Risk of psychiatric disorders amongst PhD students at the Donders Institute

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INTRODUCTION

A recent study\(^1\) investigating mental health amongst graduate students at 234 institutions across 26 countries found that 41% suffered from moderate to severe anxiety, while 39% suffered from moderate to severe depression.

Mental health amongst PhD students is a serious topic which deserves increased attention. Here we present results from a mental health survey conducted amongst PhD students at the Donders Institute in 2017.

METHOD & RESULTS

- General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)\(^2\)
  - Assesses mental health using 12 items
  - 4-point Likert scale:
    - 1 = better than usual
    - 2 = as usual
    - 3 = worse than usual
    - 4 = much worse than usual
  - ≥ 4 responses above 2 indicate risk of developing a psychiatric disorder
- N = 112 graduate students across the four centers of the Donders Institute completed the survey
- 30% of respondents were at risk

NEXT STEPS

- Awareness
  - via this poster
  - by presenting survey results to Donders PIs
  - via ‘popular science’ poster (upcoming)

- Assessment of existing resources
  - Peer Coaching
  - Confidant program

- Assessment of sources of stress
  - What causes PhD students the most stress?
  - How can we mitigate stress from these sources?

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