

Workloads and well-being supports

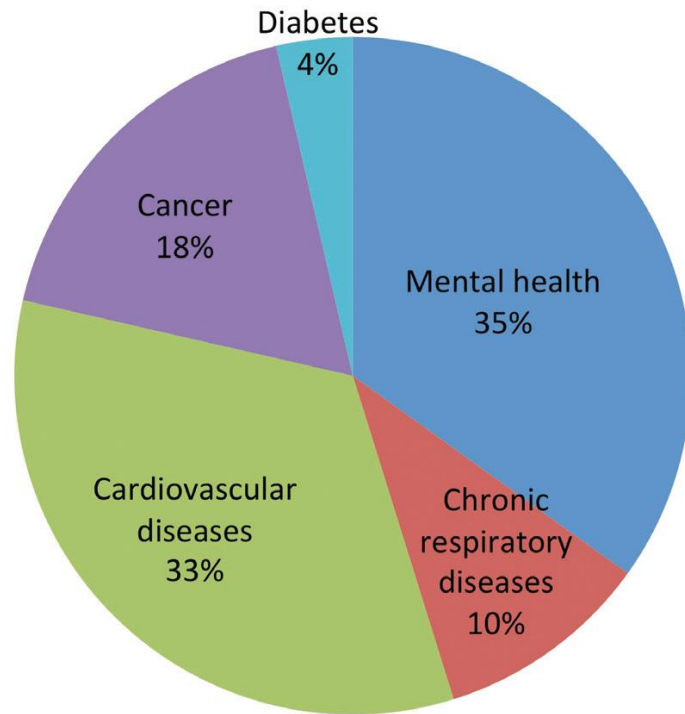
Professor Barbara Dooley,
University College Dublin

EUA-CDE Thematic Workshp, 23rd Jan2020
Tbilisi Georgia



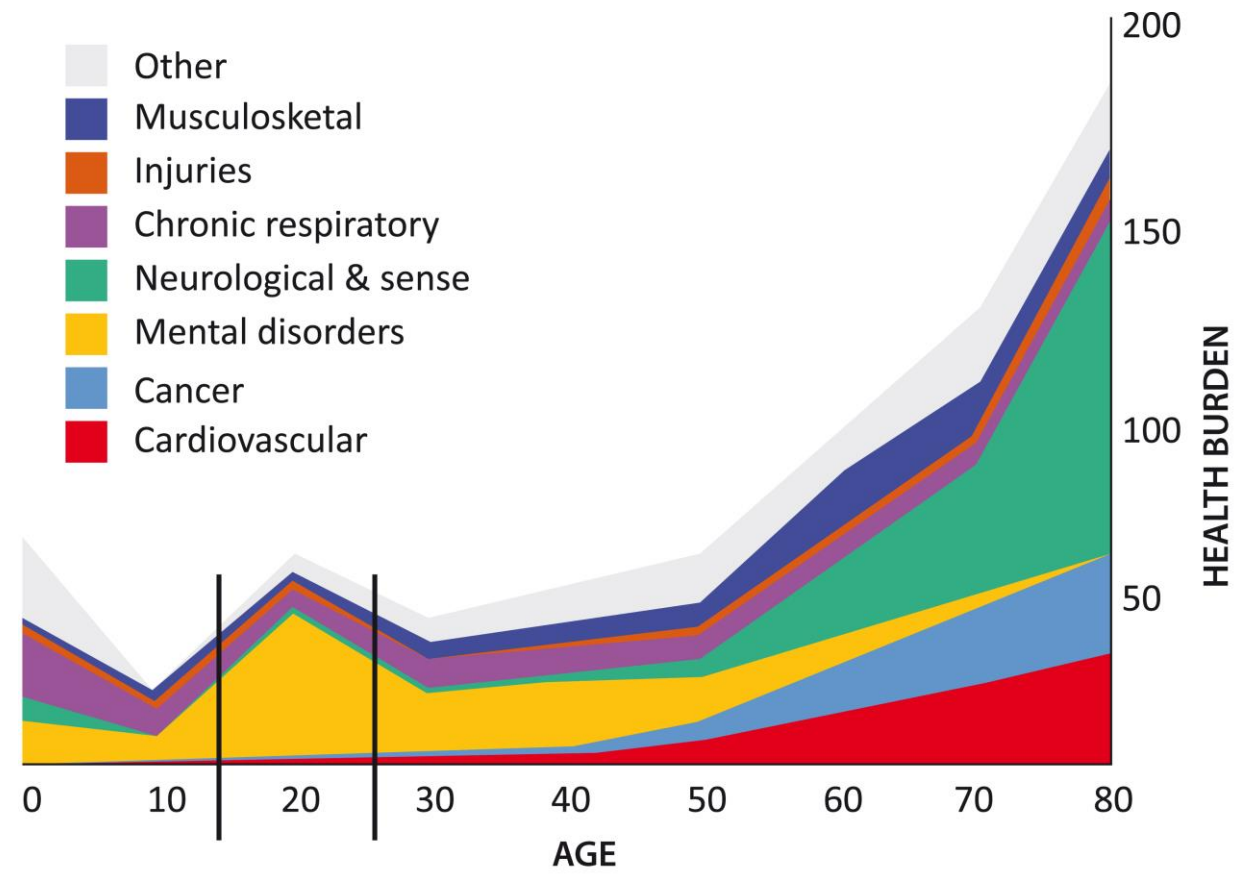
Why is it important for universities to focus on mental health?

Lost Economic Output by Disease Type, 2011-2030



**The Global Economic Burden of
Non-communicable Diseases**

When do mental health issues begin to emerge?





Mental health and higher education

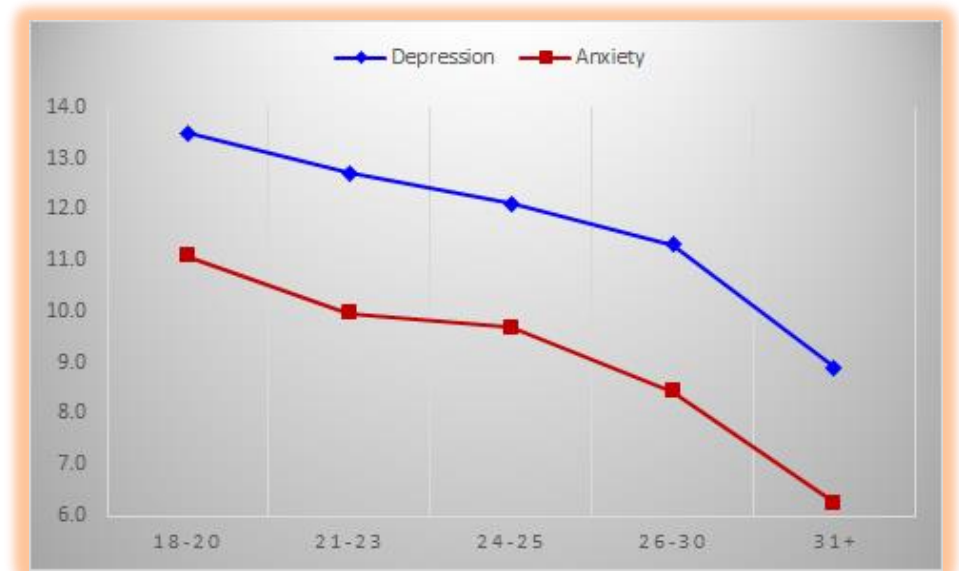
- Increased focus, mostly on undergraduates
- Increased demand
- PhD candidates gap in understanding
 - Can impact completion time
 - Need to look at the causes
- Anxiety and depression top presenting issues

- Depression
 - UG 24%
 - PGT 20%
 - PGR 12%

Categories of severe/very severe

- Anxiety
 - 28% UG
 - 20% PGT
 - 16% PGR

Depression and Anxiety



Supervision and support Studentsurvey.ie

84% reported
appropriate level of
support

86% appropriate
level of contact

83% reported
receiving feedback

77% understand
deadlines for formal
assessment

58% appropriate
orientation

42% aware of
student supports

42% reported their
institution values
and responds to
feedback

33% advice on
career options



Personal Outlook Studentsurvey.ie

80% felt their research degree is worthwhile

77% satisfied with life within their institution

73% satisfied with life

56% satisfied with work-life balance

55% reported there is someone they can talk to in their institution



Findings from Vitae Study (2018)

- Opportunity to enhance PGR experience by considering the following
 - Supervision
 - Conflict
 - Knowing the processes
 - Signposting to support
 - Motivating when the dip occurs
 - Finances
 - Monitor extent of MH issues & demand
- Potential triggers
 - Isolation
 - International, part-time, family responsibilities

The PhD Experience: Review of the Factors Sverdlik, Hall, McAlpine & Hubbard (2018)

External factors

- Supervision
- Departmental/school structures & integration
- Social / personal life
- Finances

Internal factors

- Motivation
 - Lack of structure
 - Admission
 - Intrinsic
- Self-worth & self-efficacy
- Writing skills
- Academic identity

Factors
(Cornwall et
al.2016)
many
controllable
with good
policy and
practice

Time pressures

Understanding of doctoral processes

Sense of belonging to scholarly community

Social isolation

Financial impact of study

Workload

Doubt

Work/life balance

Supervision

Synergies with world of work (2017)

Thriving at work


The Stevenson / Farmer review
of mental health and employers

- Mental health standards
 - Produce, implement and communicate a MH plan
 - Encourage open conversations
 - Provide good working conditions with a healthy work-life balance & opportunities for development
 - Promote effective people management
 - Routinely monitor employee MH and wellbeing



The University Mental Health Charter (2019)

- UK - A whole university approach
- Catalyst projects
<https://re.ukri.org/research/postgraduate-researchers/>



Evidence we
are on the
journey

The voice of PGRs

Addressing known issues

- Developing community, dedicated space
- Supervision, supervisor training
- PhD journey
- Mentoring
- Good practice guides
- System and processes
- Diversity
- Culture
- Work life balance
- Role overload & control

Thank you

