. A large portion of the electro-physiological recordings are carried out in the field.

Dissemination of knowledge
Stress Research Institute contributes to stress research by publishing a lot of original articles, reviews and popular science publications, which includes a series of scientific reviewed Stress Research Reports. These publications are disseminated to different target groups such as authorities, NGO’s and professional groups. Knowledge dissemination also includes seminars, debates, courses, conferences - both national and international. Education efforts are primarily targeted at graduate students in the field of stress and psychosocial health.

Research cooperation
Besides carrying out research, the Stress Research Institute interacts with surrounding society and provide information about its activities, targeting other universities, research institutes, authorities and organisations, industry, and also the general public. The Institute organizes public lectures and contributes to higher education for students. The researchers often participate in the media and the public debate about new research and comments on current issues. Knowledge and research results that are produced in the Stress Research Institute is the result of a variety of ongoing projects, including several made in collaboration with other universities, government agencies and research institutions, in particular the Department of Psychology at Stockholm University, Karolinska Institutet, the Royal Institute of Technology and the Stress Research Clinic. The Institute also has an extensive cooperation with several international research centers.

The Swedish Stress Research Network
The Stress Research Institute also coordinate the "Swedish Stress Research Network" founded in 2001. The members - about 60 altogether - consists of different research groups in the field of stress and psychosocial health, and related national authorities all around Sweden. The network organizes annual an national stress research conferences at various places in Sweden.

Organization
The Stress Research Institute is headed by a Managing Board and a Director, and has a total of 33 persons (2011) employed - 29 researchers/research assistants and 4 with administrative tasks.

The Institute is currently financed to 52% of a budgetary allocation from Stockholm University. External research grant funding represents 39% of the total revenue and outside activities and conference fees represent the remaining 9%.

Stockholm Stress Center
Stockholm Stress Center is an interdisciplinary centre of excellence for research on work-related stress and health, which was established within the Stress Research Institute in October 2009. The centre is funded by an allocation of 50 million SEK spread over ten years from the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS).

Stockholm Stress Center comprise of six collaborating research groups from the Stress Research Institute and the Department of Psychology at Stockholm University and also from the Department of Clinical Neuroscience and the Department of Public Health Sciences at Karolinska Institutet. Within the collaboration between Stockholm University and Karolinska Institutet, the aim is to build a centre of excellence, with outstanding research in the field of work, stress and health and with the highest quality that can compete internationally. The combination of expertise is unique and will help create a new type of intellectual setting for stress research.
Stress Research Institute

Postal address
Stress Research Institute,
Stockholm University,
SE-106 91 Stockholm

Visiting address
Frescati hagväg 16 A,
114 19 Stockholm

Website
www.stressresearch.se

Telephone and telefax
Switchboard: +468-16 20 00
Fax: +468-5537 8900

E-mail addresses
info@stressforskning.su.se
firstname.surname@stressforskning.su.se