StressMap: The Effect of a Coordinated Testing Schedule on Student Stress

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Students attending high school today have an increased average stress level compared to those in the past. Heightened stress levels in high school students can cause health problems if stress is intense or becomes chronic. An opportunistic survey of Fairview High School students in the 2018-19 school year revealed that a build-up of major assignments was the greatest factor in influencing student stress. In response to these results, we designed an application called StressMap that interfaces with the online grading program Infinite Campus to regulate student stress surrounding testing. StressMap provides teachers with information on the overall course workloads of their students and allows teachers to make informed decisions about when to schedule major assignments and exams. Eleventh-grade students (n = 439) answered questions on the Perceived Stress Survey (PSS), once before the implementation of Stressmap and once after to compare student stress levels. The t-Test (a = 0.05) was used to explore any changes in PSS responses. The t-Test for both the advanced (t = 5.6) and college prep (t = 2.0) students revealed a statistically significant change in PSS scores. There is evidence of an effect of the use of StressMap on student PSS scores. However, many other uncontrolled variables may also be partly responsible for driving down student stress during their junior year of high school. We theoretically explore these variables.

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