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Addressing trends in student suicide rates

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Student mental health

Insight into student lifestyle and intervention choices

Intervention services

Future Directions

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Student mental health

- 207 million students enrolled globally in 2014 (UNESCO)
- 2.3 million in the UK (HESA 2014)

- 95 suicides in 2016-2017
- 4.7 per 100,000 students

- 10% of students use counselling services

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- Most enduring mental health problems show their first signs before 25 years of age

- 75% mental health problems manifest by the age of 24

Burstow, P., Newbigging, K., Tew, J., and Costello, B., 2018. *Investing in a Resilient Generation: Keys to a Mentally Prosperous Nation*. *Executive Summary and Call to Action*.

Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

Tobacco smoke
Dietary risks
High systolic blood pressure
High body-mass index
Alcohol and drug use
High total cholesterol
High fasting plasma glucose
Occupational risks
Low physical activity
Air pollution
Impaired kidney function
Child and maternal malnutrition
Sexual abuse and violence
Low bone mineral density
Unsafe sex
Other environmental risks
Unsafe water, sanitation, and...
HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis
Diarrhea, lower respiratory, and other common infectious diseases
Neglected tropical diseases and malaria
Maternal disorders
Neonatal disorders
Nutritional deficiencies
Other communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases
Neoplasms
Cardiovascular diseases
Chronic respiratory diseases
Cirrhosis and other chronic liver diseases
Digestive diseases
Neurological disorders
Mental and substance use disorders
Diabetes, urogenital, blood, and endocrine diseases
Musculoskeletal disorders
Other non-communicable diseases
Transport injuries
Unintentional injuries
Self-harm and interpersonal violence
Forces of nature, war, and legal intervention
0%
1%
2%
3%
4%
5%
6%
7%
8%
9%
10%
11%
12%
Percent of total disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs)

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Health Needs of the Student Population

Aims

- To explore the health and lifestyle choices of students attending an urban university in the UK.
- To identify health issues within the student population.
- To design appropriate and early interventions.

Holt, M. & Powell, S. (2017) Healthy Universities: a guiding framework for universities to examine the distinctive health needs of its own student population. Perspectives in Public Health, 137: 53-58.

Health Needs of the Student Population

Methods

- Used a health needs assessment stepped approach (Hooper and Longworth 2002).
- Online, 60 question questionnaire, mainly closed.
- Focused on national priorities (PHE Outcomes Framework 2014):
  - Health care utilisation
  - Eating and dietary
  - Alcohol
  - Smoking
  - Sexual health
  - Mental health
  - Drug and substance use
- Administered at time of no other student focused activity – November 2014.

Results: Completion of Survey

- 3683 students completed the survey (approximately 10% of the student population).
- 3428 answered the whole survey:
  - 2507 female
  - 1162 male
  - 14 transgender or other
  - Year 1 1636
  - Year 2 952
  - Year 3 658
  - Postgraduate 208
  - Part time 229

Results: Health Care Utilisation

- 42% (n=1426) not registered with a medical practitioner.
- 4% (n=150) would use hospital accident and emergency services for any ailment.

Health Needs of the Student Population

Results: Eating and Dietary

- 56% (n=2227) respondents prepare their own food.
- 11% (n=371) eat 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Requested free water.
- Healthy food in vending machines.
- Cooking classes on campus.

Health Needs of the Student Population

Results: Alcohol

- 8% (n=258) students consume >20 units per week.
- 23% (n=792) males and 50% (n=1,700) females wanted to get drunk.
- 42% (n=1,434) couldn't remember night before.
- 54% (n=1,847) not aware of support available.

Health Needs of the Student Population

Results: Drugs

- 30% (n=1027) used illegal or legal recreational substances.
- Alcohol, cannabis and cocaine.
- Obtain from friends and dealers off campus.

Results: Sexual Health

- 78% (n=2,673) sexually active.
- 335 had unprotected sex.
- 1,511 tested for STDs.
- 150 diagnosed (chlamydia).

Results: Mental Health

- 28% (n=1,015) had an emotional or mental health issues whilst studying:
  - 756 female
  - 255 male
- Increase by year of study.

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Significant associations between mental health and:

- Gender ($p<.001$) with fewer males and more females
- Ethnicity ($p<.001$) more white and mixed race and fewer Asian, Black and Chinese students
- Disability ($p=.004$)
- Living arrangements ($p<.001$) more in private halls and rented
- Course of study: more Arts and Humanities and Health related.

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Support available

Most common to seek from Students Union, Personal Tutors

Top reason for not seeking support was feeling they should be able to cope, followed by embarrassment

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Segmentation: higher risk groups

- White and mixed race females
- Living in private halls and rented accommodation
- Studying arts, humanities and health

Health Needs of the Student Population

Interventions

- Creative calm.
- Chlamydia testing.
- ManMetMunch.
- Improved GP registration.
- UUK Stepchange framework

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#Stepchange

- Developed by Universities UK
- Recommends whole system approach
- Leadership, data, staff literacy, prevention and early intervention and partnerships

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Next steps

- Informing Student Services of priorities: evidence.
- Improved signposting to support services.
- Designing interventions: student consultations.
- Developing a surveillance system rather than a snap shot

- GM Mental Health Hub in the city centre

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"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"

Benjamin Franklin

Burden of disease attributable to leading risk factors for both sexes in 2015, expressed as a percentage of England disability-adjusted life-years
TOWN HALL
PLANNING
THE 'PREVENTION CHALLENGE'
PARK
CARE HOME
HOSPITAL
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS?
SPORTS CENTRE
Creating Healthy Communities
TRAIL
MAP
Where do we go next?
Breast is Best
CHILDREN'S CENTRE
COMMUNITY CLINIC
OUR PROGRESS TO DATE
How many people in England takes at least one course of antibiotics each year?
SCHOOL
1 in 3!
FACTORY
Healthy Living Pharmacy
PHARMACY
GP SURGERY
How can you help?
Questions to consider
1. What are you doing to implement All Our Health in your area?
2. What could be done both at a local and national level to assist in scaling All Our Health going forward?
3. What is the one key action you can commit to today?
Thank you
ALL OUR HEALTH

4 Building Blocks (Burstow et al 2018)

- Positive family, peer and community relationships
- Minimise adverse experiences
- Mentally friendly education and employment
- Respond early and respond well to the first sign of symptoms

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THANK YOU

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