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### **Undergraduate psychology training and workplace needs: student perspectives on the extent to which their education prepares them for their chosen career**

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## **Undergraduate psychology training and workplace needs: student perspectives on the extent to which their education prepares them for their chosen career**

### **Abstract**

The current study surveyed 195 first to fourth year psychology students at a regional university in New South Wales about the amount of applied content in undergraduate psychology training and post-graduate opportunities for employment as a psychologist. Eighty-nine percent of students believed that the level of applied psychological training was either nonexistent or inadequate, and therefore did not equip them for finding work as a psychologist. Ninety-six percent of students who wished to become intern psychologists believed that opportunities for working as intern generalist psychologists were either non-existent or insufficient. Concerns around employment and registration opportunities reflected this group's disillusionment with undergraduate training. Availability of work-place supervision and associated worry about paying for alternative private supervision was also evident. Recommendations for further investigation of the 'goodness of fit' between undergraduate psychology training and the ability of students to be competitive in the workplace following graduation will be articulated.

### **Keywords**

needs, workplace, training, psychology, undergraduate, them, prepares, education, their, career, which, chosen, extent, perspectives, student

### **Disciplines**

Arts and Humanities | Life Sciences | Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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*Abstracts of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology*

2 Forward from the Editors

**Forward from the Editors**

It is with great pleasure that we present the *Abstracts of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology*. These abstracts represent the great breadth of topics covered by the presentations at the

Congress, including over 100 State of the Art and other invited keynote addresses, over 200 symposia,

almost 600 individual oral presentations, over 600 brief oral presentations, and over 550 electronic posters,

bringing together more than 2000 presenters from 60 countries - a truly international event. The range and

depth of the research reflected in these abstracts attests to the vibrant international applied psychology

community across the world.

The 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology incorporated the 45th Annual Australian Psychological Society Conference, and on behalf of the Scientific Program Committee, we'd like to thank all

who contributed to the scientific program on behalf of the IAAP and the APS. We would also like to thank

the many Congress registrants for helping to make this such a successful event, both for the IAAP and the

APS.

All abstracts presented here have been blind reviewed by a dedicated group of volunteer reviewers, who

deserve our sincerest thanks for participating in the review process, many of them dedicating a considerable amount of their time to ensuring the high quality of presentations during the Congress.

This publication would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of those at the Australian Psychological Society, who worked tirelessly to proof read, collate and format these abstracts.

We are extremely grateful and thankful to Joanne Howard, Athena Politis, Renee Taylor, Jennifer Jackson,

Kylie Murphy, Angela Nicholas, and many, many others for their support. Special thanks must also be paid

to Laura Sciacchitano for her tireless effort and enthusiasm in completing this publication.

Vicky Mrowinski BBSoc (Hons) Assoc MAPS, Michael Kyrios PhD FAPS and Nicholas Voudouris PhD MAPS

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*Abstracts of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology*

4 Opening Keynote Address

**Opening Keynote Address**

**The more who die, the less we care: Psychic numbing and genocide**

SLOVIC, P. (Decision Research and University of Oregon)

Most people are caring and will exert great effort to rescue individual victims whose needy plight comes to their attention. These same good people, however, often become numbly indifferent to the plight of individuals who are "one of many" in a much greater problem. Why does this occur? The answer to this question will help us answer a related question that is the topic of this talk: Why, over the past century, have good people repeatedly ignored mass murder and genocide? I shall draw from psychological research to show how the statistics of mass murder or genocide, no matter how large the numbers, fail to convey the true meaning of such atrocities. The reported numbers of deaths represent dry statistics, "human beings with the tears dried off," that fail to spark emotion or feeling and thus fail to motivate action. Recognizing that we cannot rely only upon our moral feelings to motivate proper action against genocide, we must look to moral

argument and international law. The 1948 Genocide Convention was supposed to meet this need, but it has not been effective. It is time to examine this failure in light of the psychological deficiencies I shall describe and design legal and institutional mechanisms that will enforce proper response to genocide and other forms of mass murder.

*Abstracts of the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology*

**Medication alliance: Development and implementation of a mental health staff training program for the enhancement of patient medication adherence**

BYRNE, M. (University of Wollongong)

Patient non-adherence to prescribed medications remains a major hurdle in the effective delivery of health care services for people experiencing chronic illnesses. Nonadherence rates are particularly high among those with major mental health problems. The aim of this research was to investigate barriers to the implementation of adherence interventions, in particular, clinician skills, attitudes and knowledge, as well as describing a potential strategy to overcome these barriers. This research incorporated three phases. Firstly, mental health clinicians were surveyed using a series of cross-sectional studies to investigate the relationship between their beliefs and knowledge with respect to medications and adherence, and their self reported efforts to enhance patient adherence. Secondly, a clinician training program (*Medication Alliance*) was developed based on belief and knowledge deficits found in phase one and this was evaluated with a sample of mental health professionals. In the third phase, a sample of patients with mental health problems were assessed for changes in adherence behaviour and mental health status following the training of their mental health care provider in Medication Alliance. The first phase of research indicated that poorer knowledge and more negative attitudes were associated with the extent to which mental health clinicians sought to enhance patient adherence. The second phase of research provided significant evidence that Medication Alliance training improved clinician skills (CBT), knowledge and attitudes with respect to the enhancement of patient adherence. In the third phase, the data indicated that patients of clinicians who had received

Medication Alliance training experienced an improvement in both their adherence and their mental health. A model was developed from the data which explained this improvement in terms of the therapeutic alliance and patient insight. Efforts to enhance patient adherence to treatment should include a focus on the 'frontline' clinicians delivering mental health services. Appropriate attention to clinician skills, attitudes and knowledge can enable the improvement of patient adherence to treatment. Larger studies across chronic health domains are needed to substantiate these findings.

Keywords: *patient medication, mental health, training, attitudes*

**Undergraduate psychology training and workplace needs: Student perspectives on the extent to which their education prepares them for their chosen career**

STOYLES, G. (University of Wollongong), CAPUTI, P. (University of Wollongong), BYRNE, M. (University of Wollongong), CROWE, T. (University of Wollongong)

The current study surveyed 195 first to fourth year psychology students at a regional university in New South Wales about the amount of applied content in undergraduate psychology training and post-graduate opportunities for employment as a psychologist. Eighty-nine percent of students believed that the level of applied psychological training was either nonexistent or inadequate, and therefore did not equip them for finding work as a psychologist. Ninety-six percent of students who wished to become intern psychologists believed that opportunities for working as intern generalist psychologists were either non-existent or insufficient. Concerns around employment and registration opportunities reflected this group's disillusionment with undergraduate training. Availability of work-place supervision and associated worry about paying for alternative private supervision was also evident. Recommendations for further investigation of the 'goodness of fit' between undergraduate psychology training and the ability of students to be competitive in the workplace following graduation will be articulated.

Keywords: *students, undergraduate psychology, employment, supervision*

quality of the relationship and perceived experience of a therapist.

Keywords: *therapeutic relationship, boundary, trust*

**Family carer attitudes toward medications are related to self-reported medication adherence amongst people with mental illness**

DEANE, F. (University of Wollongong), BYRNE, M. (University of Wollongong), MORTIMER, C. (University of Wollongong)

Others' beliefs influence our own attitudes and behaviours. Parents in particular can affect their children's behaviour by influencing their attitudes and cognitions. The aim of the present study was to explore the beliefs that family carers had toward medications and to determine whether these were related to the attitudes and medication adherence of their family member with mental illness (consumers). Forty adult carer-consumer dyads independently completed the Beliefs about Medicines Questionnaire (Horne, Weinman & Hankins, 1999), the Drug Attitudes Inventory (Hogan, Awad & Eastwood, 1983) and measures of medication adherence. Carer and consumer attitudes toward medications were strongly positively correlated. Further, carer attitudes were significantly correlated with consumers' self reported adherence. However, consumers' own attitudes were more strongly related to their adherence ratings. Consumers and family carers had high levels of awareness of each other's attitudes toward medications. The moderate relationship between carer and consumer attitudes highlights the need to target psycho-educational activities to increase adherence at both carers and consumers. There is also a need to better understand whether attitude transfer between carers and consumers is a two-way process.

*Keywords: medication adherence, caregivers, beliefs, family, medication*