The Rise of Anxiety Among the College Age Population
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Introduction

Anxiety is a mental illness that comes in various magnitudes of severity. The college student population is one that is often looked for how often they experience the symptoms. We hypothesized that nearly all students experience periods of their academic career where they have anxiety, but those that are aware of their anxiety are the ones that are willing to cope with it in a healthy manner.

The article, Replacing Stressful Challenges with Positive Coping Strategies: A Resilience Program for Clinical Placement Learning (Delaney, C., 2015) explains how there is an increased stress among students and that not many of them know how to effectively manage their anxiety. The researchers also explain that with an increased anxiety level and decreased coping strategies, it can interfere with how students are able to learn and focus on the material at hand. What this particular research study suggested was that "replacing stressful challenges with positive coping strategies [which] offers a potentially powerful tool to build self-efficacy and cognitive control as well as greater self-awareness as a learner" (Delaney, C., 2015).

Throughout this study, we will be researching how college-aged and young adults deal with their anxiety weather it is severe or minor. The researchers are able to learn and focus on the material at hand. What this particular research study suggested was that "replacing stressful challenges with positive coping strategies [which] offers a potentially powerful tool to build self-efficacy and cognitive control as well as greater self-awareness as a learner" (Delaney, C., 2015).

Discussion

We hypothesized that nearly all student's experience symptoms of anxiety to some degree, but those that are aware of their anxiety have learned to cope. It is that healthy manner that is effective for them. We found that mostly all students do experience anxiety but they all cope in a healthy manner. Some have to cope with it in the worst manner as well as not getting enough hours of sleep.

We also found that there is a gender difference among males and females as to who is more likely to experience anxiety symptoms. In an article called Gender differences in anxiety disorders and anxiety symptoms in adolescents, it talks about how "there was a" preponderance of females among current and recovered anxiety disorder cases, but not among those who had never experienced an anxiety disorder. The female preponderance emerges early in life, and retrospective data indicate that at age 8, females are already twice as likely to have experienced an anxiety disorder than males. (Leary, P., 1998).

In this cross sectional study students at Dominican University of California were able to learn and focus on the material at hand. What this particular research study suggested was that "replacing stressful challenges with positive coping strategies [which] offers a potentially powerful tool to build self-efficacy and cognitive control as well as greater self-awareness as a learner" (Delaney, C., 2015).

Methods

Participants

In this cross sectional study students at Dominican University of California and other college aged students, were asked to complete a survey about their demographics, thoughts on stress and anxiety, and their mental health while being a college student. Participants were informed about the survey through a link as well as receiving emails, kindly asking to take part.

Statistical Analysis

We started off analyzing the results of both BRFSS and the survey in a program called SPSS. We first compared two of the questions in BRFSS to see if they were statistically significant. To see if there were any similarities, we used descriptive statistics and put the questions in a cross tab by doing Chi-squared tests. We then did the same process for the survey. We first had to code all of the responses from our survey and insert them into SPSS.

Results

We first compared a person's smoking status with a depression index. What we found was if a person was an active smoker, they are more likely to be depressed (0.44%). These results were statistically significant with a p-value of (0.2%). We also compared alcohol drinks consumed per day with anxiety. We found that those who drink alcohol daily more likely to have a depressive disorder (0.13%). There is a statistically significant difference between those that drink alcohol every day versus those that do not. Lastly, we compared ones satisfaction in life with the amount of poor mental health days a person had in the past 30 days. We found that those that are more satisfied with their life had fewer poor mental health days (1.2%). Those that were not satisfied with their life typically had more poor mental health days (3.5%).

We also analyzed the results given from BRFSS and found that at a national level, females (22%) are more likely to be depressed than males (14%) are, which had a p-value of (0.01) which is statistically significant. Given that females are more prone to develop depression, we then looked to see if this was true at a local level, specifically among the college students.

Within the survey, the researchers asked the students to complete two very similar questions that were in the BRFSS questionnaire. Some of the questions included general demographics such as age, gender, level, county of residence as well as health behaviors they engage in regularly, such as smoking, drinking, exercising, and overall feelings of stress and anxiety. We administered the survey using a link through Survey Monkey and the responses were kept confidential and anonymous.

Study Design

The survey was sent out via the email to the students of Dominican University of California as well as through our Facebook profiles. We decided on what questions to ask by researching previous studies that were done on college students as well as get ideas of what to ask after analyzing the BRFSS dataset. We wanted to know if college students were constantly thinking about assignments that they needed to get done as well as other stressors they had in their life.

Methods Continued

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Measure

For the 2015 BRFSS questionnaire, we were able to pull out all questions that participants explained their sex, smoking, alcohol behaviors having good or bad mental health days, weather or not they have ever had a depressive disorder, how often they get physical exercise, sleeping patterns, and the amount of anxiety they experience. All of these different questions gave us a large range of different variables that could potentially be hindering college student's mental health, therefore making them experience anxiety on a regular basis.

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