

Stress among health profession students and the Locus of Control of Occupational Therapy students.

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Introduction: While academic achievement has been addressed in educational establishments, little attention has been paid to the underlying effect of stress that accompanies academic performance. Research has shown that over the past 30 years there has been an increase in the levels of stress experienced by college students. In response to these increasing levels of stress, students often engage in negative health behaviors (1). Locus of control (LOC) refers to an individual's perception of the underlying causes of events in their life. LOC is conceptualized as external or internal. External locus of control individuals believe that behavior is guided by fate or external circumstances. Internal locus of control individuals believe that behavior is guided by personal decisions and efforts. It is considered desirable to have an internal locus of control. An internal locus needs to be matched by competence and self efficacy (2).

Objectives: This research explored the effects of stress on the following health profession programs at various degree levels: physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing. At the same time we explored the relationship between locus of control and Occupational Therapy (OT) fieldwork grades to understand issues that may negatively affect student performance.

Methods: The study is quantitative (hypothesis driven) non-experimental (ex-post facto) and cross sectional (senior health profession students).

All student participants were administered the Adolescent stress and the LOC questionnaire.

Results: Overall levels of stress indicated on the 10 scales ranged from 2.133 to 3.280 (on a scale of 1-5). Two areas in the Fieldwork Evaluation were found to be significantly different with LOC, Written Communication and Participation in the Supervisory Process.

Conclusion: OT students need to be monitored for stress which will contribute to an internal locus of control

Contribution: Modifications can be implemented in OT programs to accommodate student stress in an effort to foster an internal LOC.

References:

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