Work Stress and Well-being of
Hospital Doctors

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .......................... i
Table of Contents .......................... ii
List of Tables .............................. viii
List of Figures ............................. ix
Abstract ................................... x

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction ............................ 1

1.1.1 Current Situation in New Zealand 1
1.1.2 The Prevalence of Work Stress Research 3
1.1.3 Stressors of Work .......................... 3
1.1.4 The Effects of Work Stress ................. 3
1.1.5 Mediators in the Work Stress - Well-being Relationship 4
1.1.6 Purpose of the Present Study .......... 5
1.1.7 Rationale for the Present Study .......... 5

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definitions .............................. 6

2.1.1 Stress, Distress/Eustress and Strains 6
2.1.2 The Meaning of Work Stress ............. 6
2.1.3 The Meaning of Well-being .............. 7
2.1.4 Attributional Style ...................... 7
2.1.5 Stressful Life Events ................... 8

2.2 Stress and Well-being .................. 8

2.2.1 The Origins of Stress .................. 8
2.2.2 Stress and Appraisal .................... 9
2.2.3 Individual Differences and Stress
2.2.4 The Learned Helplessness Model
2.2.5 The Reformulated Learned Helplessness Model
2.2.6 Measurement of Stress
2.2.7 Methodological Designs of Stress Research
2.2.8 Theories Prevalent in Stress Research

2.3 Attribution Theory, Work Stress and Well-being
2.3.1 Attribution Theory
2.3.2 The General Stress-Strain Model
2.3.3 The Person-Environment-Fit Model
2.3.4 The Karasek Job Strain Model
2.3.5 The Fletcher Stressor-Strain Model
2.3.6 Work Stress, Strain and Well-being
2.3.7 Stressors in the Workplace
2.3.8 Individual Differences and Work Stress
2.3.9 Work Stress and Coping
2.3.10 The Effects of Work Stress on Psychological Well-being
2.3.11 Prevalence of Stress in Doctors
2.3.12 Work Stress and Allied Health Professionals
2.3.13 Social Support and Depression
2.3.14 Work Stress: General Practitioners versus Hospital Doctors

2.4 Demographics, Work Stress and Well-being
2.4.1 Job Position
2.4.2 Gender
2.4.3 Home/Work Interface

2.5 Personality, Work Stress and Well-being

2.5.1 Personal Characteristics and Job Choice

2.5.2 Personality Dispositions and the Perpetuation of Work Stress

2.5.3 Attribution and Personality Differences

2.5.4 Attribution, Helplessness and Depression

2.5.5 Negative Attributional Style and Depression

2.5.6 Measures of Attributional Style

2.5.7 Explanatory Style for Bad Events

2.6 Life Events, Attribution and Well-being

2.6.1 Life Events, Negative Attributional Style and Depression

2.6.2 Life Events and the Hopelessness Theory of Depression

2.6.3 Immigration

2.7 Attributional Style and Other Personality Variables

2.8 Additional Areas of Interest

2.8.1 Stress and Coping

2.8.2 Psychodynamic Versus Cognitive Theories of Depression

2.9 The Present Study

2.9.1 Justification

2.9.2 Aims and Objectives

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Method

3.2 Sample
5.2 Implications of these findings

5.2.1 Stressful Life Events 56
5.2.2 Effects of Gender 58
5.2.3 Work Stress and Well-being 58
5.2.4 Correlations Among Demographic and Other Variables 60
5.2.5 Attributional Style and Well-being 61

5.3 Limitations of the Present Study 63

5.3.1 Measures of Work Stress 63
5.3.2 Response Rate and Sample Size 64
5.3.3 Method of Data Collection and Other Constraints 64

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION 66

6.1 Conclusion 66

6.2 Recommendations for Organisations 66

6.2.1 Wellness Programmes 66
6.2.2 Annual Resource Questionnaire 67
6.2.3 Health Advisory Services 67
6.2.4 Stress Education 67
6.2.5 Training Programmes 68
6.2.6 Foreign Doctor Monitoring 68
6.2.7 Employee Assistance Programmes 68

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research 68

6.3.1 Cross-sectional Studies with Other Health Professionals 68
6.3.2 Coping and Social Support 69
6.3.3 Sources of Work Stress 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Comparisons of Means and Standard Deviations for Scaled Scores with Related Studies</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Comparisons of Means and Standard Deviations for Scaled Scores of New Zealand Trained Versus Overseas Trained Doctors</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Comparisons of Means and Standard Deviations for Scaled Scores of Junior and Senior Doctors</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Mean (standard deviation) GHQ Likert Scale Scores and Frequency of GHQ Defined ‘Caseness’ By Professional Status</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Results Of Two-Way ANOVAS, with Two Levels of Gender (women versus men) and Two Levels of Marital Status (single/divorced versus married/cohabiting), on the Stress and Well-Being Variables’ Scores</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of the Variable Scores for Gender and Marital Status</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Principal Components Analysis and Varimax Rotation of Selected Items From the PSI</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Scales and Demographic Variables (gender and age)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis For PSI Factors and Attributional Style for Good and Bad Events on General Health Questionnaire Scores</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis for Stressful Life Events and Attributional Style for Good and Bad Events on General Health Questionnaire Scores</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>A stressor-strain model of occupational stress</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>The process of learned helplessness</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the work stress and well-being of hospital doctors and to determine whether underlying personality dispositions and stressful life events impacted on this relationship. The sample population consisted of 680 (full-time and part-time) medical practitioners from Auckland Hospital, Green Lane Hospital and Starship Hospital. The final sample was comprised of 173 medical practitioners (junior and senior) with a 25.4% response rate. The questionnaire method was utilized with the Physician Stress Inventory measuring work stress and the General Health Questionnaire 12 measuring well-being. The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was used to assess the number of stressful life events experienced by the doctors in a year and the Attributional Style Questionnaire was used to assess the role personality dispositions can play in the work stress-well-being relationship. The doctors indicated that perceived work productivity and idealistic traits were the most prevalent sources of work stress. Junior doctors experienced more stressful life events than senior doctors. Overall, 35% of the doctors were at risk to experiencing some degree of psychological morbidity, but the criteria for determining morbidity is questionable. An underlying personality disposition, attributional style of stability for good events was associated with positive well-being and acted as a mediator in the relationships of physicians’ stress and life events to negative well-being. These findings however cannot be generalized due to the small sample size and future research in this domain will help unfold a more clear and definite association between work stress and well-being of hospital doctors.