May Napora is a sophomore from Chicago, Illinois. She is a double major in Graphic Design and Animation and will be studying Illustration in Italy in Summer 2018. She firmly believes in the power of storytelling as well as the magical healing abilities of ice cream.
FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the fifth edition of The Honors Platform! This journal is produced by Central Michigan University undergraduate honors students in an effort to highlight the impressive diversity of disciplines, accomplishments, scholarly activity, and creative endeavors within our community.

To that end, pieces are published which reflect the core values of the honors program in a variety of ways. This semester, we received more submissions than any previous edition. We were impressed by the quality and variety of work being done by CMU honors students. The submitted work underscores the program-wide core values of (1) critical thought, scholarly inquiry, and creative expression and (2) active citizenship and service for the greater good.

The Honors Platform would not exist as a unifying and illuminating resource without the support of Dr. Phame Camarena, the director of the CMU Honors Program. He has shown years of unwavering support for the journal, and was again dedicated to publishing the best work of our community in this edition. We owe much to Phame’s encouragement and high standards.

I would also like to thank the associate editor of the journal this year, Anna Shapland, as well as the editorial board, Kailyn Delmotte, Jade Driscoll, Cassandra Malhado, and Leah Umberger, for their thoughtful reviews and dedication of time which made this edition possible. I am also incredibly grateful to The Honors Platform’s graphic designer this year, May Napora, for her willingness to share her time and skill.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Ashley S. Howell
Editor in Chief,
The Honors Platform

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The contributors to this edition demonstrated through their words and art a deep commitment to recognizing and insisting upon the humanity of all people. It is vital to express gratitude for difference. We then must use our passions and resources to work against harmful structures and increase awareness of all humanity. The pieces in this edition use art and research to reflect an appreciation of all people. The joint voices of these authors call for all readers to learn, grow, and use their work to better any slice of our world.

This edition of The Honors Platform is a stunning collection of diverse works which venerate the value of all human experience. It features poems and prose concerned with human relationships, the good and the bad, the internal and the external. It includes visual art that deals with the outward representation of personality and identity. Adjacent to these creative works are critical pieces that grapple with issues of discrimination, mental health, and how humanity is reflected in literary and philosophical works. It is submissions like these that exemplify the values of the honors program and allow the entire community to be proud.

CMU HONORS MISSION STATEMENT

Providing high academic ability students with unique educational opportunities and experiences. The CMU Honors Program challenges students to aim higher and to achieve more academically, personally, and professionally for the greater good of our disciplines, our society, and our world.
The Power of Fashion

by Abbey Van Allsburg

There are over 7 billion people on the planet right now; how are we managing to clothe everyone? Most people don’t know how to sew their own clothing, and without shopping centers to sell clothing, much of the world would very well be in a crisis. The large dependence on clothing outlets has made the fashion industry one of the most powerful industries in the world. While the industry has benefited from this dependence, the incredible demand for a large quantity of stylish clothing has forced the fashion industry to take a different approach to fashion production; thus, fast fashion was born. Consumers may marvel at the large variety of clothing and low costs that fast fashion offers; however, there is a hidden world behind the fashion industry that isn’t as appealing as one might think. The end costs of fast fashion outweigh the benefits, but through knowledgeable decision making while shopping, young adults have the power to change the fashion industry in a way that will not only have a positive impact on the world but will also save both their time and money.

Fast Fashion: The Industry that Keeps the World Going Around

Fast fashion is the business model many fashion retailers have adopted in order to stay competitive in the current market. The official definition of fast fashion, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is “an approach to the design, creation, and marketing of clothing fashions that emphasizes making fashion trends quickly and cheaply available to consumers” (“Definition”). To do this, retailers employ textile manufacturers overseas to produce bulk clothing cheaply, then transport and sell that clothing for lower-than-normal prices. Through fast fashion, retailers are also able to have high turnover, or the ability to quickly restock stores with new styles. Wharton University of Pennsylvania gives one example of the high turnover of fast fashion, stating that Zara, a clothing company based in Spain, has such a high turnover that the products they sell change every fifteen days (“Zara’s”). In this way, the fast fashion industry dominates the clothing market by giving consumers what they want at a lower price and faster rate.

The popularity of the fast fashion model can be proved by looking at the revenues of some of the biggest fast fashion retailers. The highest grossing fast fashion retailer, Zara, stated on the company’s annual report that sales totaled 27.5 billion dollars in 2016 (“Inditex” 6). As of 2017, Forbes business magazine listed Amancio Ortega, the co-founder of Zara, to be the fourth richest person in the world with a net worth of $73.3 billion (“The World’s Billionaires”). Other top fast fashion retailers include H&M, Forever 21, GAP, Charlotte Russe, and Rue 21. These companies are doing just as well as Zara. For example, H&M’s annual report states that sales totaled 26.76 billion dollars in 2016 (“H&M” 52). It is apparent that the fast fashion business model has proven successful for many companies.

Before jumping into the negative consequences of the fashion industry, it’s important to first understand why fast fashion has become such a popular trend in the first place. One benefit to fast fashion is that it allows people to express themselves in ways they couldn’t have before. For those with a lower income, fast fashion serves as a socioeconomic equalizer. Flavia Martinez, a student at Amherst College, asserts that “Clothing is a camouflage of social class...Fast Fashion allows consumers to be part of any social class, or rather, to appear to be” (Martinez). Without fast fashion, many people wouldn’t be able to afford stylish or professional clothing. In this way, fast fashion equalizes the playing field for many people by allowing those with a lower income to dress to impress, which can help open up more opportunities to climb the social ladder.

As more consumers come to expect the prices and product turnover that fast fashion supplies, it’s becoming harder for traditional tradesman to stay in the business. One person who can vouch for this is Edward Hertzman, founder of Sourcing Journal Online, a “trade publication for apparel and textile executives focused on sourcing and manufacturing” (“About”). In an interview with Observer magazine, Hertzman says that “The entire (fashion) industry is asking for cheaper prices. Brands will publicly state that that’s not the case, but, off the record, if you ask any factory its biggest issue right now, I don’t care what country they’re in, they’re going to say, ‘intense pressure from their clients to lower the price’” (Sharma). When it’s cheaper to produce overseas, it’s no wonder that fast fashion retailers have the competitive edge. Even other large name-brands who weren’t built on the fast fashion model, such as Kohl’s, JCPenney, and Macy’s, are beginning to adopt it, or they otherwise risk losing too many consumers to fast fashion retailers. Many locally owned businesses close their doors because of competition with fast fashion retailers, as well. With fewer alternative options to fast fashion retailers, the convenience and, therefore, the popularity of fast fashion increases.

It’s quite clear to see that fast fashion certainly has its advantages. Not only has fast fashion proven to be financially successful and almost necessary to have in order to stay competitive in the current global market, but it has provided people with clothing that will help them elevate their social status. Consumers are not wrong for wanting to purchase from such retailers; however, while fast fashion may be alluring, there are significant drawbacks that must also be brought to attention.
Social Injustices

While consumers may only see the clothes that they purchase from fast fashion as their own, it might come as a surprise at how many lives the product impacts throughout its “life.”

This impact is usually positive for the target-ed consumer, however, for the majority of people that are involved with its production and recycling, the impact is negative.

To achieve low costs and a high rate of turnover, textile manufacturers will often employ sweatshops overseas. Sweatshops are manufacturing facilities that routinely violate human rights. Many fast fashion companies will claim they aren’t aware of any sweatshops being used in their supply chain. To an extent, they aren’t lying either. According to Cornell University, large companies, like Wal-Mart or Zara, buy clothes from manufacturers who hire contractors to find factories that will help produce their desired product. The fierce competition for cheap production “forces most contractors to ’sweat’ profits out of the workers, cut corners and operate unsafe workplaces. Within this system, retailers and manufacturers claim they do not directly employ garment workers and are not responsible for workers’ wages and working conditions” (“No”). So, while purchasing a 10- or 15-dollar pair of jeans may seem like a great deal at the store, the invisible cost is the continuing reality of sweatshops. People don’t mean to do this when they are on the hunt for the best bargain, but the best way to tell the industry that sweatshops are not acceptable is by purchasing from stores that will help produce their desired product. The fierce competition for cheap production “forces most contractors to ’sweat’ profits out of the workers, cut corners and operate unsafe workplaces. Within this system, retailers and manufacturers claim they do not directly employ garment workers and are not responsible for workers’ wages and working conditions” (“No”). So, while purchasing a 10- or 15-dollar pair of jeans may seem like a great deal at the store, the invisible cost is the continuing reality of sweatshops. People don’t mean to do this when they are on the hunt for the best bargain, but the best way to tell the industry that sweatshops are not acceptable is by purchasing from stores that will help produce their desired product.

Environmental Concerns

One thing to consider while on a shopping spree are the by-products created during clothing production. The majority of clothes sold through fast fashion are made with some combination of two materials: polyester and cotton. While there are advantages to wearing both types of material, the bulk production of either has serious negative consequences. Unlike traditional materials used for textile production, polyester is made from petroleum and is actually considered a plastic. There are many advantages to wearing “plastic” clothing. Textile School, a website dedicated to educating the public about different aspects of textiles, states that polyester is resistant to stretching, shrinking, and wrinkling (“Polyester”). This seemingly magical material, however, is too good to be true. Dr. Luz Claudio, an expert on environmental health with a PhD in Neuropathology, can attest to this. Claudio comments on many different negative aspects of bulk clothing production, including the different hazardous by-products of polyester production, stating that:

The manufacture of polyester and other synthetic fabrics is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releasing emissions including volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, and acid gases such as hydrogen chloride, all of which can cause or aggravate respiratory disease... other by-products of polyester production are emitted in the wastewater from polyester manufacturing plants. (Claudio 450)

While the allure of bargain deals at clothing outlets has masked this reality, there’s nothing alluring about having to work amongst toxics or the destruction of the nearby environment. Consider this: most clothes from fast fashion are not made to last, instead they are cheaply made to be cheaply sold. These clothes both wear out and are thrown out quickly. Polyester, as a type of plastic, is not biodegradable and can stay in its form for over a hundred years. For this reason, the majority of clothes that’s thrown out doesn’t deteriorate, but seemingly multiplies in landfills instead.

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a toll on the planet at the end of the product’s life. Between the release of toxic fumes from polyester production and close contact with pesticides from cotton harvest, it’s no wonder that “The EPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency), under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, considers many textile manufacturing facilities to be hazardous waste generators” (Claudio 450). On top of it all, it’s even going to take time to completely rid of all the unwanted clothing. These statements are not meant to be propagandistic, but are included to show the reality of the consequences of fast fashion. Yes, the industry can research and implement

text: "HAVING LESS CLOTHING NOT ONLY HELPS THE ENVIRONMENT, BUT CAN ALSO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF THE CONSUMER. ACCORDING TO A SURVEY TAKEN BY CLOSET MAID, A COMPANY THAT SPECIALIZES IN SELLING STORAGE ORGANIZATION, THE AVERAGE AMERICAN WOMAN HAS 103 ITEMS IN THEIR CLOSET." (‘SURVEY’)

a more sustainable mode of production, but the bottom line is simply that the fashion industry needs to stop producing an overabundance of cheap clothing.

What Can Be Done About It
It’s not like consumers wanted all of these consequences to happen; they are not bad people for shopping at fast fashion retailers. However, once one becomes aware of the issue, the next step is figuring out how to create change for a better world.

One way we, as consumers, can create change is by changing in our mindsets. How one views clothing and fashion directly affects one’s shopping habits, and, thus, the fashion industry. The power of mindset can be assessed by comparing two cultures. Jennifer Scott, New York Times bestseller of Lessons from Madame Chic, examines the French fashion culture versus the American fashion culture in her TED Talk, “The Ten-Item Wardrobe.” According to Scott, the French each have about ten items of high quality clothing in their closet. They take care of what they wear and aren’t bothered by re-wearing the same outfit twice in a week. Americans tend to act quite the opposite. In America, people are inclined to hoard cheaply made clothing and are criticized for re-wearing the same outfit twice in a week. Purchasing less clothing, while being particular about buying high quality clothing, will help curb fast fashion’s waste problem. By looking at the French culture, one can see that such a lifestyle is absolutely possible.

Having less clothing not only helps the environment, but can also improve the life of the consumer. According to a survey taken by Closet Maid, a company that specializes in selling storage organization, the average American women has 103 items in their closet (“SURVEY”). While the survey was created to promote selling closet organizers, the numbers nonetheless reveal that American women are filling their closets to the brim. Does having more clothing increase one’s happiness? Scott argues that an overabundant closet does not yield to an easier lifestyle. Many Americans have so many options to choose from when getting dressed in the morning that they actually waste time trying to find the “perfect” outfit, which can be very frustrating. For this, Scott recommends sorting through one’s closet, then they will create a positive impact across the world while saving their own time and money. In this way, workers, to consumers, and even to those who receive the “donations.” It’s not realistic to expect all production of textiles to cease; however, if peopel begin to value a smaller closet, then they will create a positive impact across the world while saving their own time and money. In this way, consumers do not have to completely forfeit their love for clothes shopping, but by purchasing clothing with purpose they will make a positive change. What a small and relatively simple change we can make that will not only be beneficial to the consumer, but will also benefit the world!

**Works Cited**

I can’t remember how I got here.

I can’t remember how the water began to claw its way into my lungs, its fingers of white and blue foam gripping at my throat. I can’t remember why my bangs cling to my forehead or why salt and blood coat my lips or why my shirt, saturated, chills my fragile skin. I can’t remember finding my way to this rock, this asylum amidst a cataclysmic nightmare.

I can’t remember why this crushing force on my stomach is pushing the air from my chest.

I can’t remember. I can’t remember. I can’t remember.

My head rests against the tip of a grey stone, one that juts out from the center of churning waves. Small divots in its surface poke and prod at my raw back, and I rock from side to side in an attempt to lessen the pain. Staring above me, I take in the dismal scene: the inclement clouds that clump in mesmerizing swirls, the waves concaving onto themselves, the droplets of rain that cascade from the sky. It is impossible to discern the time, as the steel clouds obscure any glimpse of sun or moon. The only thing that I am wholly aware of is the stifling pain of needles in my arms and the overwhelming breath of frost that trickles its way down my neck.

I see the world through an opaque sheet of fear, all hazy and out of focus. I read somewhere that fear is supposed to heighten your senses. Why, then, do I feel nothing but overwhelming exhaustion and dimness?

I sit up, pulling my knees in toward my chest. My bones vibrate within my skin, but the water droplets pool faster than they can be shaken.

---

To David’s wife -

You let a man drive a harpoon between your legs and now you believe you are his property

The harpoon rooted in your belly and blossomed

She’s five and draws pictures of us her fat crayon fists cling to my neck when she cries goodbye

She knows chaos

She knows Daddy slammed Mommy’s head into the wall so hard Mommy swore she had galaxies branded into her eyelids for good

She knows silence

She knows Daddy and Mommy aren’t talking and there still isn’t furniture in the apartment and why do I always have to play alone?

You let King David sit on his throne luring notes from taut harp hairs but do you ever stop for a second and remember Bathsheba?

Do you imagine the way he looked at her the way you think is only for you the way that makes your legs do that thing he likes?

Do you imagine how his fingers raked through her hair charming the music that should’ve been yours?

Do you imagine a life for your daughter without screaming and cursing and Mommy, why did Daddy finger paint your neck again?

Do you imagine a life where you’re free?

---

End It All.

I can’t remember how I got here.

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MEGHAN Dyer

MEGHAN IS A SOPHOMORE STUDYING ENGLISH AND HISTORY FOR A DEGREE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION. SHE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT EDUCATION, THE ENVIRONMENT, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY. IF MEGHAN ISN’T WRITING, READING, OR WORKING, SHE’S PROBABLY CRYING OVER A CUTE DOG—OR SEVERAL CUTE DOGS.

I'm walking along the sidewalk, and the girl with the brown curls and doe eyes dawdles beside me. It is a beautiful autumn day; trees of crimson and maize line our walk, and a crisp breeze sweeps my bangs out of my eyes. The girl kicks up leaves, giggling in delight as they cascade around her. Memory Me is smiling, squeezing her hand. Memory Me cannot take his hands off of her. She’s running now, trailing me behind her, yanking at my arm. Her hand finds the delicate petals of a rose, and she pulls it toward her face. I watch, and—

“Who is this girl? Why do I know her? I try to make sense of it all. What is her name? What is her name? What is her name? What is her name?”

The words shoot from my lips with enough force that I startle even myself. My eyes fly open with the revelation.

“OLIVIA IS THE GIRL WITH THE BROWN CURLS AND DOE EYES. OLIVIA IS THE GIRL WHO LIKES PEPPERMINT STICKS IN HER COFFEE AND DANCING IN HER SOCKS IN MY KITCHEN. OLIVIA IS THE GIRL WHO MAKES IT A POINT TO CRUNCH EVERY LEAF ON THE PAVEMENT AND SNIFF EVERY FLOWER IN THE BRUSH.”


Olivia is the girl with the brown curls and doe eyes. Olivia is the girl who likes peppermint sticks in her coffee and dancing in her socks in my kitchen. Olivia is the girl who makes it a point to crunch every leaf on the pavement and sniff every flower in the brush.
Olivia.

Another blip, taller now, appears on the monitor, followed by soft static.

I repeat the name again and again, clinging to it as if it is my only lifeline.

Olivia.

Memories are writhing toward me now, flocking me from every direction.

They overcome me, flooding my senses. I hear peppermint coffee as I smell crunching leaves as I taste the warmth of the sun, soft on my cheek, as I feel the cool mountain air as I see Olivia, Olivia, Olivia. The whispering too, it’s getting louder, practically screaming within my head. Telling me that it is over. Telling me to end it all.

The memories are flying too fast, blurred and non sequitur and veiled by more questions than answers. The fractals overwhelm me, pushing my back into the cool surface of the rock. I can’t make sense of any of it, as a glimpse of Four-Year-Old Me blowing out the lurid candles of a birthday cake follows a brief peek of High School Senior Me walking across a stage in robes of maroon and black.

They spiral forever, one snapshot of my life after another, like the jumbled pieces of some giant jigsaw puzzle that I don’t know how to put together because I don’t have a reference point or a place to start.

A picture of the mountains in Pennsylvania slips by, and I shoot up where I’m sitting, fast enough for the blood to rush from my head. With a foggy mind and numb fingers, I press rewind. The mountains of Pennsylvania come back in view…

Why is that important?

OH. OH. OH.

I’m remembering, I’m remembering everything.

A hop, softer this time, whispers along the screen, followed by soft static.

Cloudy day, lots of rain and snow and sleet all mixed up into a disastrous concoction of awful driving conditions. Navigating through the woods, trees folding over themselves in a tornado of wind and rain. Car battling the elements as it continues its trek through the mountains of Pennsylvania. Olivia laughing, reading maps and directions upside-down, pointing out signs on the side of the road. Chips crunching, Oreo crumbs decorating every possible surface of the interior of the car, seats sticky with spilled Faygo and A&W. Silly celebrity trivia, stupid jokes. Madly in love.

A red car, one that I didn’t see before, squeals on the ice, swerving toward us. I try to swing the steering wheel in the opposite direction, but it’s too late.

A brilliant flash obscures my vision, and all I can hear is screaming. Whether it is my own or Olivia’s, I cannot tell. All that I can discern is pain.

And then, nothingness. That is my last memory before I ended up here, on this godforsaken rock.

Alone.

OLIVIA.

Brown curls and doe eyes are the last things on my mind as I lie down on the rock, accepting the fate that I should have foreseen. The tempestuous waves wash over me, and I drift into the sea, choosing to relax and float into space. And as the waves lap at my chest, my fingers, my thighs, I hear the ocean singing to me once again.

“Into the ocean, end it all, Cole.”

“I have always feared drowning, feared that slow, inescapable feeling of your lungs turning inside-out and bursting into oblivion.”
Ageism in the Media

Reported Attitudes Towards Aging and Influence from Advertisements

by
Aimee Kalczuk

Abstract
Despite the knowledge that the media and advertisements influence people’s belief systems, there is not much research on how they specifically impact attitudes towards aging and older adults. This paper examines attitudes towards aging and how the media influences these attitudes. This is based on a sample of reports via an online survey. Based on these reports, it appears that respondents are influenced at least somewhat by advertisements, with the possibility that they are being impacted more than they are conscious of. These findings are important for advertisement executives to consider in order to prevent promoting ageist ideas in their advertisements. This research will also hold significance for the average person to be aware of advertisements. This research will also hold significance for the average person to be aware of media in their daily lives.

Introduction
The media, particularly advertisements, play a significant role in daily life. The average U.S. adult views 362 ads per day, both consciously and subconsciously (Johnson, 2004; Grabe & Ward, 2006; Heath, 2002). This frequent viewing shapes our worldview. In recognition of this influence, there has been an effort to promote cultural diversity in television. This is linked with a move towards more minority representation and the elimination of photoshopping with media models to prevent disordered eating behavior (Stapen, 2010; Grabe & Ward, 2006). The fact that changes are being made is evidence that advertisement executives are aware of the power of their advertisements and are working to make them more accurate and representative.

Unfortunately, older adults are infrequently featured in the media. And when they are, it is commonly in outdated stereotypes. People today are living longer and healthier lives and do many of the same things that younger adults do, but they are not portrayed nearly as often as young people (Carstensen & Fung, 2003; Zhang et al., 2006; Thornton, 2002). Older people go out to eat, buy groceries, and look for fashionable clothes just like younger people, yet they are oftentimes only portrayed in advertisements buying medication, assistive devices, or anti-aging products (Schewe, 1984).

There are a variety of reasons older adults are not portrayed as often as their younger counterparts. Many advertising executives themselves are younger, so they may not have empathy for the older audience. Another reason is that their target audience is the younger generations—people who can become lifelong customers. (Carrigan & Szignes, 1999). Companies do not want to risk alienating younger customers by advertising older adults who are based on outdated and unrealistic stereotypes of aging.

When older adults are portrayed in a negative light, it is bad for both older and younger people. For older adults, seeing their age group depicted as undesirable on television can create a “self-fulfilling prophecy” in which they integrate portrayals of themselves and their age group as dependent, undesirable, and infantilized and then begin to take on those traits. For younger people, seeing older adults portrayed this way creates anxiety about aging. This can cause them to distance themselves from older adults, so they do not have to think about themselves getting older and becoming a stereotype. (Nelson, 2006; Carstensen & Fung, 2003; Zhang et al., 2006; Thornton, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to identify ageist beliefs held by a primarily young adult population and discover how much of a role advertisements and the media play in these attitudes.

Methods
Participants: This study included 2,596 participants of various age ranges. Women between the ages of 18-24 made up the majority of participants, with progressively fewer people as the age range went up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
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Procedure: The study is an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved study. Participants were recruited from Central Michigan University via email using an alphabetical listserv through the former Institute for Intergenerational Relations. All participants received an email asking them to respond to the survey questions, and there was no compensation for participating. The survey was open for five days.

Instruments: The survey was generated through SurveyMonkey.com and consisted of demographic questions asking the age range and gender identity of the participant as well as six questions designed to determine their attitudes towards aging and how much the media plays a role in those beliefs. The questions were constructed as follows:

Comfort level about getting older in general—Respondents were asked to rate their comfort levels about getting older in general. A single item, “How much discomfort do you feel about getting older?” was scored on a 1 to 5 point scale (1 = very comfortable, 5 = very uncomfortable).
Comfort levels being at specific age ranges –
A single item, “What is your comfort level about being the following ages?” was scored on a 1 to 5 point scale (1 = very comfortable, 5 = very uncomfortable). Respondents answered this question for six age ranges (30’s, 40’s, 50’s, 60’s, 70’s, 80’s+).

Specific fears of aging: Respondents were asked to select from a list of seven possibilities they fear will happen when they get older: “(loss of physical ability, loss of mental ability, loss of dignity/status, change in social life, retirement, older appearance (wrinkles, hair/loss/gray hair, etc.), or other (please specify).)”

Methods used to prevent/reverse aging:
Respondents were asked if they use any of the following to prevent/reverse aging: “skin products (wrinkle repair, sunscreen, makeup, etc.), hair products (dye, hair growth, etc.), diets/food choices, vitamins/supplements, exercise regiments, plastic surgery/botox, and/or other (please specify).”

Influence by the media:
Respondents were asked if their opinions on aging are influenced by the media and/or advertisements and were given the option to answer “yes, no, or somewhat.”

Is there an older adult present in the participant’s life: Respondents were asked if they have any close older adults in their lives, such as a grandparent, parent, friend, etc. They were given the dichotomous option of “yes or no.”

Most people were very comfortable with the thought of being in their 30’s, relatively comfortable with the thought of being in their 40’s, neither comfortable nor uncomfortable with the thought of being in their 50’s and 60’s, slightly more uncomfortable with the thought of being in their 70’s, and uncomfortable to very uncomfortable with the thought of being in their 80’s. Overall, the relationship between age and comfort level was curvilinear.

Respondents were asked what they feared about getting older, with the option to add their own responses. The two most common fears were loss of physical and mental ability, with loss of physical ability being slightly greater than loss of mental ability. Gaining an older appearance was the third most common. A change in social life was the fourth most common, ranking only slightly higher than a loss of dignity/social status and retirement. In the other category, death of oneself and death of a loved one were the most common, and the other most common were being a burden/depending on others, loneliness, nursing homes, and money/social security. None of these had as many responses as the six options to choose from, but they were significant among the answers the respondents filled in themselves.

Respondents were asked what methods, if any, they used to prevent/reverse aging. The most common answers were diet and exercise, but it should be noted that several respondents answered in the “other” category (that they did these for general health in addition to preventing aging.) The third most common was taking vitamins and other supplements, and the fourth most common was using skin products such as wrinkle repair, sunscreen, makeup, etc. The fifth most common was using hair products such as dye or hair growth products. The fifth most common with 79 responses was actually a response from the “other” option, which was doing nothing at all to prevent/reverse aging. Plastic surgery and Botox was the sixth most common with 50 responses.
It appears that when it comes to the thoughts of people, personal experiences are more influential than the media. However, the survey was conducted at a college which consists of a diverse group of people from different cultural backgrounds and may not be representative of the broader population. Furthermore, the survey did not gather any information about the respondents' gender or age, which limits the scope of the findings. Overall, it appears that although the media plays an important role in our lives and has the power to impact attitudes about ourselves and others, it does not have as much of an impact on attitudes towards aging as we may believe or even be aware of how much we are affected by it. Maybe we are just more influenced by older adults in our daily lives as opposed to those on television. Further research will need to be done to find these answers.

Citations


Rose Colored Glasses by Emily Crombez

Rose Colored Glasses has a romantic air to it that seems too dreamy to be true. The idiom “rose colored glasses” is generally used to mean someone is perceiving the world in a better light, or with a more optimistic view - overall, a distorted view of reality. This portrait is also a representation of the mystery of romance, but has an added element of altered perception. The composition of the photo - the flower in front of the subject’s face - contributes a significant amount to the mysterious feeling. The coloring of his skin is real, and the shadows have a soft, dreamy, cotton-candy type of feeling to them because of their blue and pink tones. These contrast each other, and intentionally so: when relationships begin, there is generally some discordance between reality and a person’s perception because hopes, dreams, and feelings can distort how another person is perceived.

Melting Stars by Sarah Hoekstra

Stars are melting to liquid fire, pooling in the crevices of my wrinkles, swelling before my eyes as I try to grasp, what is no longer solid or still, as it slides through the canyons, that were once my dimples.

Drinking in the liquid fire, it burns the rivers and mountains that line my throat following the curves and oiling the box of sound where my voice lives.

Color returns as breath flutters, misting over the molten stars as they seep clearing away the rust, the decay.

Through the gears and cogs, it lingers short, flying with wings of silver spray spattering the cage of bone, dipping through my veins the caverns of my heart throb touched with melted stars wreathing around core and soul the heat of a million suns no longer enough to ignite the shattered coals.
The Problematic Nature of Time Travel in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*  

by Jade Driscoll

There are numerous plot devices that, no matter how often they are used, captivate audiences time and time again. They are present in stories across age ranges, primary genres, and forms of media. One such device is time travel, which has become an extremely popular concept in media—especially in science fiction and fantasy. In many cases, characters attempt to go back in time to “fix” a previous event that has had substantial effects on what is regarded as the present, although the concept is also used for characters to explore alternate timelines or to gain information or insight from the future. Although the concept is used constantly, it does not always benefit the story if it is used solely for its universal likability. Since it is so well-liked, there are some generally accepted rules of time travel that many writers tend to consider real and follow in their stories, and problems can occasionally arise when writers stray too far from them. One story that attempts to use the concept of time travel without necessarily abiding by the accepted rules is the play that is considered to be the eighth book in the *Harry Potter* series: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Not only is it written as a play (as opposed to the novel format of the original seven books), it heavily relies on using time travel to bring characters to events that happened in the previous books, all without following many of the standard, unofficial rules. Throughout the entirety of *Harry Potter* and the *Cursed Child*, the concept of time travel is used ineffectively by not coinciding with the generally accepted rules of time travel.

Time travel is a relatively complex subject to talk or write about not only because of the potential paradoxes, nonlinear timelines, and causal relationships among people and events, but because the concept is not currently a feasible reality. Naturally, since the idea is so appealing and interesting to many people, its attainability is a hot topic for scientists and science-fiction enthusiasts alike; it is not too out of the question either, as Einstein’s general theory of relatively seems to allow for travel to the past (Dowden). The theory also allows for two potential types of travel to the future, which would be “either by moving at high speed or by taking advantage of the presence of an intense gravitational field” (Dowden). However, without proof of its existence (either from the theory of relativity or otherwise), any “rules” or requirements for its usage are merely speculative. This is why there are “generally accepted” rules of time travel rather than legitimate guidelines for various storytellers to follow, with some plotlines becoming relatively problematic when they do not adhere to these technically-unofficial rules.

Although these rules exist—as well as some others that primarily discuss the real feasibility of time travel—there naturally remains elements that are highly speculative even with the general theory of relativity and other science-based theories taken into consideration. For example, there are no set theories that discuss exactly how time travel could be set into motion. Time travel could be onset by a handheld device, a car going 88 miles per hour, a flying blue police box, a helmet, or any other miscellaneous device; any theory could be plausible since there are no theories that keep one of those objects from being a viable option. Additionally, there is no singular idea on exactly how long someone could last in a time period other than where they exist in linear time, or how far back into the past or forward in the future someone could travel. In some stories, the extent of time travel is limitless, with people having the ability to travel to any point in time for as long as their hearts desire. Other stories put some sort of cap on how long people can remain in another time, as well as how far away from the standard present they can move. Even though these seemingly tiny details have no major rules governing them, a story can run into problems if there are too many (or too little) regulations around the concept, or if the rules within the story’s universe change without cause. One general rule regarding time travel is that time travel cannot be used to simply go back in time and “fix” any event that the traveler wants. Nearly every miniscule event or decision from the past adds up to create what is regarded as the present, meaning if even the smallest aspect of the past were to change, an entirely new present would be created. Although the many-worlds theory exists—stating that for every individual decision that is made, a nearly-parallel universe exists with the other possible outcomes—this theory does not account for any potential changes to what the traveler understands to be the present (Vaidman). Actually, traveling to the past as an instant “fixer-upper” solution to tragic and/or life-changing events would most likely be impossible, as those events were incorporated into making the present exactly what it is. If someone were to go back into the past to change something, it would have already been changed, thus meaning the present would not require any change. Many stories avoid dealing with this problem by simply giving the traveling characters the innate knowledge that they cannot mess with “fixed events,” or events that would alter the present timeline. Additionally, if someone were able to go back in time to fix something, not only would it have already happened, but it would rule out a
“IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED AS A TRUTH OF LIFE—EVEN OUTSIDE THE RULES OF TIME TRAVEL—that someone cannot be in more than one place at once, so it becomes especially problematic when two copies of the same person are in the same place at once.”

In *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, time travel is put into motion through a device that readers of the original series are all too familiar with: a time turner. Time turners are small, hour-glass shaped pieces on a necklace chain, and they allow anyone in contact with the device to travel back in time. Characters are seemingly able to travel to any time they want, but they must be thinking about that time as they use the time turner. Moreover, they can only “travel back in the same spot [they] stand in,” meaning if the characters want to travel back in time to Hogwarts as it used to be, they must be standing in Hogwarts (Thorne 180). Additionally, although the characters seem to be able to travel to any point in the past, they “only get five minutes in the past” before the time turner automatically returns them to the present (Thorne 183). Although these regulations do not seem terrible, they inherently change from the time travel descriptions from earlier books in the series, where characters seemed to be able to stay in the past for a few hours without severe consequences (Rowling). Therefore, the time turner’s individual rules have changed throughout the series, thus violating the generally accepted rule of constancy within a single universe.

Another major problem with the use of time travel within the play is that there are a couple instances where two copies of the same person are in the same place at one time. In some stories, characters are physically unable to travel somewhere they already exist, thereby eliminating this problem. Regardless of the exact nature of the paradox, its inclusion creates a major problem within any story: some event, decision, or action happened that logically should not have occurred.

In *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, the Grandfather Paradox is when a person is able to be in the same place and time with their “old” self and “previous” self. It is widely accepted as a truth of life—evidence of the inability to interfere in one’s personal timeline. Essentially, “you could go back in time and kill your grandfather, but then you wouldn’t be born and so could not go back in time and kill your grandfather” (Dowden). This statement is a clear paradoxical situation where the grandfather’s murder would be committed by someone who no longer exists. It could potentially be argued that the murderer/traveler could continue living separate from this event that, according to their personal timeline, happened well after they were born. However, when looking at all time as a strict linear progression, this event would have still taken place in the past, regardless of how old the traveler would be when he experienced it. Another major paradox is when a person is able to be in the same place and time with their “old” self and “present” self. It is widely accepted as a truth of life—even outside the rules of time travel—that someone cannot be in more than one place at once, so it becomes especially problematic when two copies of the same person are in the same place at once.

The use of time travel in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* does not follow many of the time travel rules that are predominantly considered to be true. Throughout the story, rules of time travel are changed from how they were initially introduced in earlier books to suit the narrative, causing a major paradox. Regardless of whether or not they made contact, these instances should not be allowed due to the rule denying paradoxical situations.

Without a doubt, however, the primary problem with the time travel in this story is that it is used both as a fix for anything that goes wrong and to directly attempt to change fixed events in the past. The first instance of the time turner being used is when Albus and Scorpius attempt to stop Cedric Diggory from dying. Albus directly tells Scorpius that he wants “to set one of [Harry’s] mistakes right” by trying to change the events of the Triwizard Tournament and, hopefully, save Cedric in the process (Thorne 53). However, Cedric’s death is a fixed event that essentially led to the “correct” results for the Tournament, and in trying to avoid Cedric’s death, all events that occurred afterward were altered. Meddling in the first event of the Tournament results in a complete change of the present, with only Albus and Scorpius being aware that anything is different than how it “should be.” Differences from this change include: Albus being sorted into Gryffindor instead of Slytherin, Ron being married to Padma instead of Hermione, and Hermione being a relatively strict teacher at Hogwarts (Thorne 241-246). After seeing this new present, Albus and Scorpius try to fix it by attempting to save Cedric again; this time, they interfere with the second event of the Tournament. Instead of making things “right” or “normal” but with a living Cedric, the present changed once again. In this new present, Voldemort and the death eaters rule, Harry Potter is dead (and therefore Albus was never born); Snape is still alive, and Ron and Hermione are rebel outcasts (Thorne 267-268). After seeing that version of the future, the time turner is once again used to attempt to undo the first time travel attempt that was originally made by Albus and Scorpius. Not only were all the problems and alternate-futures caused by trying to “fix” the past, but each time something went wrong, the time turner was used as an automatic solution. Even though it took a few tries, the characters essentially used the time turner over and over until they were able to return to what they considered the “real” present. This violates generally accepted rules regarding the usage of time travel, the inability for past events to be altered, and the impossibility of paradoxical situations.

Acknowledgements:

This paper was written for a children’s literature class taught by Dr. Joseph Michael Sommers.
books in the series, paradoxical situations are present, and time travel is used as a fix-all. The breaking of the generally accepted rules of time travel renders its use in the story ineffective, especially since characters essentially chose what version of the future they wanted simply by using the time turner a few times. Almost every event in the play is undone and corrected in some capacity by simply using the time turner; characters are able to use the time turner as many times as they want until they return to their preferred (and the original) version of the present—thus making the entire premise of time travel within the story problematic in nature.

References


Out the Window

Out the window, it begins,
the soft plop plop of bare feet on cobblestones.
Then more feet join the patter, children racing the sleepy road.
The “grandest of parents” come puffing in the rear, creaking,
their breath, wheezing, is the wind passing through small ears.
Soon all sound is a crowd, shifting and giggling, lining the street,
the roar of their hands and throats bounding across the rooftops.

And then, the distant thrum of drums.
The slow roll felt like a tiger in every chest,
sticking to the shadows of hearing.
The crescendo as the performers draw near,
musical flutings discernable now, leaping, soaring.
The horses and their magnificent, billowing chariots clattering,
clopping past, hoofbeats deafening.
Acrobats flipping and twisting, twirling,
their silver ribbons are on fire and their flags flash,
there, then gone again, blinding every sense.
Dancers planted, bending and waving their limbs,
buffeted in the torrential excitement of the moment, yet unyielding.

All too soon the final flash of a flag is past,
leaving faces lit with visible fire, only snuffed as backs turn.
The appreciation of the crowd is the only sound remaining.
The last in are the first out; the “grandest of parents,”
beginning to pack their bags, shuffling,
murmuring fervently in their own parade to the next event.
The children are left still pattering around barefooted,
until the distant calls are far enough to ignore; and plop plop
they run along after, their giggles nothing but a memory.

Out the window, it is over.
The streets are silent; painted in gray and green,
settling into peacefulness, vulnerable and raw.
Torn to pieces, stripped to the bone, laid bare,
seeming to truly awaken in the stillness.

Grace Scheerhorn

Grace is a freshman Honors student, passionate for Christ and about language. Grace hopes to study language and publish a book. This poem represents much of what she loves about the written word: it captures the imagination, stirs emotions, and carries the reader to another world. “Out the Window” is Grace’s first published piece.
Stressed Out: Are Medical Students Able to Reduce Stress and the Risk of Burnout During Their Education with the Available Methods?

by Mark Hansen

Abstract

No one is a stranger to the grips of stress; not even medical students. Stress can manifest itself from a bit of pressure for completing an assignment to an overwhelming force that renders the affected incapable of thinking clearly. The educational system our aspiring physicians forged is extremely demanding; Medical students experience much higher stress levels than their same-aged peers. Resulting from this stress are consequences such as depression, suicidal ideation, and decreased academic performance. While there is research showing that medical students are under increased stress, it falls short when it comes to the relief of stress in medical students. Very few research teams have created adequate measures to experience during their training to become physicians. By the end of the first year of medical school, both depression and/or elevated levels of distress were determined to occur at a rate of 30-50% in students (Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). Increased stress and depression are also associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation or attempts, higher levels of anxiety, and increased rates of burnout. During medical school, increased suicidal ideation and actions were seen in numerous reports (Dunn et al., 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2007; Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). Increased stress and depression are also associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation or attempts, higher levels of anxiety, and increased rates of burnout. During medical school, increased suicidal ideation and actions were seen in numerous reports (Dunn et al., 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2007; Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). The concern is that the education process designed to produce physicians is causing students to mentally deteriorate. Worse, a meta-analysis of physician suicide found that world-wide, male and female physicians were 1.41 and 2.23 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population (Schorrenhammer & Colditz, 2003). Physicians need to be well trained and prepared for the line, but the tribulations they experience during their education and are pushing them too far.

Background

Everyone is affected by stress at one point or another in their lives. Both physical and mental health can be positively or negatively influenced by it (Bughi, Sumcad, & Bughi, 2006). Stress comes in one of two forms: eustress and distress. While eustress can be beneficial, once the level of stress reaches a certain threshold, it becomes distress, or ‘negative stress.’ One such group which has repeatedly been reported to experience higher levels of distress (referred to as ‘stress’ and ‘perceived stress’ throughout the paper) than their peers are medical students (Dunn, Iglewicz, & Mounter, 2008; Finkelstein, Brownestein, Scott, & Lan, 2007; Hassel, Sierpina, & Kreitzer, 2008; Shiralkar, Harris, Eddins-Folensbee, & Coverdale, 2013; Yusoff, 2014; Pereira, Barbosa, Rezende, & Damiano, 2015; Fares, Tabosh, Saadeddin, Mouhayyar, & Aribi, 2016).

Extensive research has been performed on the stress that medical students experience during their training to become physicians. By the end of the first year of medical school, both depression and/or elevated levels of distress were determined to occur at a rate of 30-50% in students (Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). Increased stress and depression are also associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation or attempts, higher levels of anxiety, and increased rates of burnout. During medical school, increased suicidal ideation and actions were seen in numerous reports (Dunn et al., 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2007; Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). Increased stress and depression are also associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation or attempts, higher levels of anxiety, and increased rates of burnout. During medical school, increased suicidal ideation and actions were seen in numerous reports (Dunn et al., 2008; Finkelstein et al., 2007; Yusoff, 2011; Yusoff, 2011). The concern is that the education process designed to produce physicians is causing students to mentally deteriorate. Worse, a meta-analysis of physician suicide found that world-wide, male and female physicians were 1.41 and 2.23 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population (Schorrenhammer & Colditz, 2003). Physicians need to be well trained and prepared for the line, but the tribulations they experience during their education and are pushing them too far.

Research also suggests that medical students suffer from increased rates of burnout when compared to nonmedical peers (Finkelstein et al., 2007; Hassel et al., 2008; Slavin et al., 2014; Fares et al., 2016). Defined by Fares et al. (2016) as “another measure of physical exhaustion and mental distress, which is catalyzed primarily by occupational and professional demands” (p. 76), burnout is easily brought on by the medical school training. A combination of the workload, lack of support, and the emotional commitment to medicine all contribute to the de-personalization and emotional exhaustion experienced by medical students. These are the beginning phases that can easily culminate into burnout (Fares et al., 2016).

Unfortunately for medical students, the stress can also begin to influence other aspects of their lives. Overall life satisfaction was seen to decrease in medical students (Ball & Bax, 2002; Holm, Tyssen, Stordal, & Haver, 2000). A part of this was the drastic change in exercise. One study showed that 76% of first-year medical students exercised at least 4-8 times per month at the beginning of the semester. At the time of finals, only 52% of the students were able to keep up the same amount of exercise per month. Additionally, there was a large increase in the number of students who did not exercise at all, from 9.3% at the beginning of the semester to 24.1% at finals (Ball & Bax, 2002). Missing out on exercise hurts students by not only decreasing the amount of time spent on healthy habits, but also losing a chance to reduce the stress they may be feeling. Medical students were seen to have an increased use of alcohol and drugs due to stress (Ball & Bax, 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2007; Hassel, Lisle, Sullivan, & Pier, 2009; Yusoff, 2011; Shiralkar et al., 2013; Yusoff, 2014).

While increased stress can lead to the development of unhealthy or dangerous behaviors such as alcohol and substance abuse or even suicide, highly sustained levels can also contribute to mental health disorders (Yusoff, 2011; Slavin et al., 2014). Medical students...
are not immune to the disorders that many of them will come to treat one day, as it was found that soon after schooling began, medical students’ mental health declined (Slavin et al., 2014). A multitude of longitudinal studies completed in the past decade have shown that medical students have a higher rate of mental disorders compared to the normal population. With expectations for professionals and students only rising, it is a dangerous position to be in: not wanting to sacrifice the quality of physicians, but also not wanting to push them past their breaking points. If the stress experienced during the medical training process were lower than it is currently, perhaps by the time students became physicians, they would not be at such a risk for decreased mental health.

An overarching problem surrounding mental health and mental disorders is the stigma attached to them. Medical students believe admitting that they are experiencing increased stress or signs of a mental illness will impede their career plans (Bugh et al., 2006; Shiralkar et al., 2003). Not only does stress itself need to be reduced for medical students, so does the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. The problem continues, as our schools began, medical students’ stress may be reduced in a particular set of students, but there is little evidence to support the intervention.

The overall goals of this study were to identify common stressors identified by medical students, to determine what the long-term consequences of stress are, and to analyze the methods used by medical students to reduce stress. These objectives were completed using published research and a survey that was created and sent to medical students. From this survey, data was obtained showing how stressed medical students currently feel, and it revealed the current methods they used to reduce their stress. IBR approval was obtained on January 8, 2018. Data will be shown that is divided between the two methods of collection. Further increased awareness of the prevalence of stress and its negative consequences, as well as methods that can reliably reduce it, are a must if medical students are going to be successful caretakers of others and themselves.

The overall goals of this study were to identify common stressors identified by medical students, to determine what the long-term consequences of stress are, and to analyze the methods used by medical students to reduce stress.

Methods
Similar to methods described in Shiralkar et al. (2003), primary articles were selected using key words such as “stress, burnout, medical students, management, methods, and reduction” in a variety of combinations. Articles written in the past 15 years were chosen to include only those containing relevant, updated information and data. There was one exception with the Ball and Bax (2002) paper. However, at the time of selection, it was within the 15-year grace period, and due to the information included, it was kept as a source. The idea was to accumulate as many sources as possible and reduce the number based on their quality.

The quality of the sources was determined based on publication date and if they contained relevant information about the stressors medical students experience and the consequences from them. Articles that contained analysis of data were secondarily examined to check whether or not the authors utilized validated outcome measurements such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), or the AUDIT to make the data more meaningful. Articles that did not include a validated outcome measurement were not excluded from selection to avoid the risk of having too few sources to draw reasonable conclusions. After selection was completed, 20 new articles fit the criteria listed and were subjected to in-depth analyses.

Once the articles were selected, their contents were dissected out and organized using Microsoft Excel. Information for the figures was recorded with its source(s) listed next to it. After the data collection, the number of articles for each statement or piece of data was counted. Percentages were based on the number of articles that contained information pertaining to the category. For instance, five sources stated that medical students listed the detail of the material they were required to learn as a stressor, while only eight out of the twenty articles directly stated conclusions about stressors identified by medical students. The reasoning behind this was to not include articles that did not discuss stressors, as they would have no input. The results would give readers values lower than they truly were. From this, the percentage of articles that make a claim are quantified as a single number, allowing for the figures in the results section.

To obtain data directly from medical students, a survey and consent form were designed. Prior to receiving the survey, participants were given a consent form outlining the purpose of the study, created using the recommendations of the Central Michigan University (CMU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Mount Pleasant, Michigan. The survey itself was created through SurveyMonkey. Once participants opened the survey, the first question asked for a confirmation that they had read through and given their consent. Answers would forfeit their ability to continue with the survey. The following questions asked for background information from the students, which allowed for more comparisons within the data. The stress of participants was then evaluated, followed up by many questions about methods implemented by their institution in an attempt to reduce stress. The goal was to pick one medical school from each state and to include all medical schools from Michigan. However, not all states have an associated medical school, and many medical schools did not respond. Analysis of the data from the survey was similar to that of the articles. The number of responses per answer were divided by the total number of respondents to the question (which was not always all). There were two types of questions: questions where students could only pick one response (such as the stress levels they are experiencing) and questions where they could select multiple answers (such as which methods students used to reduce stress). Each question of these types of question had up to 144 responses. This allowed for the quantification of the answers into a single percentage to be easily compared with the rest of the data. Similarities and differences were analyzed to determine which methods could help reduce stress for medical students.
Results

Eight articles which described stressors identified by medical students. Figure 1 depicts the major stressors identified by medical students, listed in descending order based on the frequency of their appearance. The two stressors with the highest occurrence were the volume of the material covered and the detail of the material, at 8/8 (100%) and 7/8 (87.5%), respectively. Between the articles, a total of ten stressors were identified by medical students (Figure 1). Twelve of the twenty articles identified fifteen long-term consequences of stress. Depression and suicide were the most commonly seen, appearing in 9/12 (75%) of the articles mentioning the consequences of stress. Also seen at high rates were drug/substance abuse at 6/12 (50%) and anxiety at 7/12 (58%, not pictured). Lastly, sixteen articles identified eight methods shown to be effective at reducing the stress of medical students, displayed in Figure 2. Changing the classroom had the biggest impact. For example, adding an elective into the curriculum to help medical students reduce stress, and changing the grading from multi-level to pass/fail were seen useful in 5/16 (31%) articles (Figure 2). A total of 144 medical students responded to the survey, although occasionally 142 or 141 answers rather than the full 144. Percentages are based on the number of students who answered the question, not the total number of students who took the survey. A breakdown of the educational level of the students revealed 32 first years, 41 second years, 36 third years, and 34 first years, with 1 student not answering. Stress levels of the students were next identified, based on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from ‘Not at all’ to ‘Very stressed,’ with the responses displayed in Figure 3. Next, students were asked what they did to reduce the stress that they were experiencing, reflected in Figure 4. The number one choice was exercise, chosen by 138 out of the 144 students (96%), closely followed by time management at 141 (98%), not pictured. Figure 4. Medical students were also asked to identify the stress reduction methods they were aware of at their institution, as well as the methods they wished their institution offered them. A pass/fail grading system was the most common answer to which method was known to be available to students (69%, not pictured). Just below that was the mindfulness seminar (68%, not pictured). For the methods students desired, 146 students made choices. Eight selected “N/A.” The most popular answer was some sort of exercise program (38%, not pictured). Next was yoga, followed by an elective course designed to reduce stress (39% and 25%, respectively, not pictured).

Discussion

The data gathered showed that aspects of the coursework were the most commonly cited stressors by medical students. The number one stressor, reported by 100% of the articles discussing stressors, was the volume of the material required to be learned (Figure 1). This makes sense as medical students are typically required to learn far more in the first two years of medical school than throughout all of their primary undergraduate schooling. Closely related and nearly as stressful was the detail of the material required to be known. Of the articles discussing stressors, 62.5% of them reflected this (Figure 1). It is difficult to combat this due to the large, specific knowledge base required to be prepared for clinical rotations, but some schools have started to implement clinical time during the first year. Many say this method has been effective, but there was no evidence in the articles found to support this.

Long-term stress has many lasting consequences, including depression, burnout, and increased suicidal ideation. Research has shown that depression and suicidal ideation are the most common consequences of stress, noted in 75% of articles (not pictured). Depression is a serious mental illness that was found to be much higher in medical students than peers (Hased et al., 2009; Slavin et al., 2014). Luckily, by taking the appropriate measures, the rates of depression can be decreased. If more medical schools implemented methods to reduce the stress their students were subjected to, then it would likely follow that the rates of depression would decrease as well (MacLaughlin et al., 2011; Slavin et al., 2014; Yusof, 2014). It follows that the rates of suicide and suicidal ideation in medical students could also decrease. The increased rates of suicide and suicidal ideation speak for themselves: something is wrong. The risk persists throughout schooling and follows residents as they become physicians as well (Slavin et al., 2014). Male and female physician suicide rates are 1.41 and 2.27 times higher compared to the general population, respectively (Scherhammer & Colditz, 2004). It is dismal and painful to think about.

If the stigmas around both physician and medical student mental health were removed, it would save lives that needlessly lost.

Optimistically, medical schools have begun to fight back. Numerous studies have been able to conclude that implementing an elective focusing on stress reduction can help students lower their anxiety, their risk of depression, and stress itself (Redwood and Pollak, 2007; Pereira and Barbosa, 2013; Slavin et al., 2011; Shiralkar et al., 2013; Watling, 2015). So far, medical students who were graded on the pass/fail system have performed just as well on exit examinations as those who were graded...
I have confirmed that a low proportion of articles address stress among medical students, with even fewer looking at the effectiveness of different stress reduction methods. In order to determine if methods are effective at reducing stress in medical schools, the methods need to be tested with the greatest of scrutiny, repeatedly. This shortage of research is a cry for help from medical students as they face higher rates of depression, more cases of burnout, and a higher risk of suicide/suicidal ideation than their peers.

From the current research, many of the common stressors have been identified as classroom material relating to examinations and having pets. Further questions looked at larger-scale stress reduction methods, addressing methods similar to those in the articles. The first question determined what methods students were aware of at their institution, and to see what methods were offered. A pass/fail grading system was the number one response, at 69%. This correlates well with what the articles have shown, and it does not sacrifice academic performance or licensing exam scores.

**Conclusion**

Stress and stress relief have been the subject of research for decades. Only recently, however, have researchers begun to focus on these topics in medical students. With the wide range of studies still being performed, it is obvious the best methods have not yet been agreed upon. While a single method will not be effective for every student, relying on these methods allows the most number of medical students to be addressed at once. Successful, large-scale programs have the opportunity to better the lives of thousands of medical students. With continued research using controls and validated measuring instruments, successful stress reduction methods will hopefully be found and implemented for medical students to use in the future to come.

**References**


Based on intervals (Shiralkar et al., 2013; Watling, 2013). In fact, no difference was found throughout academic performance, United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) scores, residency placement, or class attendance (Shiralkar et al., 2003). An intervention that is able to reduce stress while simultaneously maintaining the quality of education is powerful, and one worthy of serious consideration when attempting to help medical students.

One of the main goals of this study was to determine how much stress medical students were experiencing. Students reported over half of them were moderately or very stressed, with another quarter somewhat stressed (Figure 3). Based on how many students reported to be stressed, it indicates the current methods employed by medical schools to reduce stress are not working well and need to be reevaluated. Individually, the most popular method used by medical students to reduce stress was exercise, with 96% of students stating they rely on it (Figure 4). Interestingly, from the articles that were previously analyzed, none of them reported exercise as being a valid method of stress reduction. This may be due to the fact that the articles focused on school-wide modifications, not individualistic changes. Time management was the second most popular answer at 88% (Figure 4). It makes sense to see this as a common response, as medical students must balance their classes, homework, extracurriculars, social lives, and other activities, all while trying to get enough sleep for the next day. Students also wrote in answers such as venting to other medical students trying to get enough sleep for the next day. Students also stated the number one response, at 69%. This correlates well with what the articles have shown, and it does not sacrifice academic performance or licensing exam scores. 

"A pass/fail grading system was the number one response, at 69%. This correlates well with what the articles have shown, and it does not sacrifice academic performance or licensing exam scores."

"A pass/fail grading system was the number one response, at 69%. This correlates well with what the articles have shown, and it does not sacrifice academic performance or licensing exam scores."


**REFERENCES cont.**


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**Flowers in a Dying Summer**

by Shane Guenin

We were like daisies, then
never knowing more than our lakeside meadow
hoping chastity would be what saved us.
The winter comes.

We were forget-me-nots
defiantly fighting in alpine heights
hoping our memories would outlast the storms of July.
The gales rage on.

We were crocuses, when
we sprang forth in all naivete
hoping our boldness would drive off a late-season frost.
The daffodils grow from our corpses.

But were we ever roses?
When will we try to fight back
against inevitables; death comes to all perennials.

Would we ever be wolfsbane, nightshade
turning beauty for silent teeth
so we might, in other worlds, live another year?

Or perhaps, we learn to grow again
and remember what it means to stand tall
Is wood pulp so different in the world of chloroplasts?

I’m not here for the bouquet.

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SHANE DOESN’T REALLY KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON, BUT IS GLAD EVERYONE THINKS THEY DO. IN ANOTHER LIFE, SHANE WAS MOST PROBABLY A POTATO FARMER ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER; NOW THEY ARE CONTENT WITH PURSUING THE SLIGHTLY LESS PRESTIGIOUS TITLE OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE. SHANE HOPES YOU LIKE THE POEM, AND WATCH OUT FOR OPEN MANHOLES.
HOLLY CONNER IS A SENIOR AT CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY STUDYING BOTH FASHION DESIGN AND FASHION MERCHANDISING WITH A MINOR IN FINE ARTS. SHE IS ALSO PART OF THE ACCELERATED APPAREL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND MERCHANDISING TECHNOLOGY MASTER’S PROGRAM. SHE ENJOYS MANAGING FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND TEACHING AN INTRODUCTORY TEXTILES LAB COURSE TO GAIN FURTHER EXPOSURE IN HER FIELD OF STUDY.

These are the original illustrations and final products for a fashion collection created for and submitted to the Threads Fashion Show in the spring of 2017. This collection won Best Women’s Wear and Rookie of the Year Awards.
An Analysis of Descartes on Mind-Body Dualism

by Chandler Ray

For ages, the human experience has been characterized by our perception of the world through the mind and body as one. While many people do perceive the mind to be one with the body, René Descartes challenges this idea in his meditation concerning mind-body dualism. In this paper, I will discuss Descartes’ views on the relationship between mind and body. Then, I will discuss Descartes’ conclusions about the connection between knowledge and mind-body dualism. Next, I will analyze the strength of his argument by qualifying his dualism views and refuting his argument of distinction. Finally, I will note the implications that his ideas have on ideas of the soul.

Descartes’ first argument breaks down into three main assertions. If mind and body are one substance, then everything that is true of mind is also true of body. However, the body exists in a place, while the mind does not. Therefore, the mind and body are distinct substances. To be clear, a substance is something capable of existing by itself, as opposed to within something else. While the mind can potentially have properties of the world, it is not possible for the mind to perceive the world through the senses, while the mind perceives the world through thought. Together, he is whole. This calls into question how we should perceive the world. Is it through our body, our senses, or our mind and thoughts? Before this question is answered, Descartes prepares his second argument by acknowledging the importance of clarity and distinction in knowledge and the role that it plays in identifying our primary method of perception.

Descartes draws a comprehensive analogy in his analysis of the different ways that we perceive the world. In a famous example, he notes a ball of wax. Our senses perceive this ball of wax as feeling hard, sounding dense, looking circular in shape, and smelling of honey. He describes bringing the wax closer to a flame, “the remaining traces of the flavor of wax vanishing; the scent is vanishing; the color is changing; the original shape is disappearing...” (Cress 64)? He notes that the same wax certainly remains, but this acknowledgement is founded on our prior understanding of the properties of the wax. If we were solely perceiving the world using our senses, we would have no way to distinguish the ball of wax from the melted wax. We can, however, make this distinction with the mind. Therefore, our perception of the world is assisted by our senses, but founded in our minds. Thinking, in the end, is better for grasping the nature of things than the senses. There are, however, problems in Descartes’ ideas of distinction that can be addressed by thinking about it from a famous hypothetical perspective.

One fallacy associated with this argument follows the story of Clark Kent, a reporter for the Daily Planet, and his alter-ego as Superman. Clark Kent is shy, nerdy, and a simple reporter that blends in. Conversely, Superman is an alien hero with special abilities and great charm. Lois Lane, a coworker of Kent’s and common damsel in Superman’s life, identifies distinct characteristics between Clark Kent and Superman. This, following Descartes’ logic, leads Lois to believe that Clark Kent and Superman are different people. We know, however, that this is not true. They are, in fact, one. This leads us to think there are other things in the world that we identify as separate by their distinct features, which would be a mistaken conclusion.

While Descartes uses strong examples and logic to support his perspective, I find that there are some ideas that are hard to follow. Firstly, Descartes concludes that the mind and body are distinct substances, meaning that they both can exist by themselves, as opposed to in something else. While the mind can potentially have metaphysical properties that allow it to seemingly exist “separately” from the body, it is still very dependent on the body for its existence. I am a member of the hard science community, I study neuroscience and have a general familiarity with physiology. I argue that the mind, or a person’s awareness, is a result of brain tissue, neuronal
elements, and their interactions. The mind is a subjective construct formed by a complex network of neurons, hormones, and neurotransmitters in the brain. Without these physical components, our consciousness does not come into existence. Given this scientific truth, it is impossible to claim that the mind can be separate from the body. For those that doubt what is known of our physiology, one can also analyze the functionality of a mind and body when separated. Imagine a mind and body physically separated on opposite sides of the planet. The body may have the physical capability of sensation, but without a mind, it lacks the ability to interpret such a sensation. Similarly, the mind, without the body, could think on its own. The limitation lies with not having access to any of the world around the lone mind; no visual, olfactory, auditory, or touch sensation to explore surroundings. There would be no information to process, therefore the mind would be obsolete. The dependence of mind and body allows the scientific community to understand the world around us. Without these analyses about physiology, we would have no certainty in our knowledge of things like biology, chemistry, physics, and everything else that composes the sciences. It is comfortable for the scientific community to have clear, defined rules for how the world works. Descartes challenges these ideas in his claims for mind-body dualism. However, while the mind and body may be able to technically function independently, it is their dependence on one another that enables their strongest functionality.

While I claim that the mind and body are physically dependent on one another, I believe that from a metaphysical perspective, the mind is not bound by the body. Metaphysics examines things that are not necessarily linked to a concrete reality. In this context, I think that the mind is separate from the body; the body is a vehicle for the mind to explore the surrounding world. A mind is in existence because of the body, yes, but the growth of the mind (the ever-changing personality, habits, values, and worries) is a result of its interactions with the rest of the world. This can also be shown in dreams. The body is not responding to large amounts of sensory stimulation, yet the mind forms realities and stories that show the power of consciousness. Therefore, the mind has a quality of independence that allows it to exist boundlessly. One of the most interesting components of Descartes’ argument is rooted in his conclusion that the mind is separate from the body. If the mind transcends the confines of the body, that opens up discussion about the possibility of minds outlasting bodies. In other words, minds (lives, experiences, feelings, knowledge) live on past the body after death. This could, in theory, validate ideas like reincarnation and judgement of souls. Furthermore, what differentiates between a soul and a mind? Isn’t a soul just a collection of feelings, experiences, and characteristics that define a person’s being? I would argue that a mind, if free from a body, is no different. Descartes states that properties of the mind are things like judgement, reasoning, understanding, and memories. If, as Descartes claims, a person is composed of the mind and the body, and the properties of the body are sensory perceptions, then the soul must be comprised of what remains besides the body: the mind.

Descartes has largely shaped philosophy today through his compelling beliefs and arguments. One of the most significant of these contributions has been his remarks about the separation of mind and body. He defines clarity and distinction in terms of his argument, using them to strengthen his claims. His noteworthy example of the ball of wax helps to distinguish between our sensory perceptions of the world and our perceptions founded in knowledge, understanding, and experience. Given the argument that the mind is separate from the body, Descartes supports ideas confirming a soul, and furthermore, a soul that could be synonymous with the mind. His logic is lacking when considering the physiological dependency that the mind has on the body. However, I argue that the metaphysical properties of a mind allow it to transcend the physical boundaries of a body. Regardless of the level of agreement that one has with Descartes and his ideas on mind-body dualism, he has inspired me to think more deeply about my beliefs, and for that, I am grateful for his contributions to philosophical theory.

Works Cited
