

Focus Group Analysis of Imposter Phenomenon & Impact on Social and Personal Experience



Kasey Reneau, Hunter Roach, Dr. Jessica Hinson, Dr. Karen Kier, Chase Kiriazis

Imposter Phenomenon (IP)

“A feeling of internal inadequacy and fraudulence in spite of any accomplishments or public perception”

AKA Imposter Syndrome

Can be determined using the IP-Clance Scale

- 40 or less = few Imposter characteristics
- 41-60 = moderate IP experiences
- 61-80 = frequent IP experiences
- >80 = intense IP experiences

Previous Studies

- ONU
- Northeast Ohio Medical University vs. Sullivan University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (pharmacy students and faculty)¹
- Imposter Phenomenon in Academia²

What I wanted to study

1. Boyle J, Malcom DR, Barker A, Gill R, Lloyd M, Bonenfant S. Assessment of Impostor Phenomenon in Student Pharmacists and Faculty at Two Doctor of Pharmacy Programs. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2022 Jan;86(1):8474.
2. Wester KL, Vaishnav S, Wachter Morris C, Austin JL, Stickl Haugen J, Delgado H, et al. Interaction of imposter phenomenon and research self-efficacy on scholarly productivity [Internet]. [cited 2022Apr12]. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ceas.12191>

Methods

- **Participants:** 6 participants (6 F). Mean Age:23 years. All were fifth-year pharmacy students that participated in COVID-19 testing for ONU Healthwise.
- **Materials:** IP-Clance scale, powerpoint slides, whiteboard, markers, recording devices
- **Design:** A focus group was conducted with the Delphi technique post IP-Clance questionnaire. Five questions were designed by researchers to explore personal experiences with IP, social deterrents as a result of IP, as well as self-identification of techniques to overcome IP.
- **Procedure:** Delphi technique, Students were then given a survey a few days after the focus group about their feelings of imposter syndrome, and their perspective on potential ways that the pharmacy program could acknowledge or give resources about IP.

Questions Asked:

1. Do you experience feelings of IP? If so, when did they first appear?
2. Can you think of situations that trigger IP?
3. Has IP ever prevented you from doing something that you wanted to do/try out for/complete?
4. Have you ever been in a situation where your IP or feelings were disproven?
5. What do you do that helps you when you are feeling inadequate/underprepared/unfit, etc.?

Hypothesis

- Pharmacy students would express moderate to high incidences of IP
- Students would experience IP before academic career
- Students would describe ways in which their IP was disproven and also ways in which IP has hindered them, either in school, life, or professional experiences.

Responses:

1. Do you experience feelings of IP? If so, when did they first appear? → **Yes, mainly appeared in academic career, but also some instances in childhood and adolescence.**
2. Can you think of situations that trigger IP? → **Within organizations or leadership positions, performance based activities and in work settings.**
3. Has IP ever prevented you from doing something that you wanted to do/try out for/complete? → **Situational → push for a need to succeed but also can hinder if situation will cause extreme distress**
4. Have you ever been in a situation where your IP or feelings were disproven? → **No, a cascade of stress comes despite positive outcomes that may occur. Overthinking and analyzing prohibited feelings of satisfaction in work.**
5. What do you do that helps you when you are feeling inadequate/underprepared/unfit, etc.? → **Talking with others for external validation and support**

Post-survey analysis

- Mean IP score was 71 (a score of 60-80 indicates frequent feelings of IP)
- Post-Survey analysis showed students were interested in resources within the pharmacy program about IP, and would be most interested in doing so by small group discussion. Students also reported that having encouragement and guidance from pharmacy residents have helped tremendously in decreasing IP and would be interested in the establishment of resident/student relationships in the future.
- Post-survey is also going out to the P5 class

Conclusions

- The present study found that pharmacy students have a high incidence of imposter syndrome. This supports the hypothesis that the pharmacy students included would express moderate to high incidences of IP. The hypothesis that students would experience some IP before their academic career was also supported. However, the data did not support the hypothesis that IP could be disproven, as the students indicated that IP is a cycle that is not easily broken down despite positive outcomes.
- Implications of this study

Acknowledgements & Questions