

Prevalence and sources for stress among employees at a major academic institution

Jin Jun (University of Michigan)

Research objective: The Centers for Disease Control reports that 110 million people die every year as a direct result of stress. For employed adults, work is one of the top stressors in daily life, followed by children. Researchers interested in stress traditionally distinguished between work and non-work. However, the relationship between work and non-work have been explored by some in notions of spillover and compensation. In order to further understand the sources of stress experienced among working adults, this study examined the level of stress and stressors among the employees who participated in a wellness program at a large teaching institution and its affiliated health centers.

Study design: A cross sectional, correlational design was done using a large data set from an employer wellness program in 2013. General stress level and various stressors were measured in a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistic was done for the analysis.

Population studied: Since 2005, the University of Michigan (UM) initiated a program aimed to promote employee health and well-being. All faculty and staff from the university and health care centers were invited to participate. Health data were obtained annually via self-report and biometric screening. The participants were categorized into ten "job families" based on the Human Resources Career Path: 1) Nurses, 2) House officers, 3) Healthcare Administrators & Supports, 4) Patient care services, 5) Office, 6) Engineering/Information Technology, 7) Lecturer/faculty, 8) Service/Maintenance, 9) Research, and 10) Others.

Principal findings: In this study, 9,256 individuals answered the stress-related questions in the self-report wellness screening program. About 46% of House Officers, who were residents and fellows, reported 'extremely or quite stressed'. The members of 'Lecturers/Faculty' were the second highest in their stress level (32.2% reported "extremely or Quite stressed"). Healthcare Administrators and Supports ($p = .01$), Office ($p = .02$), Engineering/Information Technology ($p = .01$) and Service/Maintenance ($p \leq .00$) were statistically significantly less stressed than House Officers. The top three stressors were consistent across all jobs: 1) lack of time (36.6%), 2) finance (32.4%), and 3) job (32.2%).

Conclusions. House officers reported the highest stress level, however, the sources of stress were the same regardless of their jobs.

Implications for policy and practice: The findings of this study demonstrate that work and non-work stress are interconnected regardless of jobs. This is encouraging for employers who are developing a work-based stress reduction and/or wellness program. These programs may have global effects on the overall well-being of their employees.

College student perceptions of anticipated burnout and engagement in their future careers

Kristen Black (The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga)

Employee burnout has received increased attention, both in research and practice, over the past few decades. Early conceptualizations associated burnout with professions that require intensive involvement with people (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), but burnout can be more generally described as occurring when employees experience high job demands with low resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Some of the most common features used to characterize burnout are a state

of exhaustion and negative attitudes toward one's work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Much research has been devoted to understanding the antecedents of burnout. Consistent findings include a positive association between job demands and burnout, with job and personal resources alternatively acting as a buffer against burnout (Crawford, Lepine, & Rich, 2010). Beyond job demands and resources, individual differences such as hardy personality traits have been associated with lower burnout risk (Garrosa, Moreno-Jimenez, Liang, & Gonzalez, 2008).

Preventing burnout has gained attention, not only because of the effects on employee well-being, but also for the costs to organizations, as many employees in occupations susceptible to burnout consider leaving the profession (e.g., Numminen, Leino-Kilpi, Isoaho, & Meretoja, 2017). In efforts to intervene early in an employee's career, Dwyer, Hunter, and Revell (2015) called for increased attention on how to incorporate additional teaching on the emotional challenges in the nursing profession into the educational training of nurses. While studies like this have begun to identify burnout among students in these occupations prone to burnout (e.g., commonly nursing and other healthcare fields; Watson, Deary, Thompson, & Li, 2008), less is known about what students think about the potential for experiencing burnout.

In order to better understand early prevention techniques that could be used for students considering professions susceptible to burnout, we surveyed a sample of undergraduate students regarding their perceptions of the potential to burnout in their future career. Our overarching research questions were: 1) Do students anticipate burning out of their future jobs? 2) Are there student characteristics that differentiate those who believe they may burn out?

Undergraduate students ($N = 354$) were recruited from an online participant pool at a southeastern university. Participants took part in an online survey that contained questions on their desired career for their future, their awareness of certain healthcare fields, and a variety of items asking students to reflect on their future careers. Students were asked to imagine they had been working in their intended career for two to three years and consider how they would feel at that point in time. They then responded to the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OBI; Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003), which was re-worded to future tense. The same measure was repeated, having the students imagine themselves ten years into their future career. In addition we included measures of orientation toward one's work, person job fit (adapted to future tense thinking about one's future job), and future work-self salience. Beyond these quantitative measures, we included a number of open-ended questions, which asked the students to provide: examples of things about their future job that they expect will be a source of stress; examples of how they imagine their future job will impact their health and happiness; experiences that they've had or personal characteristics they possess that they believe have prepared them for any potential stressful aspects of their job that they may encounter. Finally, we directly asked students if they have any fear that they may "burn out" of their future job.

Data analysis for this project is ongoing, but will be complete by the time of the Work, Stress, and Health Conference. We hypothesize that students will generally report higher levels of anticipated burnout symptoms at 10 years compared to two or three years into their future job. We expect that the difference between the prospective ratings will be larger for those who indicate that they are going into a healthcare field (compared to other students who do not provide a healthcare field as their anticipated career). We also expect that those who have a calling orientation toward work and perceive high fit with their

PHILADELPHIA, PA | NOVEMBER 6-9

Work, Stress and Health 2019

FULL PROGRAM



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



Society for
Occupational
Health
Psychology

