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Anxiety in college students: Implications from the CCMH database

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Anxiety in college students: Implications from the CCMH database



Payton Jones and Tyler Lefevor

Introduction

- Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH) 2014 database^{1*}
- Includes standard intake information and outcomes for more than 140 university counseling centers around the nation
- Anxiety is the most common concern for university students^{1*}
- 12.9% of university students were diagnosed or treated for an anxiety disorder in 2013^{2*}
- Anxiety concerns in college students have steadily increased in the past two decades^{2*}
- What is causing this anxiety?

Theories of Anxiety

- Anxiety Expectation: will something bad happen?^{3*}
- Anxiety Sensitivity: how bad will that something be?^{3*}
- Possibility of academic and future career failure is a source of anxiety



What exacerbates anxiety?

- Academic stress
 - $r = 0.430^{**}$
 - Anxiety has a bi-directional relationship with academic failure; anxiety causes failure and failure causes anxiety^{4*}
 - Is academic success in college more important to students than it was 20 years ago?
- Financial burdens
 - $r = 0.189^{**}$
 - Financial burdens have steadily increased in students^{5*}
 - May help explain increasing rates of anxiety
- Recent hospitalization
 - $r = 0.142^{**}$

What protects against anxiety?

- Family support
 - $r = -0.160^{**}$
- Social support
 - $r = -0.167^{**}$
- Therapy was effective for students with anxiety
- How can counseling centers improve?

	Anxiety	Academic Concern	Financial Concern	Recent Hospital	Family Support	Social Support
Anxiety	x					
Academic Concern	0.430**	x				
Financial Concern	0.189**	-0.210**	x			
Recent Hospital	0.142**	0.062**	0.129**	x		
Family Support	-0.160**	-0.184**	-0.263**	-0.123**	x	
Social Support	-0.167**	-0.179**	-0.178**	-0.106**	0.399**	x

Conclusion

- Anxiety has a bi-directional relationship with academic failure
- Students today are more anxious than ever before
 - Increased pressure to succeed
 - Financial stress
- What can be done?
 - Increase support services
 - Decrease academic and financial burden on students

*citations available upon request
**significant at <0.001 level