News Release

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Attitudes to learning may influence mental health, study finds

Students' mental health may be tied to their approach to learning, research suggests.

Experts say changing the way students are given feedback could help them adopt a more appropriate mindset and improve their psychological wellbeing.

The team from the University of Edinburgh found that students who believed their level of intelligence was fixed showed signs of poorer mental health.

The students scored lower on five out of six areas of psychological well-being compared with those who believed that their intelligence could be improved.

Previous studies have found that students' mindset relating to intelligence is influenced by the type of praise given by parents and teachers, as well as the way in which they are assessed.

The research suggests that altering feedback and assessment styles to promote a positive outlook on learning may offer an opportunity to tackle mental health problems among students.

Mental health problems such as depression and anxiety are becoming more common among UK university students. The number of students seeking counselling has risen by almost a third in the last four years.

Researchers at the University's Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies used a questionnaire to assess mindset and psychological well-being in 148 veterinary students.

Vets are particularly susceptible to mental health problems and are four times more likely to take their own lives than the general population.

The study is published in the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*.

Rachel Whittington, Lecturer in Professional Studies at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: "We're interested in how we can give our students and graduates the best chances of a fulfilling and successful career while promoting positive psychological wellbeing."

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