Good mental health is very important, suicide is the second leading cause of death worldwide in 15-29 year-olds\(^1\) and statistically more than **\(\frac{1}{3}\) people suffer from a mental illness** each year\(^2\). Currently mental health disorders and addiction have 7% of the global burden of disease and affected **1 billion people** globally in 2016\(^3\).

Work related stress can impact someone’s mental and physical health as well as decrease their productivity. **Long working hours**, unclear roles, dissatisfaction, insecurity and poor relations with colleagues are some of the main stressors that people may face at the workplace\(^4\). **Chronic occupational stress** can lead to a syndrome called ‘**burn-out**’, characterized by decreased efficiency, lack of energy and negative work-related feelings\(^5\). Chronic stress additionally increases the **risk of developing mental illness** in some people\(^6\).

### Fast facts about Doctoral Researchers

**Mental health**—You are not alone

- **51%** of DRs experienced psychological distress (~2x more likely than employed matched controls)\(^7\).
- **32%** of DRs were at very high risk for developing a **mental health illness** (2.4-2.8x more likely than employed matched controls)\(^7\).
- **40%** felt under constant strain and **30%** felt unhappy and depressed\(^7\).
- **41%** percent of graduate students scored with **moderate to severe anxiety** (6% in the general population)\(^8\).
- **39%** of graduate students scored with moderate to severe **depression** (6% in the general population)\(^8\).
- **60%** of DRs suffer from stress related symptoms\(^9\).
- **40%** suffer from back pain and **33%** from **sleeplessness**\(^9\).
- **24%** increase in stress related symptoms from 1\(^{st}\) to 3\(^{rd}\) year DRs\(^9\).
Supervision
16% meet their direct supervisors less than once a month\textsuperscript{10}.

1/5 share direct supervisors with 6 other DRs\textsuperscript{10}.

Frequency of meeting supervisor correlates with satisfaction\textsuperscript{10}.

40% that consider giving up PhDs mention supervisors as a reason\textsuperscript{10}.

33% of DRs have considered giving up their research often or occasionally\textsuperscript{10}.

Working hours
DRs work 11.2 hours more than contracted\textsuperscript{10}.

55% work weekends/holidays more than once a month\textsuperscript{10}.

Well-being at work
Various meditation apps can help reduce stress and improve well-being\textsuperscript{11}.

Plants/green space in the office and forest visits can lower tension and anxiety\textsuperscript{12,13}.

Have a look at the MHAW 2019 Self-help document for more tips.

References


