

Britain wakes up to growing student mental health plight

LONDON: Former business student Greg used to resort to drink and drugs to get to sleep—a common story at British universities struggling to adapt to growing concerns about student mental health problems. “I was super, super depressed,” Greg, now aged 26 said. Around half of the 37,500 students interviewed by The Insight Network, a therapy provider, used drugs and alcohol “as a means of coping with difficulties in their lives.” One in five reported suffering from mental health issues, mostly depression and anxiety, according to the survey conducted at 140 British universities.

In Greg's case, it was a combination of factors at play, including the disappointment of not liking his course and coping with having more time on his hands. The end of a five-year relationship, on top of the death of his grandparents, however, made things even worse, he said, asking not to be identified by his full name. Dominique Thompson, a doctor who has treated students for 20 years, said their anxiety could be debilitating and was “not about feeling a bit stressed about exams”.

“They would not be able to go out with friends, to go to their lectures, to study, to read... they stop socializing, leaving their room,” she said. And students with depression sometimes develop “suicidal thinking”, she warned. Over the last decade, the proportion of British students

reporting mental disorders has “significantly increased”, according to a study.

From 0.4 percent in 2008, the figure rose to 3.1 percent last year, the study of nearly 2.3 million students published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency indicated. However, “we do not know how much of this increase is due to increased awareness of mental health conditions, the willingness of students to report such conditions, or a genuine increase in the prevalence of mental health conditions,” the agency said in written comments to AFP.

‘Everything a competition’

Jolted into action, the government announced in March the creation of a new working group “to support students to deal with the challenges” of starting in higher education. “Our universities are world leading in so many areas and I want them to be the best for mental health support too,” Education Secretary Damian Hinds said at the time. Students often impose “extremely high, often unrealistic, expectations” on themselves and have difficulty coping with failure, said Andrew Hill, director of a wellbeing research group at York St John University.

There is also anxiety associated with “seeing mistakes in your work, or that others will spot mistakes you have made,” he said. Social media, with its visibility and reach, has also contributed to the

pressure on young people, said Thompson. “Cake baking is now a competition, putting on makeup is a competition, sewing, painting, sculpture...”

“You name almost anything that could have been fun and relaxing, it's now become a competition,” she said. “They're... 24/7 under the microscope because of their social media.” The doctor also said that the rise in student mental disorders was an international phenomenon. She said students also battled the feeling that it was “no longer enough” to have a university degree because they were now so common. Another factor can be “helicopter parents”, who micro-manage their children's busy activity-packed routines while they are still at school, leaving them at a loss once they have to manage on their own, she said.

The experts say that universities need to implement new strategies to help struggling students. Non-competitive activities just “for fun” should be introduced, as well as teaching students how to deal with failure, said Thompson. For his part, Hill urged tutors to receive “basic mental literacy training” to “recognize the signs and symptoms” of potential disorders. Greg remembers asking for help when he was a 20-year-old student at a top London university in 2013, but said that the process took “so long” he gave up. “They recommended books, numbers to call and asked if I wanted a chat,” he recalled. — AFP

Coal-hungry S Africa introduces carbon tax

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed into law a carbon tax to cut emissions in the continent's worst polluter, the treasury said yesterday, drawing cautious praise from environmentalists. The tax, a rare step for an emerging economy, will be levied from June 1 on greenhouse gases from fuel combustion and industrial processes and emissions.

“President Cyril Ramaphosa has communicated the urgent need for action around the climate crisis,” WWF said in a statement, describing it as a landmark moment for South Africa. “While there is still much to be done for the tax to become more effective, we recognize this is a significant first step.” The tax was first planned in 2010,

but has been delayed by opposition from business and industry in a country struggling with low growth and unemployment near 28 percent.

“Climate change represents one of the biggest challenges facing humankind, and the primary objective of the carbon tax is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a sustainable, cost effective and affordable manner,” the treasury said in a statement. It said the tax was part of South Africa's efforts to meet the global climate change agreement negotiated in Paris in 2015. Set at 120 rand (8.30 USD) per ton of carbon dioxide, the tax will be largely offset by allowances to lower it to an effective rate of between six and 46 rand per ton in the first three years. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

HADI CLINIC Ophthalmology Services

Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Cataract Surgery, Glaucoma, Retina, General Ophthalmology, Follow-Up All Treatments

Follow us on Social Media: @hadiclinicw

Tel: 1882822
Whatsapp Us: +965-6000 2184

Dr Sahar Ghannam
Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

Timing: Saturdays to Wednesdays from 9 am to 1 pm
and from 8 pm to 12 pm
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm

Friday is a holiday.

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465
Mobaile: 90974754/ 99166746

saharpolyclinic | Dr.saharghannsmclinic | Email: drsgderma@gmail.com

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon

Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
Snoring and OSAP Surgery
Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
Salivary gland and parotid surgery
Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
Micro laryngeal surgery

1 888 883
www.qmc-kuwait.com

qmcKuwait

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or
Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088 | 94449452 | Twitter: @DrHusain_Urol

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!

Dr. Kiran Turaka (Ophthalmologist), Dr. Zareena Zahir (Ophthalmologist), Dr. Hasan Khan (Senior Cardiologist), Dr. P. Seshendra Nath (Orthopedic Consultant (AUSTRIA) Specialized in Neck, Shoulder Hip and Knee)

50721507 / 24551555
www.exircenterkw.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER
Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

Tel: 24568857 / 24568859 | info@exircenterkw.com | www.exircenterkw.com