LINGUISTS ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN
• Back in the 1960s, professional athletes considered strength training akin to cheating: either you were good at sports, or you weren’t. Scientists still think along the same lines.

• Great academics work a substantial amount. And the more accomplished they are, the more they work. Yet we still try to make it look easy on the outside, slave to the "genius" fallacy.

• We hope to convince people of our brilliance, while simultaneously fighting back the impostor syndrome, and wondering how the others do it so effortlessly. Truth is: they don’t.

• Sports and music have abandoned the genius notion in favor of dedicated training and hard work, and performance has improved across the board over the last few decades. In science, we still cling to an overcome notion that brings more harm than good.
MY NON-SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

• Google form advertised via Facebook and Corpora list
• 573 usable responses
  – 455 computational linguists
    • gender: 150 women, 303 men, 2 other/NA
    • age: 115 <30, 210 30-39, 82 40-49, 48 >=50
    • with kids: 162 yes, 293 no
    • position: 113 students, 111 fixed/short term, 71 researchers, 106 professors, 54 other
  – 68 other researchers
  – 35 non-researchers
• This is not a controlled experiment, please don't make important life choices based on its results
ARE WE DIFFERENT?

STRESS LEVELS
STRESS SOURCES: COMP LING

This is a word cloud visualization that highlights the stress sources in the field of computer linguistics. The words are sized according to their frequency in the dataset, with larger words appearing more frequently. Key stress sources include deadlines, tasks, lack, work, research, teaching, and managing researchers. Other terms like pressure, time, hard, and little also feature prominently. The image suggests that computer linguists face a range of challenges, from managing a workload to handling research and teaching responsibilities. The word 'lack' is particularly significant, indicating a possible need for better support or resources. The website link provided offers additional resources or further analysis of stress factors in various fields.
STRESS SOURCES: OTHER RESEARCH
ARE WE DIFFERENT? FRAUD SYNDROME
HOW WELL-PREPARED YOU THINK YOU ARE?
ARE WE DIFFERENT? SATISFACTION
ARE WE DIFFERENT?
PERCEIVED SUCCESS
ARE WE DIFFERENT?
WEEKLY WORKING HOURS

complying

other research

other nonresearch
ARE WE DIFFERENT? WEEKEND WORK
CHASING EXTERNAL FACTORS

- Focus on computational linguists
- Only searching for major central tendency differences with median comparison
- No control for correlated variables (e.g., age and position)
CHASING EXTERNAL FACTORS

• Age, gender, having kids, position do not affect reported stress, perceived preparation for job, job satisfaction

• Professors and people over 50 report higher sense of success than others (median 4 vs 3)

• (Over-)working affects stress:
  – median stress at 3 for those who work for up to 40 hours per week, at 5 for those who work more than 70 hours, 4 for those in the middle
  – median stress at 3 for those who don't work on weekends more than a few times per year, at 4 for all others
  – those who work for more than 70 hours also report higher perceived preparation (median at 5 vs 4 for the rest) (!)
COPING WITH STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>method</th>
<th>complying</th>
<th>other research</th>
<th>other nonresearch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>exercise</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>any</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within complying group, the following are more likely to adopt explicit coping strategies:
- Professors (74%)
- Women (81%)
- Non-over-workers (88% among those who work during weekends just a few times per year)

Within complying group, no sign that explicit coping strategies affect stress, perceived preparation, satisfaction, perceived success.
MY 3 CENTS

• Lots of running
• Selected Getting Things Done methods
• Meditation (Headspace app)
HOW OTHERS COPE
PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE SURVEY

• The Pomodoro method
• Meeting socially with colleagues
• Work less!
• Limit email/social media
• Alcohol and drugs

• Supportive colleagues help
• Awful supervisors/PIs don't
HOW DO YOU COPE?

• Do we have a problem?
• Can we do something as a community?
• Did I miss some important factor?
• Any further pearls of wisdom?
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