



UiO : Det matematisk-naturvitenskapelige fakultet

# Nasjonale forskerutdanningskonferanse

Helskinnet gjennom doktorgraden  
- ph.d.-kandidatenes psykososiale helse

● Universitetet i Sørøst-Norge  
● 5.-6. juni 2019

# Økende bevissthet rundt mental helse

Forskerforum

NYHETER REPORTASJE KRITIKK OG DEBATT



Ph.d-kandidater har større sannsynlighet for å utvikle psykiske plager enn andre, ifølge en fersk studie. Illustrasjonsfoto: Shutterstock

– Det er vanligere at folk sitter og gråter, enn at de ikke gjør det

Av Jørgen Svarstad  
Publisert 16. mai 2017

Mange ph.d.-stipendiater sliter psykisk, viser ny studie. Kristine Mollø-Christensen ved Universitetet i Oslo treffer de som er lengst nede.

Mest lest

Nord: Rektor snur om nedbygging av studiesteder

## Ph.d-studenter mer utsatte for psykiske problemer

Stress, konkurranse og liten kontroll øker risikoen for psykiske problemer. En ny studie indikerer at doktorgradsstudenter er vesentlig mer utsatt enn befolkningen generelt.



FOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

Fiertallet av respondentene som opplever angst eller depresjon følte ikke at de ble verdsatt av vellederen sin, viser undersøkelsen.

# Økende bevissthet rundt mental helse

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Ph.D. students face significant mental health challenges



## Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students



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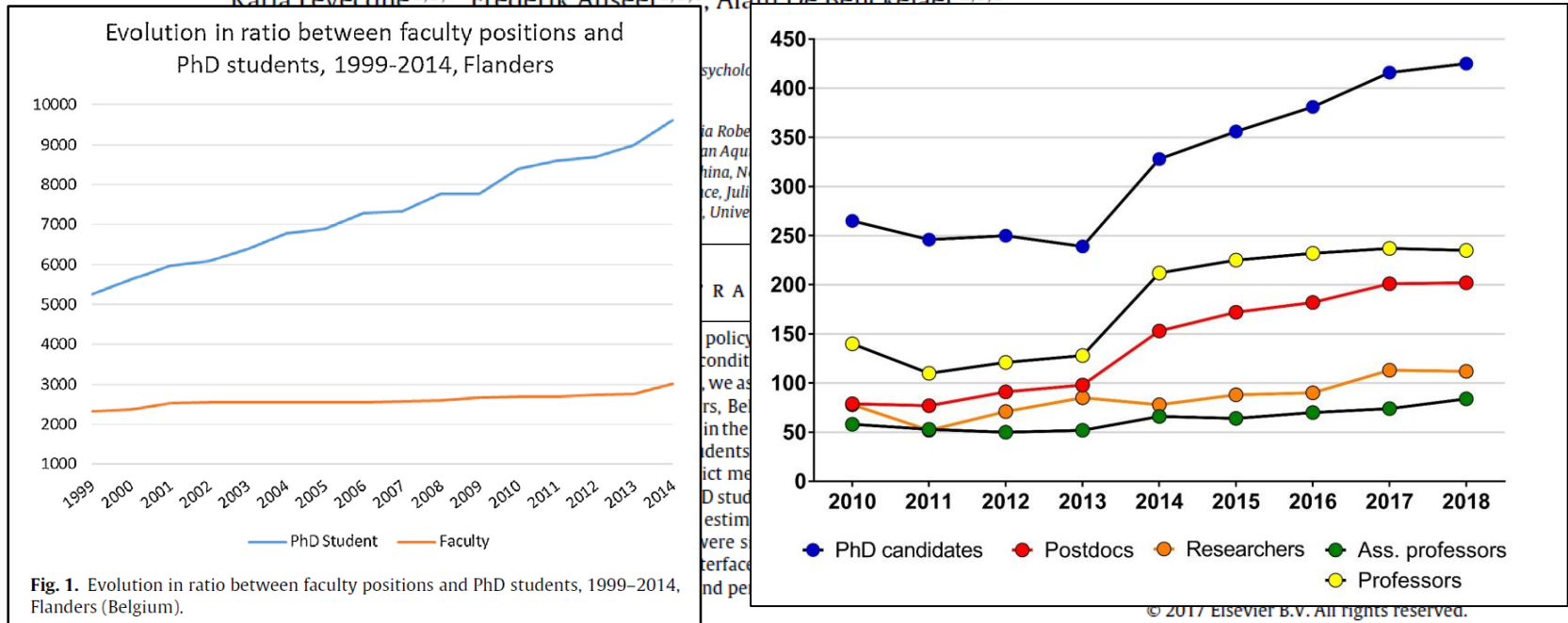
### ABSTRACT

Research policy observers are increasingly concerned about the potential impact of current academic working conditions on mental health, particularly in PhD students. The aim of the current study is threefold. First, we assess the prevalence of mental health problems in a representative sample of PhD students in Flanders, Belgium ( $N = 3659$ ). Second, we compare PhD students to three other samples: (1) highly educated in the general population ( $N = 769$ ); (2) highly educated employees ( $N = 592$ ); and (3) higher education students ( $N = 333$ ). Third, we assess those organizational factors relating to the role of PhD students that predict mental health status. Results based on 12 mental health symptoms (GHQ-12) showed that 32% of PhD students are at risk of having or developing a common psychiatric disorder, especially depression. This estimate was significantly higher than those obtained in the comparison groups. Organizational policies were significantly associated with the prevalence of mental health problems. Especially work-family interface, job demands and job control, the supervisor's leadership style, team decision-making culture, and perception of a career outside academia are linked to mental health problems.

## Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students



Katia Levecque<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Frederik Anseel<sup>a,b,c</sup>, Alain De Beuckelaer<sup>d,e,a</sup>



# The problems

- A lack of clarity about:
  - roles
  - what constitutes a research job/career
  - the defining characteristics of a 'researcher'
- Unclear expectations
- An absence of recognition of research as a profession
- Understanding the PhD process
- Impostor syndrome
- Solitude/isolation
- Working hours
- Time management
- Stress management
- Finding a sense of community
- Competing factors
- Goals of PhD project changes
- Second year blues
- Alignment between your research interests and your adviser's research interests
- An unique experience for every PhD candidate

# The problems

## Additional issues confronting international PGRs

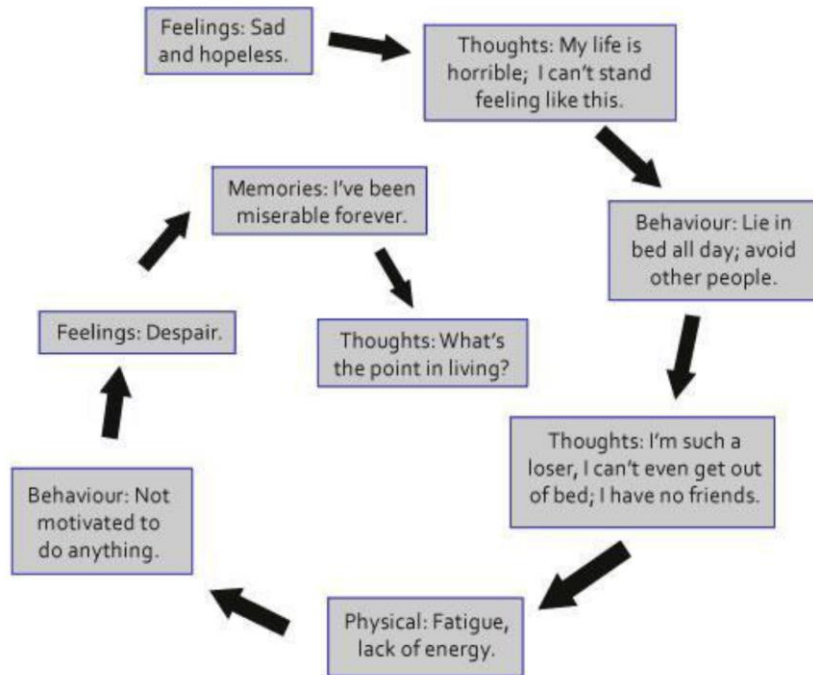
- Language barrier
- Operating in a different academic culture
- Cultural shock
  - A culture of silence
  - Too proud to talk about psychological problems
- A dual sense of loneliness
- Enormous pressure to succeed
- Physical distance from one's most important social connections
- Adjusting to the nordic climate
- Identity crisis

# The problems

## Additional issues confronting international PGRs

### The downward spiral

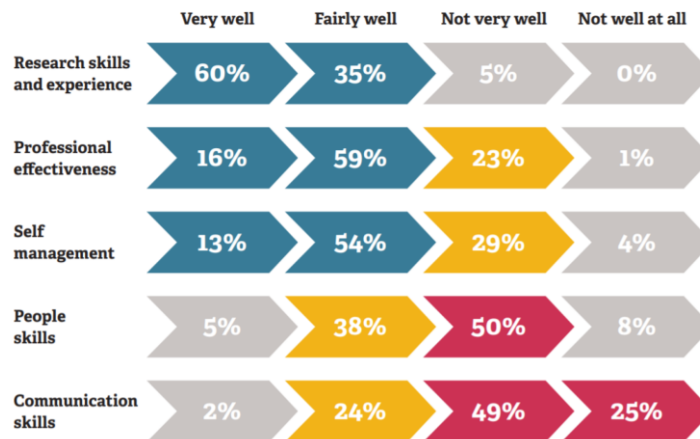
- Self-doubt
- Extreme self-criticism
- Frustration
- Guilty feeling
- Self-disappointment
- Anger
- Feeling sad and hopeless



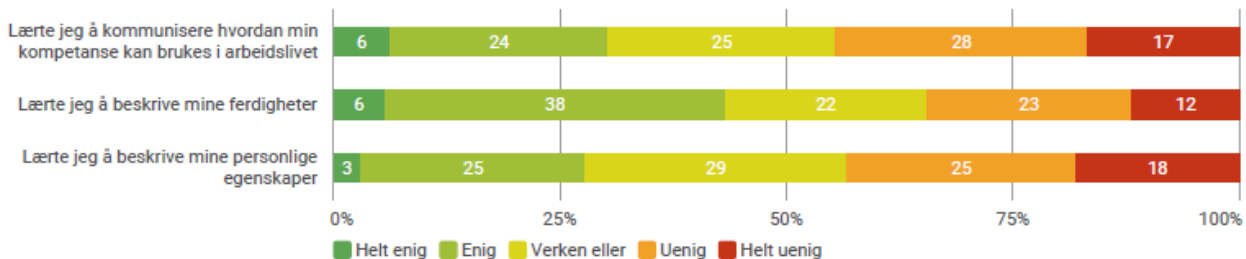


# The problems

We asked researchers about their confidence in articulating their competencies:



Hvor enig eller uenig er du i følgende påstander: Under studietiden ved UiO...

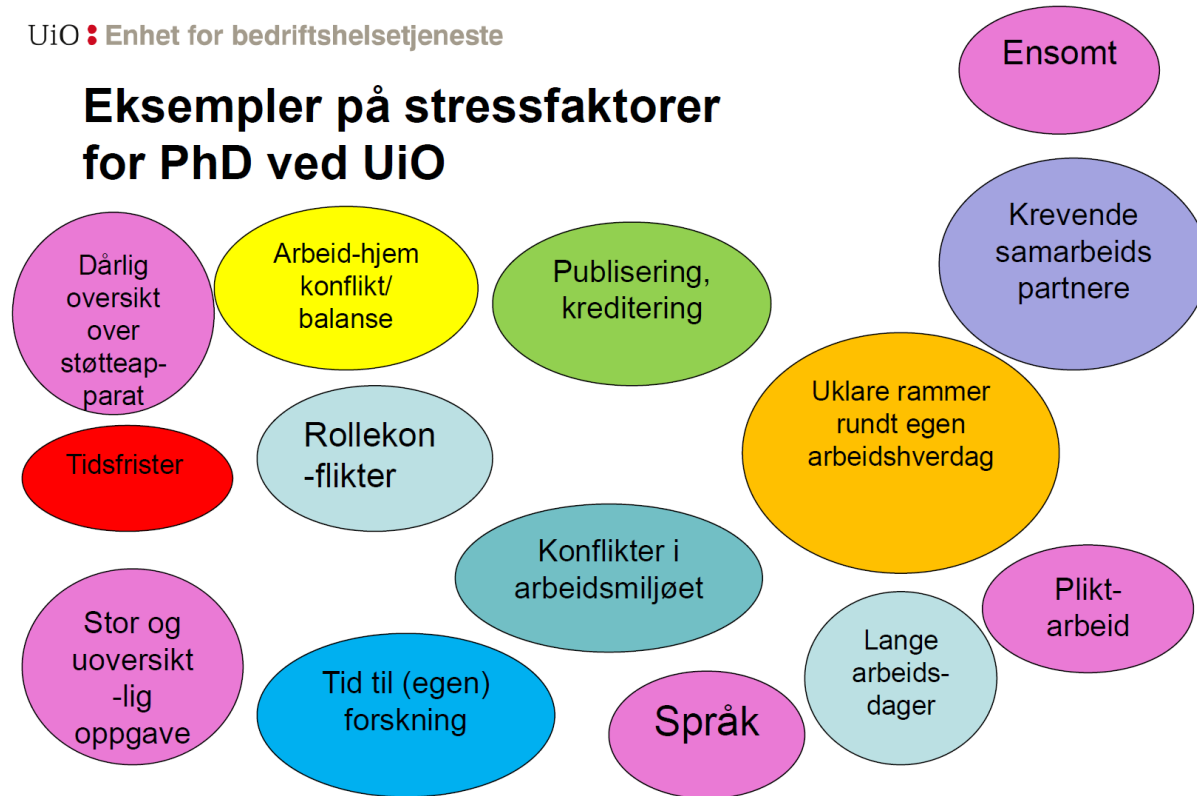


# Stress

## Factors

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### Eksempler på stressfaktorer for PhD ved UiO



# Actions

- Clarify roles
  - Students vs employees
- Get counselling
- Talk with friends/colleagues
- Peer to peer mentoring programs
- Social activities
- Networking with peers
- Follow courses (transferable skills)
- Proactively develop your future career!
- Change of supervisor(s)
- Mandatory appraisal interviews
- Guidelines for mandatory obligations
- Easily accessible information about the occupational health services
- “Mandatory” meetings with BHT for new candidates
- Prevent stress
  - Feeling of purpose
  - Feeling of coping/mastering
  - Feeling of recognition
  - Knowledge about the psyche
  - Nutrition
  - Sleep
  - Someone to talk to
  - Rituals/routines

# Actions

UiO : Enhet for bedriftshelsetjeneste

## Positive tiltak etter vår erfaring

Legge til rette for kontakt med andre PhD

Oversikt administrasjonen

Stresskurs tidlig i midtperioden

Medarbeider-samtaler

Fokus også på: Skrivehåndverket, presentasjon og undervisning

Hyppig veiledning

Arena for å snakke om PhD livet