COLLEGE COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES KNOWLEDGE BASE:

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COLLEGE STUDENT HEALTH LITERATURE

PHASE 1: 1998-2008
College Counseling & Psychological Services Knowledge Base
COLLEGE STUDENT HEALTH LITERATURE
PHASE 1: 1998-2008

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Using data from the American College Health Association Assessment this study sought to determine the presence of clinically treated depression, self-reported depression and anxiety, and 5 indicators of negative affect among college students and the relationship of these indicators of poor mental health with the prevalence of 4 acute infectious illnesses: bronchitis, ear infection, sinus infection, and strep throat. Results indicated that depression, anxiety, and exhaustion were associated with acute infectious illness across all dependent measure with correlations ranging from .56 to .91. The conclusion of the authors was that poor mental health is associated with acute infectious illness among college students.


A small convenience sample of undergraduates attending a state college, a state university and a private college responded to a questionnaire distributed in classes. The focus of the study was to that were broadly advertised in magazines that are commonly read by the study populations. Results indicated that the majority of students used at least one of the advertised products without discussing their use or the conditions for which they were taking the drugs with their physicians.


This study provided tentative support for the clinical hypothesis and that, once on campus, some college students who were not previously identified with symptoms of ADHD might experience presentations centering on academic difficulties that could warrant a first-time diagnosis of ADHD.


The purpose of this study was to establish estimates of the prevalence and correlates of non-suicidal self-injury among university students. An internet survey was administered to a sample of undergraduate and graduate students attending a large Midwestern, public university. Seven
percent of those responding reported hurting themselves on purpose within the preceding 4 weeks, without intending suicide. Only 26% of these students received mental health therapy or medication within the past year. Factors associated with a significantly higher likelihood of self-injury included cigarette smoking, concurrent depressive and anxiety disorders and, for men, growing up in a family of low socioeconomic status and having symptoms of eating disorders.


Four social support domains in the prediction of physical health formed the nexus of this study: tangible support, belonging, disclosure, and social intimacy. Findings indicated that belonging predicted better health perceptions for women and fewer physical symptoms for men. The authors concluded that a sense of connection to a group of others is a key support component for the physical health of college students.


This study examined medically prescribed use and illicit use of 4 distinct classes of abusable prescription drugs within an undergraduate student population at a large, public Midwestern university. Self-reported information revealed that the prevalence rate for illicit use within the preceding year was 14% and the highest for pain medication, followed by stimulants, sedative/anxiety medication, and sleeping medication. Lifetime illicit use for the sample was 21%. Men reported higher illicit use rates. Medical users of stimulants for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder were the most likely to be approached to divert their medication.


This longitudinal, panel design study of first year college students enrolled at an independent, moderately sized, church-affiliated, Midwestern university, examined what physical and psychological differences are caused by the college experience and what individual variables are associated with such changes. Results revealed a decline in student reported psychological and mental health. Negative coping tactics (drinking, smoking) and perfectionism predicted poorer physical health at the end of the first year. Optimism and self-esteem predicted better physical and psychological outcomes.


These mixed methods study, one of a series, examined the prevalence, severity and disclosure of adverse life events and assessed the levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in a large population of college undergraduates attending several institutions located in the Southwestern
U.S. Two thirds of those responding reported that they had experienced at least 1 adverse life event. In interviews with a subset of the study’s sample, 9% reported symptoms of clinical PTSD and an additional 11% reported subclinical symptoms.


This study analyzed the effects of several health-related variables on first-year college students’ GPAs. A sample of students attending a large private university were asked about a variety of health-behavior variables that a literature review suggested were related to academic performance. Of all the variables considered, sleep habits accounted for the largest variance in grade point averages. Later wake-up times were associated with lower average grades. Variables associated with higher GPAs among first-year students were strength training and the study of spiritually oriented material. The number of paid or volunteer hours worked per week was associated with lower GPAs.
THEME 2: DEPRESSION & SUICIDE


The author provides legal opinion to counter the notion that students who threaten suicide should be dismissed from college campuses preferably on medical grounds. According to the author, the general legal rule regarding suicide liability for non-mental health professionals was stated in Jain v. State of Iowa (2001), “the act of suicide is considered a deliberate, intentional and intervening act that precludes another’s responsibility for the harm.” According to the article, the best alternative to mandatory dismissal in the case of attempted or threatened suicide is to focus on specific conduct that violates reasonable institutional standards. This will provide necessary due process. The University of Illinois plan for dealing with threats or attempts of suicide by students is described.


The purpose of this study, which used an experimental design, was to test the long-term effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral group intervention in reducing depressive symptoms, decreasing negative thinking, and enhancing self-esteem in college women at risk for clinical depression. Female students enrolled at a large, public, Midwestern university were randomly assigned to either a treatment or a control group. The women in the treatment group experienced a greater decrease in depressive symptoms and negative thinking and a greater increase in self-esteem than those in the control group. These effects continued over an 18 month follow-up period.


The author, using U.S. government data and the National Survey of Counseling Center Directors (NSCCD), reports that while suicide is the second leading cause of death among American college students, suggestions that there is a growing epidemic are false. Rather, according to the author, there is a growing expectation that colleges and universities will prevent suicide by their students. Between 1952 and 1996 the reported rates of suicide among adolescents and young adults nearly tripled. However 100% of the increase occurred between 1955 and 1976. The rate is now close to its lowest value in the past 100 years. Suicide rates for 20-24 year old college students was half the rate for the same group in general U.S. population. Suicide rates for clients of campus counseling centers is 3 times the rate of students who have not been clients, but their risk of suicide is 18 times as high as the risk for individuals in the general student population. Based on this data, the author concludes that university counseling centers are effective in reducing the suicide rate for clients by a factor of 6. Finally, the author’s review of the NSCCD
revealed that the proportion of students who use campus counseling centers was almost perfectly correlated with the availability of campus mental health professionals.


The author offers a comparative analysis of data from studies of college student suicide from 4 eras: 1920-60, 1960-80, 1980-90, and 1990-2004. The suicide rate of college students has declined steadily during the period of this analysis. The author concludes that this is the result of the decreasing proportion of men in the student populations studied. The rate has also consistently been about half the rate of the general U.S. population; the author presents evidence to support his argument that this favorable relative rate for college students is largely due to the effective prohibition of firearms on college campuses.


This study, using a cross-sectional, population-based design, was designed to determine the prevalence of psychological and pharmaceutical treatment for depressed medical students, factors associated with treatment, and whether completion of medical school psychiatric training at a large, eastern private medical school, influenced treatment of depression among these students. The results indicated that more than 15% of the respondents were classified as depressed based upon self-reported data and, of those, 20% reported suicidal ideations during medical school. The prevalence of treatment for depression was low (26.5%).
THEME 3: EATING DISORDERS


The agenda for this study included the investigation of the relationship between paternal attachment security, depression, and eating dysfunctions among college women. Participants in the study were 306 undergraduate women who attended a midsize coeducational Catholic university in the Midwest. Depression was directly related to severity of eating dysfunction. After controlling for depression, paternal alienation significantly differentiated 3 groups: symptomatic, but not eating disordered; eating disordered; or asymptomatic.


The purpose of this study was to investigate eating and exercise disorders in a male college population who were enrolled at an Australian university. One fifth of the men in the sample of 93 undergraduates worried about their weight and shape, followed rules about eating, and limited their food intake. Twenty-seven percent followed rules about exercising and 14% worried about the amount of exercise they managed to perform. A small percentage of the sample met the standards for clinical diagnoses for various eating disorders.


Eating disorders and body image in college men as compared with college women was the focus of this study. A random sample of men and women enrolled at a public university in California were sent a questionnaire containing questions about eating behaviors. In the sample, men expressed more preoccupation with muscle tone and less concern about weight than did their female counterparts who exhibited behaviors consistent with an eating disorder.


This study examined a proposed model (Eating Disorder NOS diagnostic framework) that was designed to describe and assess the experiences of college women who present moderate eating related concerns when they seek health and counseling services. Female college students who attended a public, mid-sized, southeastern university and who had used a multidisciplinary eating disorder intervention program participated in the study. Overall, findings suggested that the model describes the group of college women who seek help and resources for moderate eating-related health and mental health concerns.

This study a proposed Not Otherwise Specified (NOS) diagnostic profile is examined to determine if it is applicable for women with clinically significant eating concerns who do not seek treatment. One hundred twenty-two female college students who attended a campus eating disorders awareness workshops, those seeking information during Eating Disorders Information Week, and women not concerned about eating disorders participated in the study. Participants completed the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26). Results suggested that the framework is specific to women with eating problems but does not applying over-generally to all college women or to all female patients and clients.
THEME 4: COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS


Three varied men’s support groups were formed at a large, public university located in the southeast. This article describes the experiences of each of the groups and poses the following questions for follow-up research: (1) Does the decreased face-to-face social contact occurring in the advent of e-mail and other electronic communication have a detrimental effect on men’s health, particularly on depression indices? (2) Does creating a support group for seemingly healthy young men have a beneficial effect by reducing social isolation? (3) Do growth groups lead college men to be more likely to seek help when they see the early onset of symptoms of physical illness? (4) Does participation in a support group increase the likelihood that men will follow through with treatment once treatment is prescribed?


The authors used an experimental design to assess the effect of a 6-week mind/body intervention on college students’ psychological distress, anxiety, and perceptions of stress. Among 128 student participants, those who received the 6 group training sessions in relaxation response and cognitive behavior skills demonstrated significantly greater reductions in psychological distress, state anxiety, and perceived stress than did those in the control group.


In this article, the authors describe the development and implementation of postvention services in the aftermath of college student deaths at a private, land-grant university in the northeastern U.S. The format of the model, called Community Support Meetings (CSMs), is described and the authors report that “it is very effective.” An informal assessment process is described.


A Student Assistant Program (SAP) provided by a private vendor to serve students at a public university provided to students to address psychosocial concerns that may interfere with
academic performance. These services are designed to meet the need for more intensive time-limited behavioral interventions or mental health treatments. These interventions are similar to employee assistance programs offered by many employers.
THEME 5: PROFESSIONAL ISSUES & TRENDS


The author scans some major changes that have occurred during the past 20 years, that he believes have impacted college mental health and the practice of psychiatry on the college campus. He calls for collaboration between counseling services, administration, residence life programs and student health to address the challenges facing mental health professionals.


This paper provides an overview of the distribution of health states (including disease). The goal of the essay is to provide a summary of variables that define both high-risk groups and his risk situations that lead to psychiatric morbidity. The author reviews prevalence studies and clinical facility usage and calls for longitudinal studies of a cohort of students in which changes in the state of their mental health can be obtained.


The objective of this study was to examine connections between students’ mental health and their knowledge and use of campus mental health services. A random sample of students attending an eastern, land grant university in the eastern U.S. completed an anonymous, on-line survey that asked about their knowledge of campus mental health services, their mental health, and their use of the services. Students who were mentally distressed were more likely to know about and use services. Living off-campus, identifying as male, and having fewer years in college were predictive of higher service usage.
THEME 6: SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS


This study described the levels of psychological symptom manifested by first year students who attended a 4 year, nonresidential, undergraduate college in a public university system in the core city of a large metro area in the Northeast. A culturally diverse sample of 595 of these students was interviewed using 25 items from the Trauma Symptoms inventory to determine the extent to which participants were currently experiencing psychological symptoms. The students reported a wide range symptoms, with women’s reported level of symptoms higher than men’s.


The purpose of this study was to document the prevalence of mental health needs of international graduate students, their knowledge of campus counseling services available, and the factors that contribute to the use of counseling services. The entire population of graduate students attending a large, western university was invited to complete an anonymous Web survey that included the following topics: 1) need for mental health services; 2) knowledge of campus mental health services; 3) use and satisfaction with campus mental health services; 4) factors affecting student mental health; and 5) demographic information. Then, international student responses were analyzed separately. Approximately 44% of international graduate students responded that within the last year they had had an emotional or stress related problem that significantly affected their well-being or academic performance.


This study presents an empirical assessment of actual use of counseling for emotional purposes during the first 6 months among a large sample of diverse undergraduates enrolled in one of two commuter colleges of a public university system in the core city of a large metro area in the Northeast. Student levels of use of campus counseling services (10%) were similar to that estimated for a national college sample. Students reporting higher levels of distress were more likely to use counseling; however, more than ¾ of students who reported clinically significant levels of distress had not received counseling. The authors did not observe disparities in use of mental health services related to sex, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
REFERENCES


