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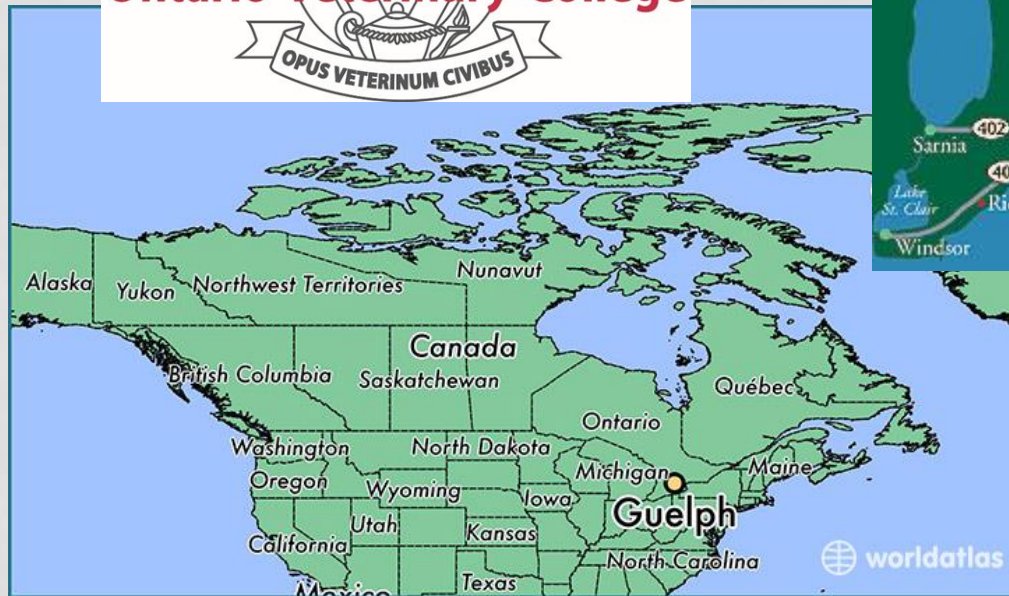


PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND DEPRESSION IN VETERINARY STUDENTS

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WHERE IS OVC?



OBJECTIVES:

Participants will

- learn how common stressors and psychological capital (PsyCap) are associated with depression in Ontario veterinary students
- learn how PsyCap differs in struggling versus adaptive students
- contribute to an understanding of how veterinary college culture, programs and supports can enhance PsyCap in their students

1ST YEAR OVC STUDY WHY?

“OVC students are burned out”

OVC Peer helper

WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?

Veterinary students (Hafen et al, 2006, 2008, 2013).

- report depressive symptomatology in 28 – 32% of students

Practicing veterinarians (Hesketh & Shoukshith, 1986, Garner & Hini, 2006, Hatch et al, 2011).

- depression, anxiety, stress and burnout at rates higher than general population
- Workplace and personal stressors correlate with depression and burnout

General population rate of depression:

- General population is 16.5-21.5% (Hafen et al, 2008)
- College students is 14.8-23.7% (Lin et al, 2006)

OBSERVATION...

“It is important to note that research on veterinary medical student mental health has traditionally focused on poor mental health outcomes. There is a need for additional research on veterinary medical student strength and strategies for maintaining good mental and physical health and academic performance”

Reisbig, et al., 2012, A study of depression and anxiety, general health and academic performance in three cohorts of veterinary medical students across the first three semesters of veterinary school.

Journal of Veterinary Medical Education, 39(4), 341-358.

FURTHER OBSERVATION

“we should look at what is right with people instead of the almost singular focus of what is wrong and/or dysfunctional with people..”

Luthans et al (2006)

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL (PSYCAP)

PsyCap is an individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by:

Hope - persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed;

Efficacy - having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks;

Resiliency - when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success;

Optimism - making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future

PSYCAP

“Taken together,
the four resources of PsyCap
(*Hope, Efficacy, Resiliency, and Optimism*)
may contribute to a motivational propensity
for individuals
to accomplish and succeed”

Luthans et al, 2010, The development and resulting performance impact of positive psychological capital.
Human Resource Development Quarterly, 21(3), 41-67

1ST YEAR OVC STUDENT STUDY

Longitudinal design

Survey # 1: first semester (Oct, 2013)

Validated measures used(dependant variables):

- Depression: Centre for Epidemiologic Studies – Depression (CES-D) Scale
- Resilience: Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Survey #2: second semester (Feb, 2014)

Validated measures used:

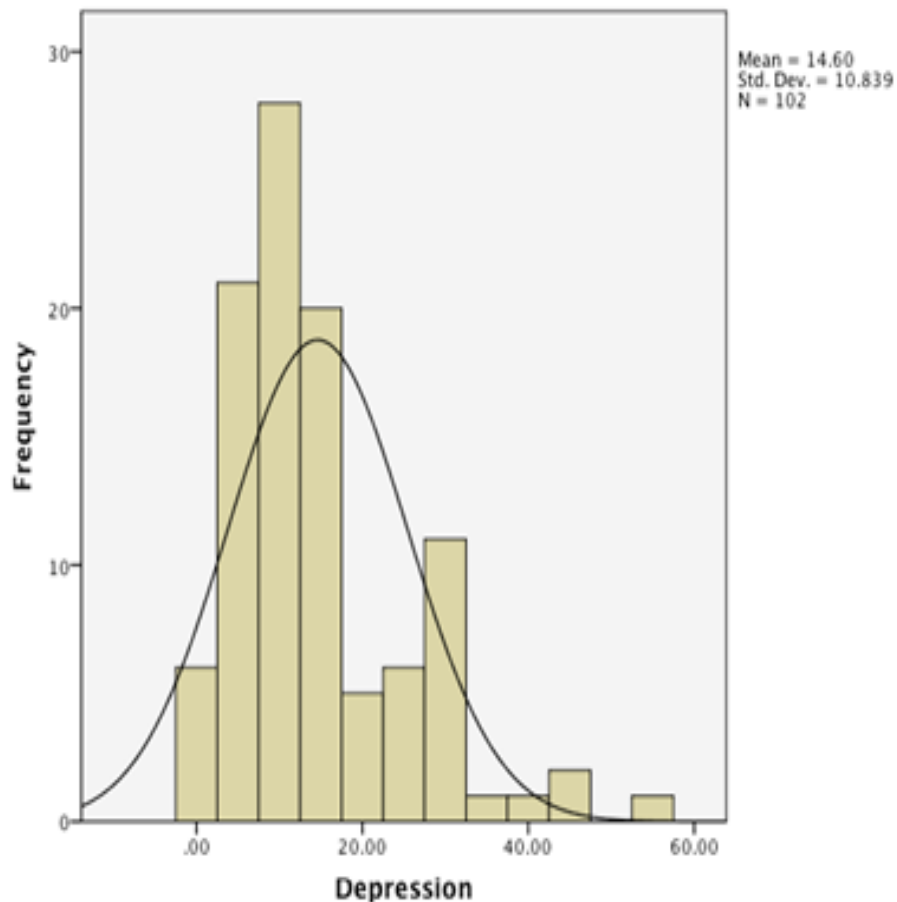
- Depression: CES-D (Radloff, 1977)
- Hope: State Hope Scale (Snyder et al, 1996)
- Efficacy: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
- Resilience: BRS (Smith et al, 2008)
- Optimism: Life Orientation Test (Scheier&Carver,1985)

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 120 first year OVC veterinary students
 - 84 (70.0%) participated in both surveys = final sample size
- Gender: 83% female /17% male
- Mean age: 22.5 years
- Relationship status
 - Not in relationship - 38.6%
 - In relationship not living together – 45.5%
 - In relationship and living together – 15.8%
- Debt ~ 36% have no debt

DEPRESSION (CES-D)

Radloff, L.S. (1977). The CES-D scale: A self-report depression scale for research in the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 1:3, pp. 385-401.



CES-D Scale: Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale

Percent of class above the cut-off for depression (> 16):

- T1 = 31.0%
- T2 = 34.5%

CORRELATES

HEALTH HABITS WITH DEPRESSION AT T1

Depression symptomology not associated with health habits:

- hours of sleep,
- diet (servings of fruit/veg),
- exercise (strength, flexibility and cardio),
- drug and alcohol use,
- use of time,
- # of pets

CORRELATES

COMMON STRESSORS WITH SELF-ESTEEM, OPTIMISM, HOPE AND RESILIENCY AT T2

Significant **negative** association ($p < 0.01$) of the following stressors with all four PsyCap resources at T2:

- concerns about academic performance
- financial concerns
- balancing school with personal life
- perception of not being smart enough
- Perception of difficulty fitting in with others
- difficulty understanding lectures and textbooks
- homesickness.

Interestingly these are the same stressors having greatest *positive* association with depression at T2.

CORRELATES

PSYCAP WITH DEPRESSION

Strong **negative** correlations ($p < 0.01$) between each element of veterinary student PsyCap (self-esteem, optimism, hope and resiliency) with depression during the second semester



PsyCAP



Depression

ADAPTIVE VS. STRUGGLING

68% were adaptive

33% were struggling

Analysis confirms that veterinary students in the adaptive group for depression have significantly higher PsyCap ($p < 0.01$)

(i.e. self-esteem, optimism, hope and resiliency)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Over 30% of 1st Year OVC students are depressed
- Stressors are positively associated with depression and negatively associated with PsyCap
- Students with higher PsyCap are
 - less likely to be depressed
 - more likely to be adaptive than struggling

SO WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL (PSYCAP)?

- PsyCap, like economic capital, can benefit from investment
- PsyCap or 'who you are' is differentiated from human capital (what you know) and social capital (who you know)
- PsyCap is 'state-like' and can be developed using:
 - Proactive Approach
 - Reactive Approach

PROACTIVE APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCAP

- Strong social supports (student affairs, peer support)
- Strong organizational culture that values ethics/trust
- Invest in human capital (knowledge, skills & abilities)
- Invest in social capital (social networks)
- Experiences of success & mastery, modelling, vicarious learning
- Experiences of positive feedback, attention to well-being

REACTIVE APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCAP

Cultivate:

- Positive emotions (laughter, smiles, broaden-and-build a wide range of thoughts rather than negative)
- Self enhancement (positive self-talk)
- Optimistic attribution (move past negative event)
- Grow & learn from both positive and negative events

THE VISION....

Veterinary students, faculty and leadership
are actively engaged to shift the culture
toward a more positive,
socially supportive environment
that actively endeavors to build skills,
face challenges,
model through vicarious learning,
and promote physical and psychological well-being.

WORKSHOP

- Break into groups of 7-10 (mix-it-up!)
- Assign a Recorder and a Reporter
- Discuss – **How can your school promote PsyCap?**
 - Culture
 - Leadership/Policy
 - Climate/Environment
 - Programs
 - Curricular
 - Extracurricular
 - Supports
 - Formal/Informal
 - Wellness events

