



Student Research Assistant Position

Harvard Student Employment Office Job ID: 16868

Project: Evaluating the effectiveness of a mobile app for students seeking mental health care at Harvard University Health Services

Lead Study Team:

Leslie Tarver, MD MPH, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital; Lead Investigator

Vikram Patel, MD, PhD Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Co-investigator

Paul Barreira, MD, Faculty Sponsor, Co-investigator

John Naslund, PhD Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Co-investigator

Barbara Lewis, MD, Harvard University Health Services, Faculty Co-sponsor

Project Description:

After conducting a pilot study to test the feasibility and acceptability of a mobile mental health app to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety for students at Harvard University, this study aims to evaluate through a full trial the effectiveness of utilizing a mobile mental health app to improve symptoms of depression and anxiety for students. In our pilot study we limited recruitment to students waiting for an appointment at the Harvard University Counseling Service. One of the limitations of the pilot study was the challenge of recruiting a significant population of students to the study utilizing only a digital enrollment strategy and limiting students to those seeking care at HUHS. In the full trial, we will broaden enrollment to include students seeking care at HUHS as well as students who complete a mental health screening as part of a campus-wide graduate student screening initiative, but who may not yet have sought care at HUHS.

In addition, in the full trial we will explore the potential mechanism of action through which the mobile app intervention may contribute to improvement in depression and anxiety among students. This will involve exploring possible mediators such as change in perceived social support. We will also explore possible moderators of the effect, such as students' demographic characteristics, extracurricular engagement and degree of usage of the mobile app.

This study will also help provide understanding of how a mobile app tool can be used to improve access to care for students in need of services who are not yet seeking an appointment. This study will make a significant and novel contribution to research in college mental health by shedding light on the utility and effectiveness of mobile mental health applications in the college student population as well as potentially uncover the mechanism of action by which this new digital delivery tool effects mental health symptoms. We propose to address the following aims:

Aim 1: Evaluate the effectiveness of a mobile mental health app at reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in students (ages 18 and over) waiting for an appointment at Harvard University Health Services.

Aim 2: Evaluate the effectiveness of a mobile mental health app at reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in graduate students who have performed a mental health screening but who may not be engaged in any mental health treatment.



Aim 3: Explore the role of social support as a potential mechanism of action for the effect of the mobile app, as well as explore mediators and moderators of the mobile intervention at impacting symptoms of depression and anxiety in students at Harvard University.

Position Description:

The Student Research Assistant is a key position within the project and serves as the communication hub for the research study, Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) staff and IT, student participants, participating vendors, IRB as well as colleagues and collaborators outside of these areas. The coordinator ensures high quality multi-direction communications between the research team and areas described. In addition, the role is responsible for a wide range of project and administrative tasks to support the Principle Investigator and other members of the research team in the successful and effective completion of the study.

Specific roles and responsibilities include:

- Overall coordination and management of research study timelines and milestones including study planning meetings and deadlines, recruitment and enrollment and survey dissemination.
- Timely and responsive communication with participants in study including pro-actively providing participants with study website information and responding to emails from participants.
- Per study protocol, notifying participant and HUH Urgent Care within one business day if a student is identified as having safety concerns during initial study screening or ongoing monitoring assessments.
- Monitoring study procedures including online study screening/enrollment: ensuring proper assignment of de-identified user IDs, confirming transmission of informed consent for participants, organization of data in secure server.
- Overseeing dissemination of monitoring assessments and ensuring reminder emails are sent to participants at correct time points.
- Understanding the nuances of IRB compliance and ensuring approval for any changes or updates to study protocol.
- Organizing and compiling data for analysis and working collaboratively with team members to assist with content analysis from study assessments.
- Pro-actively seek out and review literature for newly published studies that relate to study findings and preparation of references.
- Actively assist with grant funding – finding new sources and helping with the writing and revisions of grant proposals for ongoing study funding.
- Updating and maintaining study documentation including co-investigator certifications, IRB approval documentation, research protocol in a secure central location for easy access for the team.

Eligibility:

Undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences or a Harvard graduate or professional school.

To apply:

Submit your application through the Harvard Student Employment Office Job portal under posting ID: 16868. Any questions email patel_assistant@hms.harvard.edu with the subject line “iWellness Study Student RA”