

New inventory resource measures severity of work-related depression

December 4 2020



CCNY psychologist Irvin Schonfeld and his University of Neuchâtel collaborator Renzo Bianchi have developed a resource to quantify the severity of work-attributed depressive symptoms. Credit: The City University of New York

First came their pioneering research a few years ago linking burnout and depression. Now City College of New York psychologist Irvin Sam Schonfeld and his University of Neuchâtel collaborator Renzo Bianchi present the Occupational Depression Inventory [ODI], a measure designed to quantify the severity of work-attributed depressive symptoms and establish provisional diagnoses of job-ascribed depression.

Touted by the duo as the first such measure of its kind, the ODI comprises nine [symptom](#) items and a subsidiary question assessing turnover intention. A total of 2254 employed individuals in the United States, New Zealand and France participated in the study.

"We examined the psychometric and structural properties of the ODI as well as the nomological network of work-attributed [depressive symptoms](#)," said Schonfeld, describing the methodology.

They adopted an approach centered on exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) bifactor analysis and developed a diagnostic algorithm for identifying likely cases of job-ascribed [depression](#). Work-attributed depressive symptoms correlated in the expected direction with other variables of interest—e.g., [job satisfaction](#), general health status—and were markedly associated with turnover intention. Of the 2254 participants, 7.6% (n = 172) met the criteria for a provisional diagnosis of job-ascribed depression.

According to Schonfeld, their study suggests that the ODI constitutes a sound measure of work-attributed depressive symptoms. "It may help occupational health researchers and practitioners identify, track and treat job-ascribed depression more effectively," he said, adding: "ODI-based research may contribute to informing occupational health policies and regulations in the future."

Schonfeld said unlike other researchers who charge researchers to use instruments they develop; he and Bianchi would make the ODI available to colleagues worldwide at no cost. Titled "The Occupational Depression Inventory: A new tool for clinicians and epidemiologists," their study appears in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*.

More information: Renzo Bianchi et al. The Occupational Depression Inventory: A new tool for clinicians and epidemiologists, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jpsychores.2020.110249](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2020.110249)

Provided by The City University of New York

Citation: New inventory resource measures severity of work-related depression (2020, December 4) retrieved 24 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-12-resource-severity-work-related-depression.html>

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