

ABSTRACT

MARY H. HOWERTON. The Relationship of Attributional Style, Work Addiction, Perceived Stress, and Alcohol Abuse with Depression in Lawyers in North Carolina. (Under the direction of DR. ROBERT L. BARRET)

Since the mid-1980's, studies indicate that lawyers are experiencing depression in numbers which exceed that of the normal population. Such circumstances have an impact on lawyers' professional responsibilities and their important relationships. This study sought to observe depression by examining variables previously reported to have some relationship to depression in lawyers (e.g., alcohol abuse and perceived stress) and added two previously unexamined variables (e.g., attributional style and work addiction). Thus, this study investigated the relationship of attributional style, (e.g., how a person explains bad or uncontrollable events, typically in either optimistic or pessimistic terms), work addiction, perceived stress, and alcohol abuse with depression in lawyers.

The study collected demographic and career information through a random sample of 1000 members of the North Carolina State Bar who were anonymously surveyed by mail. Two hundred and ninety-two usable responses were received. Results of a standard multiple regression analysis indicated that over 27% were at risk for depression, 53% had pessimistic attributional styles, nearly 26% were work addicted, 51% had elevated levels of perceived stress, and 5.5%

abused alcohol. Independent t tests were conducted to measure the differences between males and females and an analysis of variance was conducted to measure the differences occurring between types of law firm practice and types of law firm positions.