

Burnout: The Means and Cost for a Techno-reliant Society

By: Pamela Holiday

INTRODUCTION

In May 2019, burnout was recognized and redefined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a “syndrome conceptualized as a result of chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” Since the term was coined in the 1970s, society has changed dramatically through the advancement of technology and with the naive notion that progress would make life easier.

The Institute for Social Research (ISR), as part of Dixie State University's Applied Sociology program, through The Quality of Life Initiative project examined current literature and ISR survey results, finding a correlation in American society's increasing rate of stress and the increasing use of technology. Referring to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's social construction theory, this correlation unveiled the social construct of a techno-reliant reality. Additionally, the labeling theory, by Howard S. Becker, is used to describe burnout as an unacceptable characterization for individuals within a techno-reliant society. Further, this section analyzes the societal cost of burnout to meet societal norms as it manifests in the increasing rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide. Thus, the inability to align with society's techno-reliant standards is analyzed using Émile Durkheim's anomie theory.

Lastly, the means and costs to succeeding in a techno-reliant society are examined among the DSU students, faculty, staff, and administration. This section concludes that although more than half of DSU students, faculty, staff and administration who keep their phone in arms reach when they sleep, disagree their life is equally balanced and feel guilty when taking leisure time for themselves, this study is find more research must be conducted to measure the stress and burnout levels of the DSU population.

METHODS

This section reviewed and utilized content and secondary analysis from greater area sources in examining and demonstrating societal patterns, changes, and structure as they relate to burnout. The main source to present stress rates is derived from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) classification system, owned and published by WHO. This section obtained data from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) provided by the United States Department of Human and Health Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to represent stress rates through the years 1999 to 2016 (HCUPnet, 2019) for all ages.

To analyze differences in generational perspective and acceptance of burnout, this section used cross-sectional methods on secondary analysis data. Further, the ISR survey results are compared with content and secondary analysis findings to examine the effects on Dixie State University students, staff, faculty, and administration.

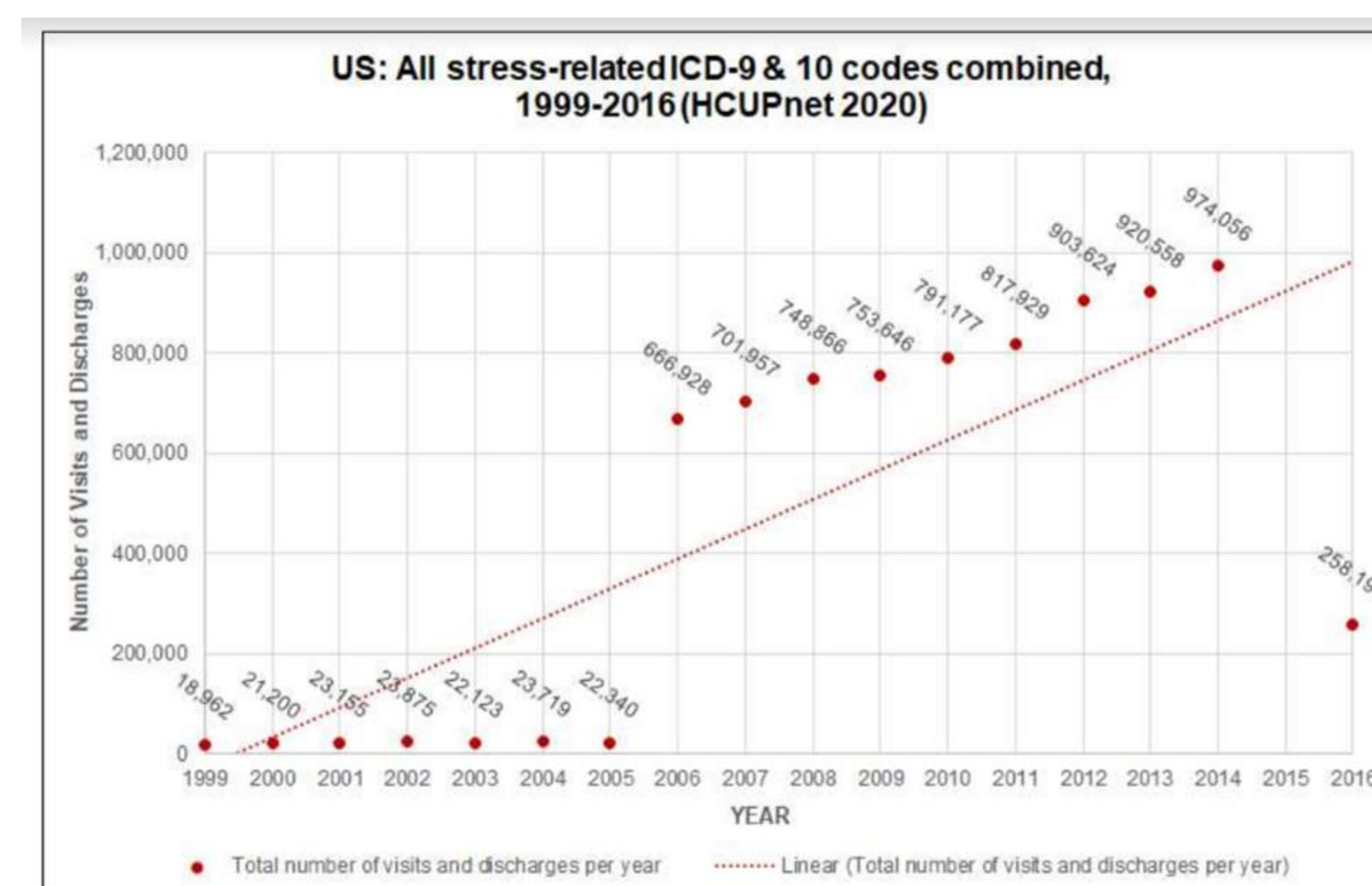
DISCUSSION

Technology Advancement

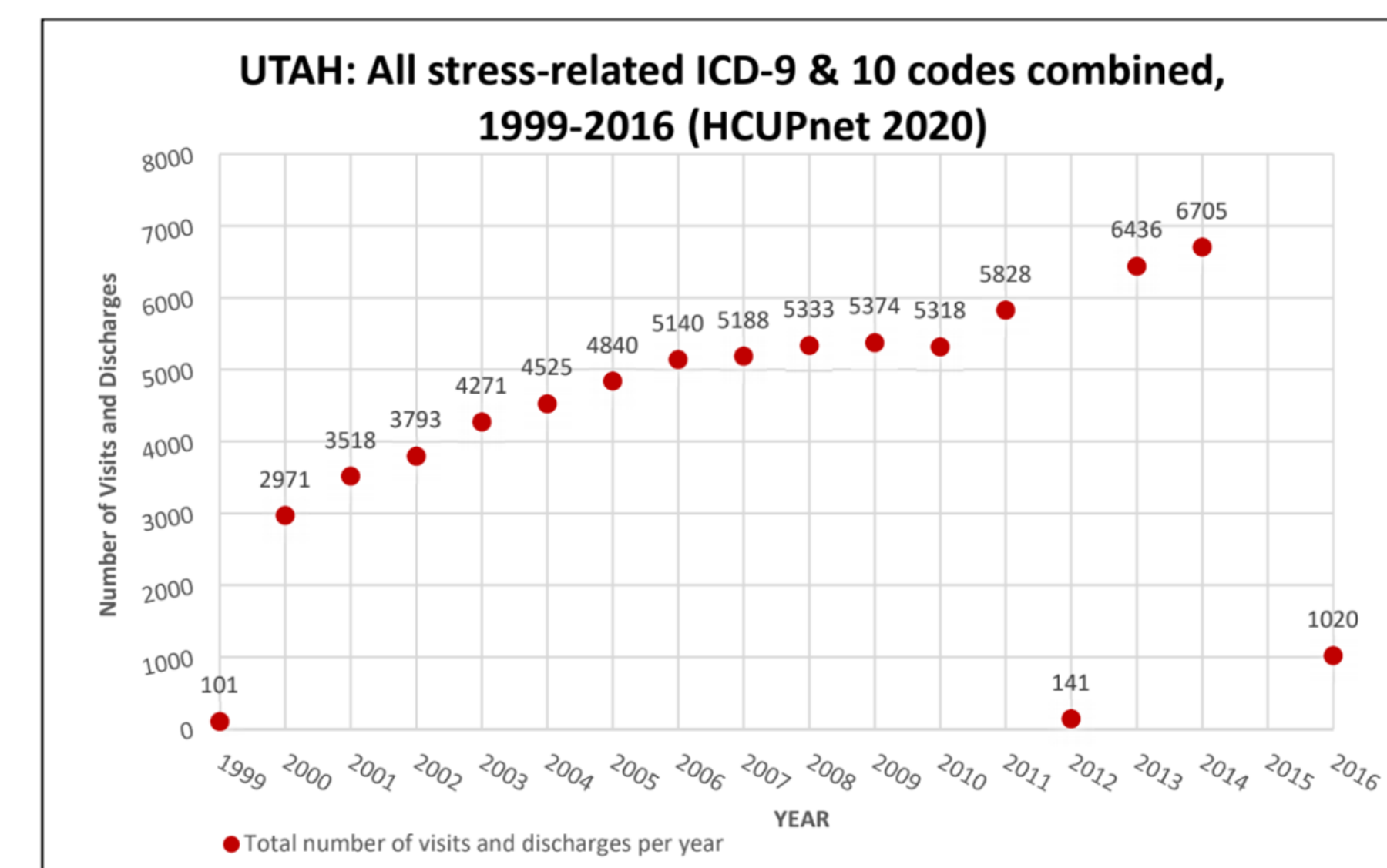
- The U.S. is consistently one of the top countries for technological development, expertise, and use.
- In 2019, there were 265.9 million smartphone users and according to the U.S. Census, there were about 328.2 million citizens in 2019, making a smartphone to each U.S. citizen a rough 1:1.2 ratio.
- In 2017, Utah ranked #1 in the US for broadband connectivity-access to internet (EDC Utah 2019).
- In 2016, Utah State Legislature invested \$ million to launch The Digital Teaching and Learning Program to bring a 1:1 device to student ratio to Utah schools (USBE 2018). However, data for the average screen-time per student is unknown.

Stress in the U.S. and Utah

Based on combined ICD-10 and 11 codes for stress and burnout (introduced in 2015), the US has shown an increase of 146% total number of hospital and ER visits from 2006 to 2014 (HCUPnet 2020).



The state of Utah shows a 225% increase from 2000 to 2014, 79% more than the US (HCUPnet 2020).



CONCLUSION

Societal Cost

- A study by CDC study shows a 30% increase in suicide rate for the most digitally connected generation from 2008 to 2016 (Ryan 2018).
- Utah has consistently higher rates of self-reported lifetime depression than the U.S. rate (22.5% vs. 19.3% in 2017) (Utah Department of Health 2019).
- From 2016 to 2018, the age-adjusted suicide rate in Utah was 22.2 per 100,000 persons, with an average of 647 suicides per year (Utah Department of Health 2019).
- 2019 SHARP survey results showed 1 in 3 students in 6th-12th grade who spend 5 or more hours per day on an electronic device seriously considered attempting suicide (SHARP 2019).
- The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) observed a 141.3% increase in suicides among Utah youth aged 10-17 from 2011 to 2015, compared to an increase of 23.5% nationally (Utah Department of Health 2019).

Dixie State University

- The ISR found 56.61% of DSU students who keep their phone in arms reach when they sleep disagree that their life is equally balanced.
- Of those students keep their phone nearby, 79% have stated they “[are] or have been overwhelmed for long periods of time.”
- 61.66% of the total Administration, Staff, & Faculty (ASF) sample agree with the statement, “I am or have been overwhelmed for long periods of time,” although 93.54% state, “Technology has made work easier for me.”
- Of the ASF sample who keep their phone nearby when they sleep and disagree their life is equally balanced, 71% state they have no time to maintain their physical health.
- However, 86% of the ASF sample state their job is rewarding enough for the job.

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- Institute for Social Research team 2019-2020
- Dr. Robert H. Oxley