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Burnout Syndrome in Students of a Distance Learning Program: The Open University of Cyprus Experience

Pavlakis, Andreas

Title:	Burnout Syndrome in Students of a Distance Learning Program: The Open University of Cyprus Experience
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Author:	Pavlakis, Andreas, Kaitelidou, Dafni
Abstract:	Introduction: Distance learning seems to have a crucial impact on the social and emotional life of students. Within the framework of distance learning at the Open University of Cyprus, the "Healthcare Management" department conducted a study regarding the levels of stress, anxiety and depression reported by the student population. The aim of the study was to record the emotional state of the students and possible factors affecting it. During the second academic year (2007-8), a questionnaire was disseminated at the first and last student group meetings to all 142 students enrolled in the "Healthcare Management" course. All students present were asked to complete the questionnaire. The response rate at the first meeting was 73% of enrolled students and at the last meeting the response rate was 52%. More than 47% of the participants were 30-45 years of age, female, and married with children. Most were pleased with their course choice but also felt that their enrolment in the course was a source of stress for them. Ten percent of students experienced stress and depression. In addition, more than one third of participants experienced high levels of burnout which subsequently decreases during the academic year and in parallel, there is a decrease in the number of students experiencing high personal achievements. Regardless of age, studying at the OUC is a source of stress to the students, a finding that should be taken into consideration so that measures are taken to address this problem in order to decrease it. There is a clear need for further research using specialized inventory tools and within the wider student population. (Contains 5 tables.)