

## **Ref: 0007 Analysis**

*Source: "Students and depression: the struggle to survive", 16/05/2016*

Toby Thorn left a few words on the back of a letter he had recently received from Barclays. The message was almost flippant. "Thank you to all my friends. I appreciate your support. Later, ANON." Thorn killed himself in a field just outside Cambridge on a Saturday night in July 2011.

Like many students, 23-year-old Thorn couldn't cope with his debt: the bank had just informed him he would not be able to withdraw any more money. When he died, he was £3,000 overdrawn and had a £5,000 student loan to pay off. At his inquest, the coroner said it would be wrong to suggest he had killed himself simply because of his debt, but it was a major contributory factor.

While I was feeling pretty good about the research on "*Tests + Stress = Problems For Students*" and now had a wealth of useable information, I wanted to confirm some of the information with some more trustworthy sources. This led me to *The Guardian's* online article about the next step after stress-depression.

The figures showing a 50% increase in student suicides between 2007 and 2011 were released by the Office for National Statistics after a Freedom of Information request by Ed Pinkney, the founder of [Mental Wealth UK](#), a student body committed to promoting wellbeing on university campuses. A spokesperson for the ONS warned against drawing conclusions, due to the small numbers involved, but Pinkney says, "It is difficult to see the rise in student suicides reversing if student debts continue to increase and support services continue to have their budgets threatened with cuts. This isn't just about the personal issues facing a minority of students. It's an academic issue, too. Just as buildings require strong foundations, students cannot be expected to thrive if they lack adequate support."

Stephen Platt, professor of health policy research at the University of Edinburgh and a trustee of the Samaritans, urges caution in making a direct link between student debt and suicides. "Students are no more likely to kill themselves than the general population in the same age group," he says. "Of course there are many risk factors for suicidal behaviour: 90% of the people who commit suicide will have a psychiatric illness at the time of their death, and there are many other cultural and social factors. But studies show that a greater proportion of people in debt will report mental health problems. And we know that mental health problems increase the risk of suicide."

While this article was more about university students and depression, I decided that this information may be useful as a conclusion, but I was weary about just how much information is actually useful to my project. This led to me skipping most of the article that mentioned the death of the young man that started this article.

Due to the nature of this article, it seemed to cover more economic reasons behind depression rather than the social and educational aspects. This trend continues until the line *"It's an academic issue, too. Just as buildings require strong foundations, students cannot be expected to thrive if they lack adequate support."* While this is just a single line, it does reinforce the general direction that I am trying to go in- the project is trying to promote interest to help support potential students of science.

Other than that quote, the direction this article took was just too different to gain any other information beyond some evidence and examples to promote the importance of trying manage the stress levels of students in education. This is a shame as I believe that *The Guardian* is a valid source of information- while this information did not disprove any of my previous research, it was mostly fruitless as there was no links between stress and depression made, nor was there much information outside of debt and suicide that I could use for any type of analysis.