Are Lawyers Unhappier Than Other Professionals?

Faculty Member: Yair Listokin

“Are Lawyers Unhappier than Other Professionals and Why?”

Many legal journals report a “mental health crisis” in law. This conclusion, for which there is considerable anecdotal evidence, rests on a shaky empirical foundation. The most influential empirical studies of mental health in the legal profession use self-reported data, in which lawyers voluntarily respond to survey solicitations. Such surveys make response bias inevitable. As a result, we do not have a good sense of the scope of the problem. While noisy data is better than no data, we need to understand the problem better if we are to work effectively to solve it.

I am collecting well-being data from a number of nationally representative randomized studies. I will use these datasets, which include many lawyers, to develop the first unbiased sample of data on lawyer well-being. In addition, many of the datasets include considerable information about covariates, so I hope to also explore why lawyers may suffer more from mental illness than a comparable non-lawyer population.

I am seeking RAs to assist me in gathering the existing data from numerous sources and then analyzing it.

Experience with Stata or willingness to learn.

Award: Caleb Dean

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