

DNA, Mumbai, 17 Mar 2009

DENMARK COMPENSATES LATE-NIGHT WOMEN WORKERS WHO DEVELOPED CANCER

# Graveyard shift goes the smoking way

**London:** Just as families of smokers who developed cancer were paid a massive compensation by major tobacco companies in US, Denmark is now paying women who have developed breast cancer after working overnights, according to a report by the *BBC*. It follows a ruling by a United Nations agency that night shifts increase the risk of developing cancer.

For years there has been growing evidence that night shifts are bad for you. Among the symptoms: disturbed sleep, fatigue, digestive problems and a greater risk of accidents at work. But these are the first government payments to women who have developed breast cancer after long spells on the night shift.

Ulla Mahnkopf is one of those who has been compensated. She spent 30 years as a flight attendant for the big Scandinavian airline SAS. Long hours and disturbed working patterns came with the territory. Then she developed breast cancer: "It was awful telling my kids that, telling them what we were facing," she told *BBC*.

So far almost 40 Danish women have won compensation. Not every case was successful: women who had a family history of breast cancer were among the ones whose claims were rejected. The Danish authorities acted following a finding by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), an arm of the UN's World Health Organisation. Dr Vincent Coglianò of the IARC said they reached their conclusion after

## India calling

**Assuming false identities and copying foreign accents take their toll on Indian call centre workers, according to a new study. Over half of all call centre staff in India quit due to tough working conditions.**

**The average Indian BPO employee serves 180 customers per day, compared with 75 customers per day for US call centre employees. Indian BPO employees work 48 to 54 hours a week.**

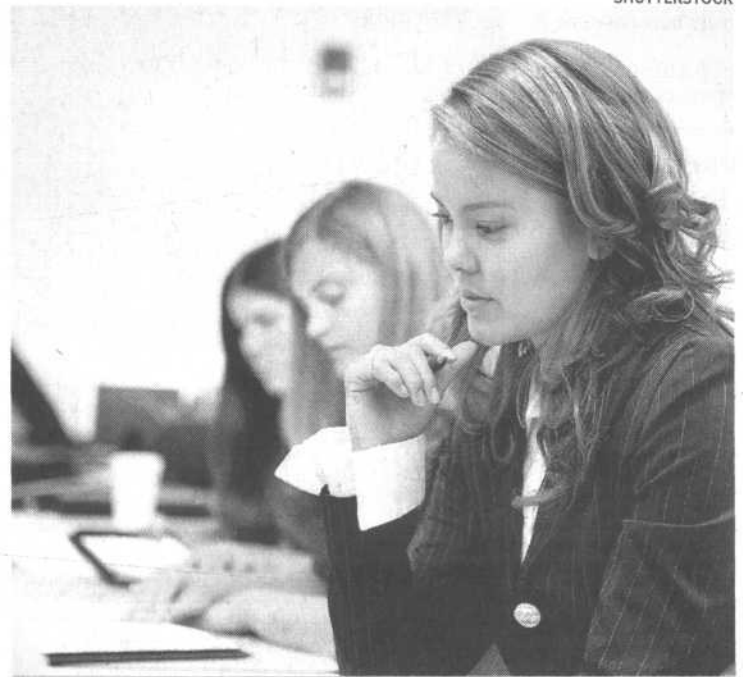
## Ulla Mahnkopf

Cancer victim

**It was awful telling my kids that, telling them what we were facing. It's not just the surgery but all the thoughts — do I survive this?"**

looking at a number of studies of both humans and animals. He said there was evidence to support the hypothesis that alterations in sleep patterns could suppress production of melatonin in the body.

In UK, about 20% of the workforce is involved in night shifts. Unions are calling for a greater awareness of the dangers of night shifts. But for Ulla Mahnkopf, that is already too late. She said she would have given up her job if she had known the dangers. AGENCIES



SHUTTERSTOCK

## SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

**The Danish government has so far paid compensation to up to 40 women working within the state sector**

**In UK, about 20% of the national workforce is involved in working graveyard shifts**

**More than 46,000 people are diagnosed with breast cancer in UK per year and it kills 12,400 annually**

**Women with a family history of breast cancer did not receive any compensation, according to reports**

**Danish authorities acted after the International Agency for Research on Cancer**

**One of the reports, showed a 36% risk of breast cancer for women who had worked night shifts for more than 30 years**