



Academia burnout - the next pandemic

Female academics tend to experience stress and burnout while from working from home as they have multiple factors affecting their home and work balance.

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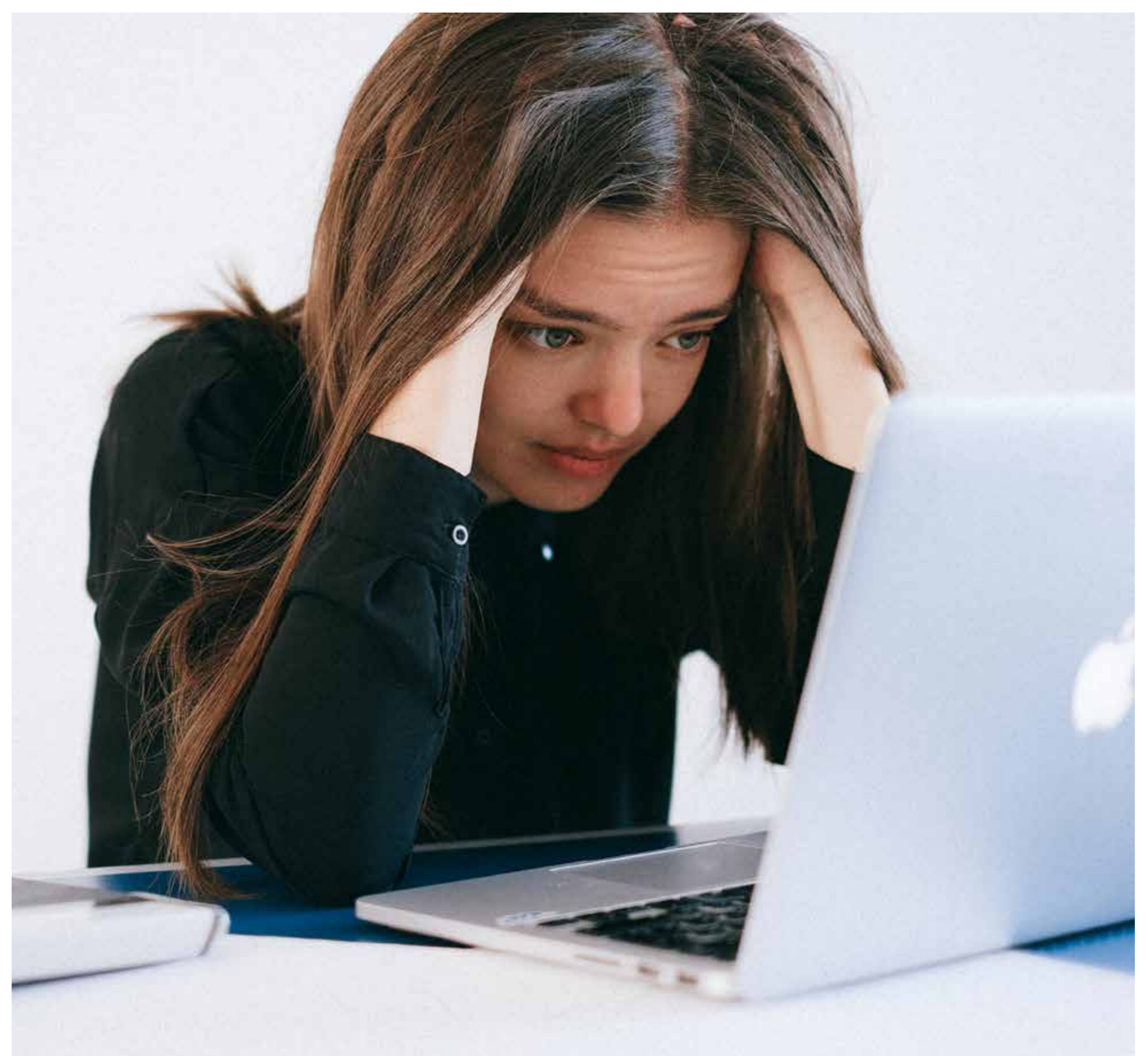
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A new era was established when academics were granted the opportunity to work from home. Many female academics jumped at the idea of avoiding traffic and working in their pyjamas within the comfort of their own homes. Although it is a fantastic idea on paper, cracks were soon identified with negative side effects brought to light.

Along with increased workload, stringent deadlines, online meetings and household demands, female academics tend to struggle with the work and home-life balance. The pressure these academics put on themselves may have lead to increasingly higher levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Some female academics have anonymously reported: "I work from morning till late, and don't know how to switch off at the end of the day;" "I seem to have low energy and get sick often;" and "Juggling demands from work, children and my partner is taxing."

Therapists specialising in mental health often recommend that women experiencing such feelings of stress should be intentional about self-care. This can be done by applying grounding techniques such as breathing deeply, walking barefoot on grass, taking long baths as well as



Universities should support female academics working from home.

taking up hobbies to help one shift from their current stressors.

"Although women academics have always juggled work and home life, working from home has removed the separation of the two environments, while the pressure to be superhuman remains," says Tumishang Sekhu.

To prevent a higher number of employees experiencing burnout

side effects including sickness, depression, unproductivity and resignation, universities should put more visible measures in place to support female employees working from home. By investing in mental health of employees, universities will have well balanced employees who are happy, productive and efficient.