



Unraveling the Researcher's Work-Life Imbalance

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The Struggles of Passion-Driven Researchers

Researchers often find themselves unable to separate their work from their life due to their intense passion for their field. High workloads, unclear boundaries, and a pressure to publish can lead to neglecting personal time.



High Workload and Long Work Hours

1 The Daily Grind

Long hours and endless experiments create an exhausting workload that leaves little room for personal life.

2 Academic Pressures

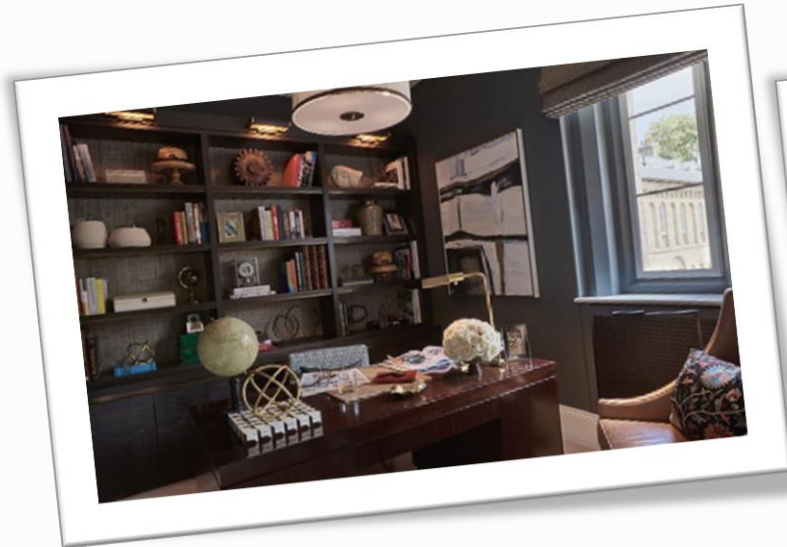
Pressure from university administration, grants, and other parties can add to the workload and exacerbate stress levels.

3 Deadlines Looming

The constant need to meet project timelines and research commitments means that there is always work to be done.



Boundary in Work and Life



Remote Research

Thanks to online tools and networks, research can often be conducted from the comfort of your own home, blurring the boundaries between work and life.



Public Places

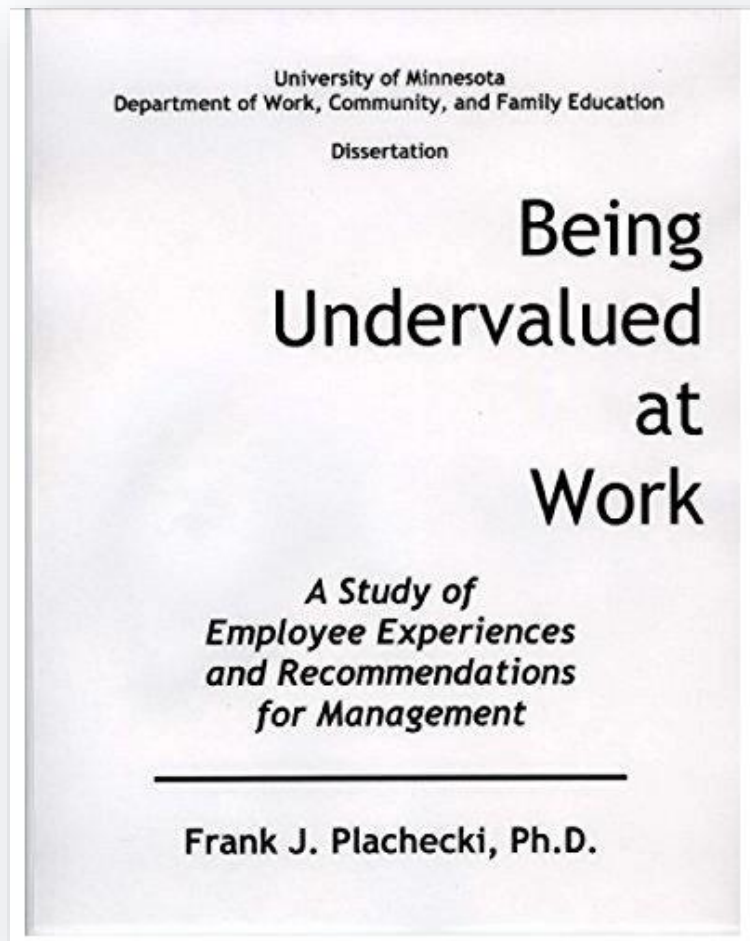
Academic work can be done anywhere, including public areas such as cafes or while commuting, making it difficult to untangle work-related brain from personal life.



Collaboration and Friendships

Research teams are often composed of close-knit groups of colleagues who share a passion for the topic, making it hard for work to not spill over during social interactions.

Pressure to Publish and Neglecting Personal Time



1 Perfectionism Prevails

The pressure to publish high-quality research creates a culture of perfectionism that makes it difficult to take time off or detach oneself from work entirely.

2 Career Prospects

Publishing research is integral to career progression and job security, leading to feelings of guilt or being undervalued if personal time is prioritized over work.

3 Publishing is a Metric

The amount and quality of research published has become a metric for measuring success, leading to researchers spending most of their time on work-related activities to the detriment of their personal lives.

Competition in Science: Links Between Publication Pressure, Grant Pressure and the Academic Job Market

Original Article | Published: 02 May 2017

Volume 31, pages 225–243, (2018) [Cite this article](#)



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Cathelijn I. F. Waaijer ✉ Christine Teelken Paul F. Wouters & Inge C. M. van der Weijden

how they are linked to the academic job market, are often neglected. In this study, we show that publication and grant pressure are not just external forces but internal ones as scientists apply pressure to themselves in the process of competition. Through two surveys, one of 1,133 recent PhDs at five Dutch universities and one of 225 postdoctoral researchers at two Dutch universities, we found that publication and grant pressure have to be considered in relation with competition for academic jobs. While publication and grant pressure are perceived to be too high by a majority



Postdoctoral researchers and other academics demand higher salaries and better benefits during a strike against the University of California last December. Credit: Sarah Reingewirtz/MediaNews Group/Los Angeles Daily News/Getty <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-01708-4>



Gabriela Khazanov, Ph.D.,
and Courtney Forbes,
M.A., M.Ed.

Behavior Briefing

PSYCHOLOGY

The Impact of the Pressure to Publish on Psychology Trainees

Papers, papers, everywhere.

Posted August 3, 2021 | [Reviewed by Chloe Williams](#)

A mental-health crisis is gripping science – toxic research culture is to blame

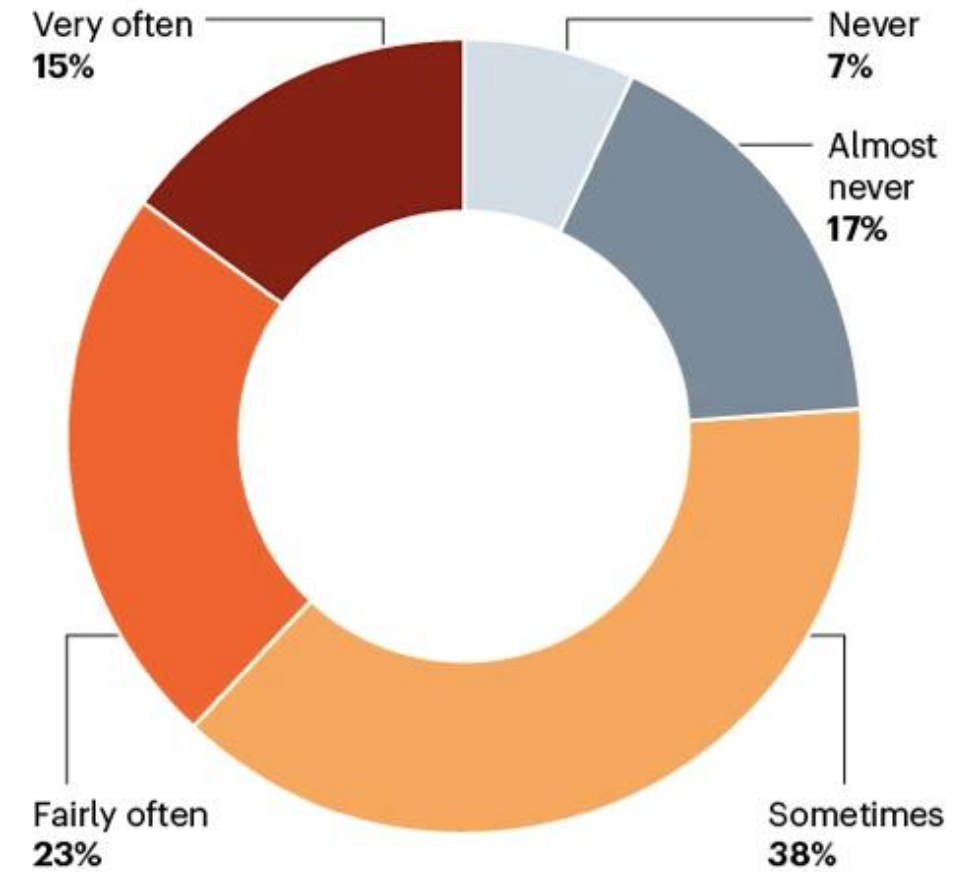
With researchers reporting high rates of anxiety and depression, calls are growing to fundamentally change science before it's too late.

STRUGGLES IN SCIENCE

Surveys show researchers are experiencing high rates of mental ill health, such as anxiety, depression and a sense of being overwhelmed by their work.

Graduate students report anxiety and depression at rates six times that of the general population, according to a survey of some 2,300 people from 26 countries. Rates were highest among transgender and female students.

In a worldwide survey of more than 13,000 researchers between October 2019 and July 2020, 38% said they felt overwhelmed by their situation at work very often or fairly often during the previous month.



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Sources: Left, Ref. 1; Right: Ref. 9

PsyPost

Home > Exclusive > Social Psychology

Perceived publication pressure is linked to intentions to engage in future scientific misconduct

by [Mane Kara-Yakoubian](#) — November 10, 2021 in Social Psychology

Competitive Environment and Overworking Culture

Overworking is Normalized

A competitive research environment can lead to workaholic behavior being normalized and even glorified, making it hard for researchers to break away from the cycle.

Work is Valued Over Time

In such an environment, work is often valued over personal time and the notion of work-life balance can be seen as a weakness.

Burnout and High Attrition Rates

The prevalence of overworking has led to high levels of stress, burnout and a significant attrition rate in the academic profession.

Overtime is a short-term solution, not an everyday expectation





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Consequences

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Workaholism can negatively influence private relations, leisure and health ([Andreassen, Griffiths, Hetland et al., 2012](#)). The symptoms are similar to what we see in other addictions, including effects on mood, tolerance and withdrawal ([Andreassen, Griffiths, Hetland et al., 2012](#); [Griffiths, 2011](#); [Sussman, 2012](#)). The following presents an overview of central findings related to the consequences of workaholism.

Studies show that when one experiences stress at work, individuals with a strong internal work drive report an increase in subjective *stress-related physical* and *psychological symptoms* compared to those with low scores ([Andreassen et al., 2007](#); [Andreassen, Hetland, Molde & Pallesen, 2011](#); [Bonebright et al., 2000](#); [Schaufeli et al., 2008](#); [Taris, Schaufeli & Verhoeven, 2005](#)). Thus, it is possible that *coping style* regulates the relationship between workaholism and health ([Andreassen, Hetland et al., 2012](#); [Shimazu, Schaufeli & Taris, 2010](#)).

Two studies have looked further into how workaholism relates to sleep. In one study, persons with the highest scores on workaholism were more likely than workers with low scores to report *sleep problems*, *tiredness at work*, and *difficulties waking up* in addition to *fatigue* in the mornings ([Kubota et al., 2010](#)). In the other study, [Andreassen et al. \(2011\)](#) found that high obsessive work drive was associated with insomnia.

Work-Life Imbalance is Unsustainable

Pressure to Publish + Unclear Boundaries + Competitive Environment = Burnout and Stress

Neglecting Personal Time + High Workload + Overworking Culture = Retained Careers and Personal Wellbeing

The Benefits of a Balanced Life



Reduced Stress

Balancing work with relaxation has been shown to significantly reduce stress levels and sustain a positive outlook on life.



Improved Relationships

Spending ample time with loved ones, engaging in social activities, and developing a robust social support system can strengthen relationships.



Renewed Energy

Needed rest and relaxation leads to renewed energy levels, a positive attitude, and greater productivity in work tasks.

The Importance of Work-Life Balance

1 Establish Clear Boundaries

Set clear rules for yourself regarding when and where you will engage in research activities, and stick to them.

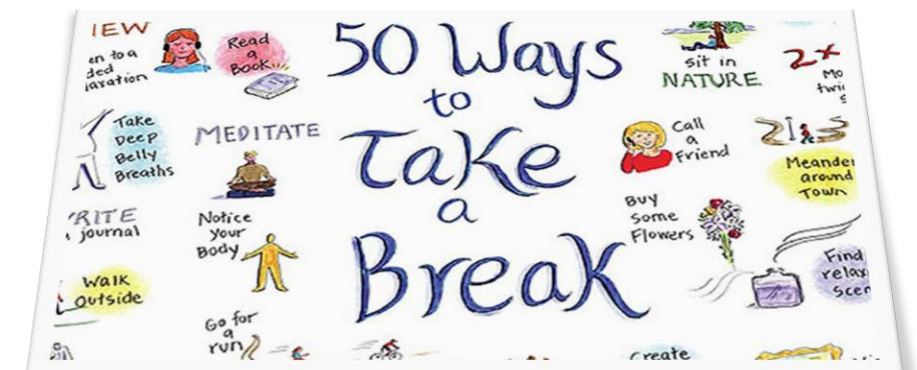


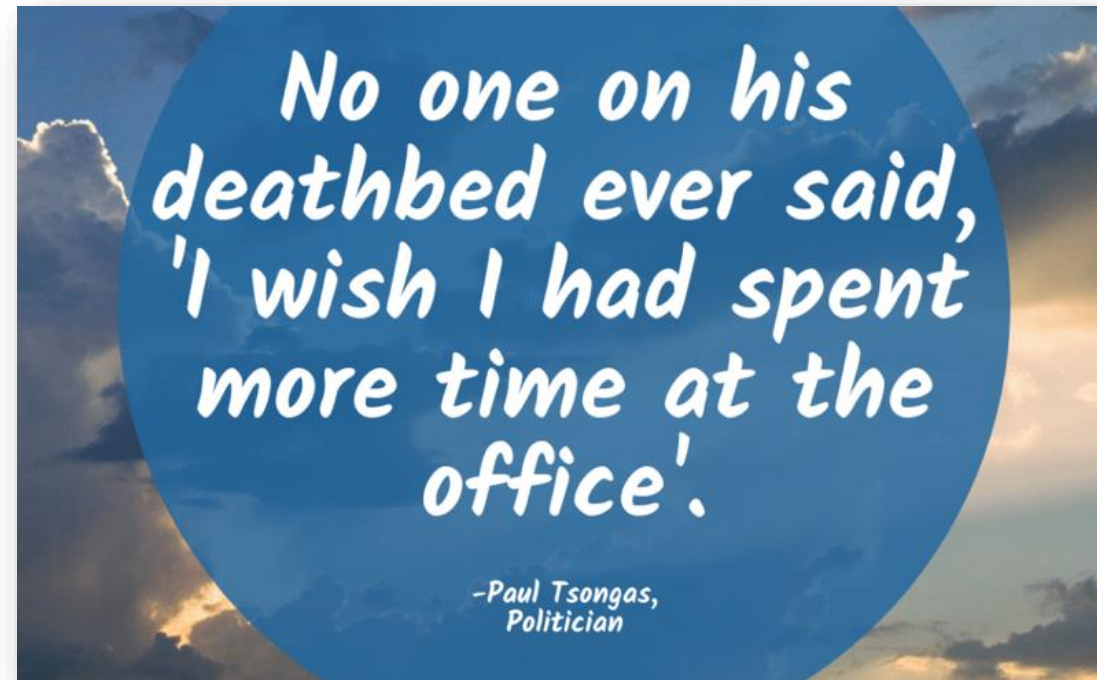
2 Prioritize Personal Time

Make sure to prioritize your personal time, hobbies, and relationships to maintain a healthy balance with your work life.

3 Take Breaks

Allow yourself time to rest and recharge. Do something that you enjoy, read a book, or go for a walk.





Thank you...

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