

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

An Investigation into the Psychological Factors Related to Occupational Overuse Syndrome.

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of
Arts in Psychology, at
Massey University.

Jon Dannatt

1993

MASSEY UNIVERSITY



1061285667

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the psychological factors that relate to Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS). The specific focus of this study was the work related behaviours associated with OOS. OOS is a condition in which sufferers experience pain in the neck, shoulders and/or upper limbs, and is often work related. Previous research in this area has found a relationship between OOS symptoms and work related behaviours encompassed by the Type A Behaviour Pattern. The current study was designed to increase knowledge in this area.

A total of 575 respondents completed a questionnaire designed to measure OOS, Type A Behaviour, and Quality of Working Life. Correlations between the main variables of OOS and Type A Behaviours found a consistent relationship between the syndrome variables and the Speed and Impatience behaviour sub scale. Strong intercorrelations were also found within the OOS variables and the Type A variables. One way analysis of variances determined that there were a range of confounds between main and demographic variables. To control for the effects of the confounds multiple regression analysis was used. The percentage of OOS explained by the Type A variables was small but significant.

The implications of the above relationships were discussed. The Speed and Impatience behaviour type can be seen as a positive employee characteristic and therefore should be further investigated in order to control for its maladaptive aspects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mike Smith, for his guidance and encouragement in the preparation of this thesis. Thanks also to Mr Kerry Chamberlain for his assistance with the data analysis.

Many thanks to the other members of the research team Bert, Ross, Christine, Frank Darby from Occupational Safety and Health Services, Department of Health, Jenny Beek, Penny Harding, Corinne Ambler and David Patton from Independent Newspapers Limited, for their assistance.

Thanks also to the various academic and office staff in the Psychology Department, who in numerous ways have helped in my endeavours.

I would also like to express appreciation to my family and friends for their encouragement and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	v
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Occupational Overuse Syndrome	1
Psychological Aspects of OOS	2
Typical OOS Sufferer's Profile	7
2 THE TYPE A BEHAVIOUR PATTERN	9
Psychological Foundations of Type A	11
Alternative Views to Type A behaviour	11
3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TYPE A BEHAVIOUR PATTERN AND THE OCCUPATIONAL OVERUSE SYNDROME	14
Type A and Physiological Reactivity	13
Type A behaviour and physical stress/strain	15
Nature of the Relationship Between Type A Behaviour and Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)	16
Type A behaviour and the Reporting Pattern of Stress and Strain	17

	Suppression of Symptom Reporting - Theory One	17
	Type 'As' Positive Relationship with Symptom Reporting	19
	Explanation of Symptom reporting Hypothesis	21
	Conclusion of Chapter Three	22
4	MEASUREMENT OF THE TYPE A BEHAVIOUR PATTERN	23
	Type A Measurements	23
	The Structures Interview	23
	The Jenkins Activity Survey	24
	JAS Sub-scales	26
	JAS Hard-Driving and Competitive scale	26
	JAS Job Involvement scale	27
	JAS Speed and Impatience scale	27
	Potential Mediators of the Type A Behaviour Pattern - Chronic Heart Disease Relationship	28
	Sex	28
	Age	29
	Socio-economic Status and Education	30
	Employment Status	30
	Comment : Self-Report Approaches to Type A Assessment	31
	Divergence in research findings	32
	New Directions in Type A research	32
	Conclusions of Chapter Four	33
5	RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND METHOD	35
	The Current Research	35
	Current Research Hypothesis	35

Method	36
Subjects	36
Procedure	36
Occupational Overuse Syndrome Questionnaire	37
The Questionnaire : Section One	37
OOS Measure	37
The Questionnaire : Section Two	37
 6 RESULTS	 39
Data Analysis Procedures	39
Correlations Between OOS and Type A	39
OOS Intercorrelations	41
Type A Intercorrelations	41
Analysis of Variance for Sex and Age	43
Analysis of Variance for Type of Work	46
Analysis of Variance for Paper Location	46
Hierarchical Regression Analysis	48
 7 DISCUSSION	 50
Research Hypothesis	50
Explanation of Analysis of Variance Results	53
Sex	54
Age	54
Type of Work	55
Paper Location	56
Explanation of Correlational Results	57
OOS	57
Type A	58
Summary and Conclusions	59

Suggestions for Future Research	62
REFERENCES	63
APPENDICES	76
APPENDIX A: Covering Letter	77
APPENDIX B: Follow Up Letter One	78
APPENDIX C: Follow Up Letter Two	79
APPENDIX D: The Independent Newspapers Limited Questionnaire for Occupational Overuse Syndrome and Type A Behaviour	80

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Correlation Matrix for OOS by Type A Variables	40
2	Correlation Matrix for OOS Variables	41
3	Correlation Matrix for Type A Variables	42
4	Means and F Ratios between Sex and Age and Main Effect Variables	44
5	Means and F Ratios between Type of Work and Main Variables	45
6	Means and F Ratios between Location of Paper and Main Variables	47
7	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	49