

SOCIAL MEDIA STRONG ACTIVISM TOOL IN AFGHANISTAN



Social media has been an active news outlet in the struggle for women's and girls' rights in Afghanistan. Flickr, Cordelia Persen

GAISU YARI FORUM STAFF WRITER

The power of social media and the way it is used in the United States and Afghanistan are markedly different. People in the U.S. use Facebook almost every hour. Jon Languasco, president of PVCC's International Club, said, "Social [networking] is a great tool for organizing and involving people in club activities because people check their Facebook more often than their emails." Facebook, Twitter and other social media have become powerful

communication tools. As Languasco said, if someone asks a new contact for his or her information, they will often say "find me on Facebook."

Languasco added that Facebook is not a viable news source in American society. "I have more than a few Facebook friends from other countries like Spain, Italy, and Brazil, but no one, as far as I know, uses it to post current events or serious news; they just use it to socialize."

Although social media leans toward a more personal communication function rather than acting as a news source

in the United States, it shows a different trend in Afghanistan. Inside Afghanistan, people often get more chances to obtain current news from sources such as Facebook and other social media than from established news outlets. For instance, on Sept. 22, a group of students protested against the lashing of a 15-year-old girl by a group of religious figures in the Ghazni province. This punishment was due to a relationship she had with a boy. The boy was released, while the

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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girl, Sabira, was flogged more than 100 times. Ghulam Hus-sain Sirat, who is currently a journalist with Deutsche Welle radio in Kabul, followed this case deeply with the help of Facebook to spread the news.

It was not possible to talk to Sirat directly, but through an email he said, "Although we witnessed achievements through the past eleven years, the religious figures are still active and act illegally. For instance, the lashing of 15-year-old Sabira in the Jaghori district of the Ghazni province [shows that] girls are still not allowed to live freely."

Government officials tried to arrest these extremists after students protested, but Sabira's life is still at risk, and she cannot return to her hometown. Sirat added, "After news coverage

of Sabira's case, the three Mullahs (religious figures) were detained and questioned for their illegally arbitrary trail." After this movement to support Sabira's case in Kabul, Sirat sounded more positive about the presence of the U.S. in Afghanistan and the power of its influence. "I think the West, especially the U.S., must put more pressure on Afghan government to avoid such cases in Afghanistan," said Sirat.

Through social media, this news received international attention and worried people from across the world.

Nadia Sherzad, an Afghan student at PVCC, said, "I think a lot of us here in the U.S. are taking so much for granted, and we are not aware of what the rest of the world is suffering from. I think realizing what's happening around the world would make us complain less, respect our lives more

and appreciate what we have."

For Sirat and other journalists, it is important for Afghanistan to have the support of the U.S. in the long term. Sirat said, "People of Afghanistan are waiting for 2014; this is a crucial year in Afghanistan's future. If Americans forget this country, Afghanistan will be changed to a terrorist home again." The Taliban are still strong, and they have their governors in Afghanistan, according to Sirat.

Even though Sherzad is not living in Afghanistan, she is still concerned about women in Afghanistan. "If the Taliban regime comes back to power, there is a great chance that we would have the same Afghanistan back where we left off twelve years ago," she said. Sherzad also complained about media and news organizations that feature less international coverage in the

U.S. She added, "I think the [media] should put a bit more focus on the news around the world, rather than delivering local news all the time."

For Sirat, the situation has been getting better through these eleven years. "Nine million Afghan children are attending schools; these schools were closed during the Taliban era," said Sirat. "Girls [are finding] the right to go to universities and continue their educations. Hundreds of private universities started their activities and students have the chance of getting more education."

In part through the help of social media, Sabira and her family are safe in Kabul. The Human Rights Commission, which is part of the United Nations, is processing the case to see what they can do to come to Sabira's aid and to improve the lives of women in Afghanistan.



Many Facebook users view the site as a vehicle for political and social activism.

John Larsson, Flickr

VITAMINS MAY NOT HELP HIV PATIENTS

VIRGINIA R. MARSHALL
HARVARD U.
via UWire

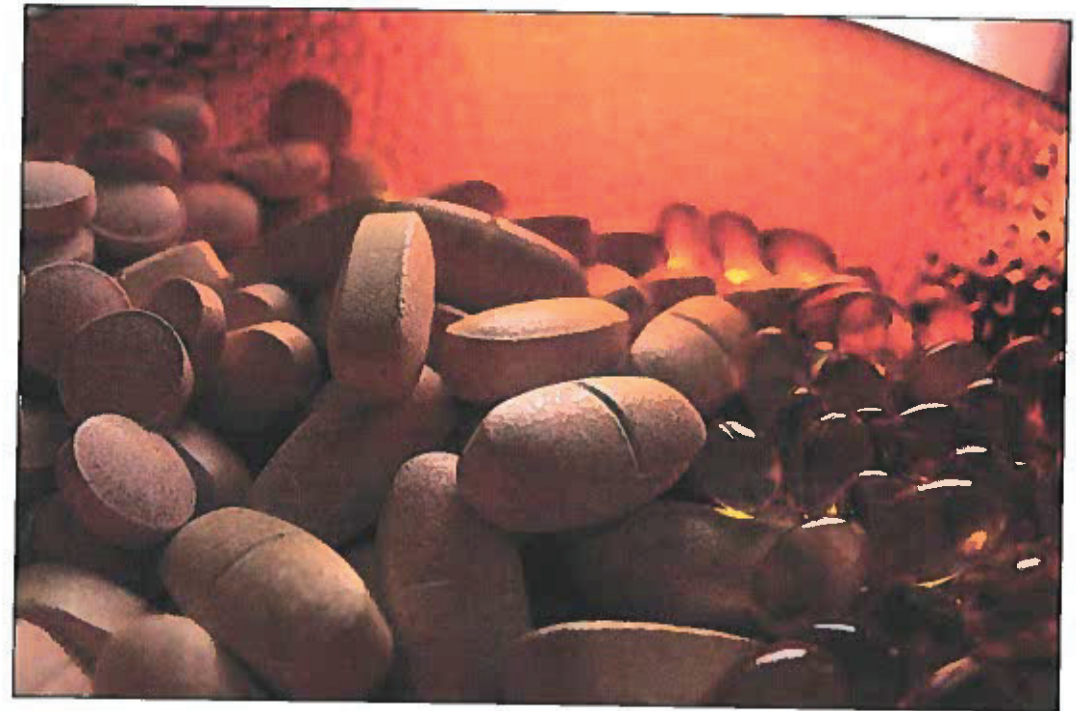
Despite the assumption that vitamins are always beneficial, Harvard School of Public Health researchers asserted in a study released Tuesday that high doses of multivitamins may instead have adverse side effects for HIV patients taking antiretroviral drugs.

High doses rather than standard doses of multivitamin supplements could result in increased levels of an enzyme affecting liver function, commonly an indication of liver damage. After examining the study's findings, Sheila Isanaka, a research fellow at the School of Public Health involved in the test, recommended that patients taking highly active antiretroviral therapy—called HAART for short—consume only standard levels of vitamins.

While previous studies have concluded that nutritional supplements slow HIV disease progression and improve immune function among patients before they start taking HAART, data from this trial in Tanzania indicate that while on HAART, patients do not benefit from an increased multivitamin regimen.

"The general assumption that nutritional intervention is always beneficial needs to be looked at," said Wafaie W. Fawzi, the School of Public Health professor who served as the director of the study based in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

The five-year study emerged from a long relationship between HSPH and research



High doses of vitamins could increase the risk of liver damage in HIV patients.

Bradley Stemke, Flickr

institutions in Tanzania. More than 20 trials have been conducted that examine nutritional effects on pregnant women, pre-natal health, and infectious diseases such as HIV. The most recent study included 3,418 HIV-positive

patients who had already started antiretroviral therapy. "We randomly assigned half of the patients to receive high doses of supplements including vitamin B complex, vitamin C, and vitamin E and the other half to receive standard doses at the recommended dietary allowance level," Isanaka wrote in an email from France.

"High-dose supplementa-

tion had no effect on several key measures that reveal HIV disease progression—CD4 count, plasma viral load, body mass index, or hemoglobin level concentration."

The only measurable difference between the two groups

a placebo group in patients already taking HAART to ascertain if indeed nutritional supplements slow the progression of HIV at all and to learn which combinations of micronutrients are most beneficial to patients.

Researchers will make the findings of their study available to physicians in both Tanzania and the United States.

Fawzi said that

the possible adverse effects of high-dose multivitamins in patients taking HAART may influence the dosage decisions of doctors and patients. "[It is] a point to note and be cautious about in the future," he said.

Virginia R. Marshall is a reporter for the Harvard Crimson of Harvard U.

"The general assumption that nutritional intervention is always beneficial needs to be looked at." - Wafaie W. Fawzi

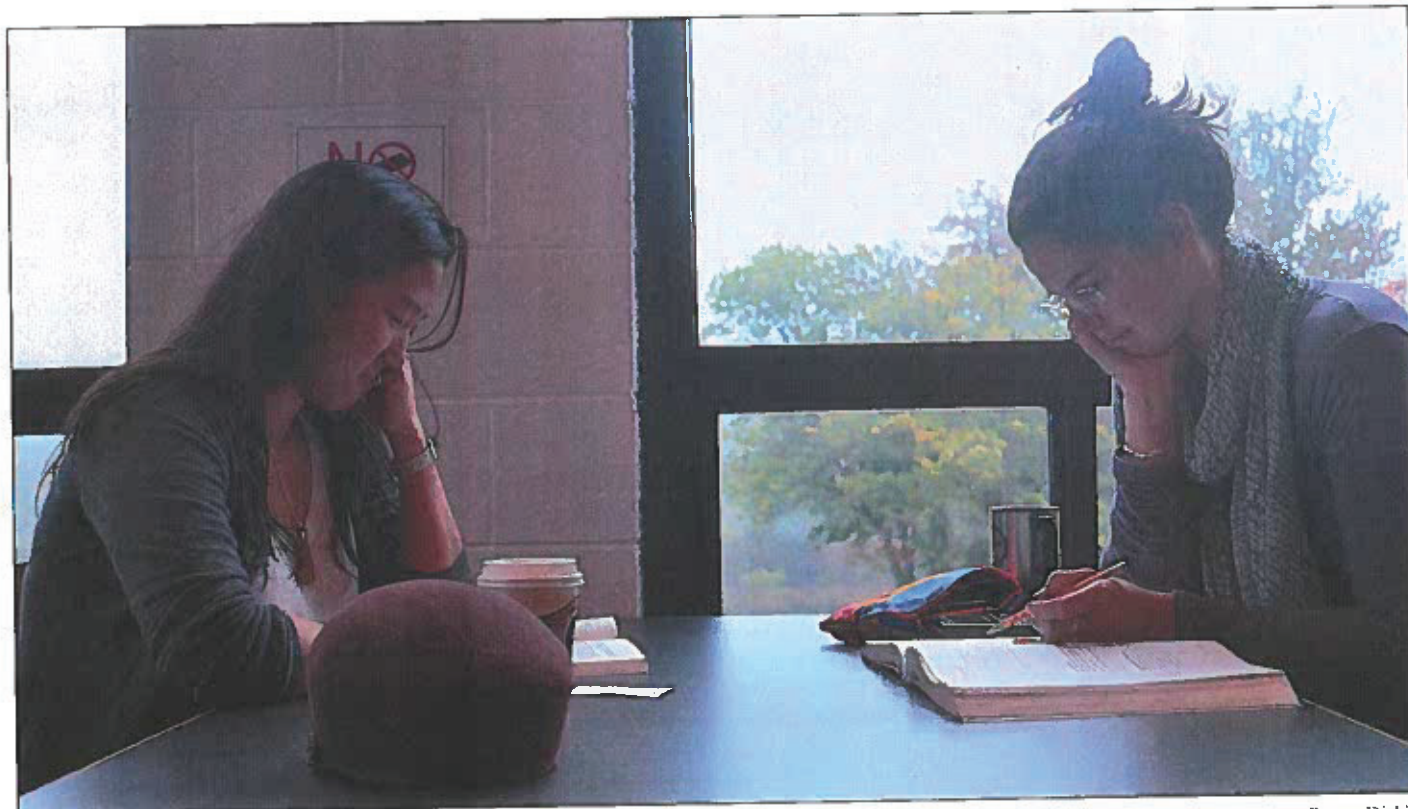
patients who had already started antiretroviral therapy.

"We randomly assigned half of the patients to receive high doses of supplements including vitamin B complex, vitamin C, and vitamin E and the other half to receive standard doses at the recommended dietary allowance level," Isanaka wrote in an email from France. "High-dose supplementa-

was the increased risk of liver damage in those patients on the high-dose nutrition supplement. "Many times we think that nutritional supplements are good," Fawzi said. "And it's only through rigorous studies...that one is able to identify whether that is indeed the case."

Isanaka says further research would need to include

LEARNING CENTER, FIRST QUADRANT OFFER ACADEMIC COACHES



Ahnm Choi and Tessa Curie study for midterms.

Porter Dickie

STEFAN MAGURA FORUM STAFF WRITER

Sometimes it can seem impossible for students to find time in a hectic day to adequately study for exams. In case these students do not know what to do or classes are swallowing their time, they can receive writing and humanities tutoring from the Learning Center and math, science and technology help from the First Quadrant, both located in the Main Building. The school has various resources in reserve for its students in time of need, and the services are covered by tuition fees.

Before students dash out of the classroom to find scholastic first aid, however, they may

consider what several fellow students said about studying: Sarah Rogers said, "Read the chapter [of your textbook] before you go into class...[and] it helps to do the homework in groups; you'll be able to understand the professor better."

Jessica Frazier said, "Don't wait until the night before to study. Read over all the ma-

they know their discipline."

For students who may be hesitant to meet with their instructors directly, the Learning Center and First Quadrant have academic coaches available for help with writing and math, respectively. Daniel Hillard, a student employed as an administrative assistant in the First Quadrant Math Center,

and note-taking skills. You can meet with coaches for as long as you need."

These academic coaches can improve students' study patterns, help with understanding material, and, in short, make college less worrisome. This frees up more time for club activities and reduces stress -- both worthwhile gains.

With these resources, PVCC students have the tools and advice to

"Academic coaches help with textbook-reading skills and note-taking skills. You can meet with coaches for as long as you need." - Jennifer Scambos

terial every single day, for at least a week before [the test]."

Even the administration has some advice. Mary Walsh, Dean of Student Services, pointed out, "sometimes the students are worried because they need practice in the subject...it's really good just to go to the faculty member [because]

said, "Academic coaches are faculty tutors who do coaching, sit down with you and help you plan around your life...to be the most successful at school."

Jennifer Scambos, an assistant coordinator for the Learning Center, said, "Academic coaches help you with textbook-reading skills

work through strenuous class schedules and exams. Students interested in making an appointment at the Learning Center can call 434-961-5499, and those seeking tutoring at the First Quadrant can call 434-961-5284. For center hours, visit pvcc.edu/tutoring_learning.

YOUNG PEOPLE DISILLUSIONED BY POLITICAL CLIMATE, SURVEY SHOWS

NICHOLAS P. FANDOS
HARVARD U.
VIA UWIRE

President Barack Obama's lead among young people age 18 to 29 has increased slightly since March to 19 percentage points with less than three weeks until election day, according to a new survey by Harvard's Institute of Politics released Wednesday morning.

Obama, who won handily among young voters in 2008 but has seen enthusiasm for his campaign wane this time around, leads former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney 55 percent to 36 percent among young people, the survey showed. Obama's lead among likely college voters, is significantly smaller, however, at 10 percentage points.

Even as the president remains popular among

young people, excitement about the election among that group continues to dip. Though 67 percent of those surveyed said they were registered to vote, only 48 percent said they "definitely" plan to vote on Nov. 6. Among college students, only 63 percent of those surveyed

C. M. Trey Grayson said, is that a growing number of young people are disillusioned by the stalemate in Congress and persistent weakness in the economy.

43 percent of those surveyed agreed it does not matter who is elected in November; Washington

they will "definitely" vote compared to only 55 percent of Obama supporters who say they will "definitely" vote. Despite their disillusionment with Washington, most in the survey still favor Obama's policy stances. The survey, which overlapped with the first presidential

debate, showed young voters still trust Obama more than Romney on a number of issues

from health care to foreign policy. 47 percent of young voters also said they trust Obama more than they trust Romney to deal with the ailing economy, the area where Romney is generally perceived to be the strongest. Only 28 percent said they trust Romney more.

In evaluating the job Obama has done as president, 62 percent agreed that the problems he faced upon entering office are "so complex it takes more than four years to do the job." 33 percent disagreed, responding that "despite his best efforts, Obama has failed." The IOP survey, taken between Sept. 19 and Oct. 3, asked 2,123 18- to 29-year-old U.S. citizens a range of questions about November's presidential election and their political mood more generally. The survey has a 2.1-point margin of error. A similar survey taken by the IOP in March, showed Obama leading Romney 51 percent to 34 percent overall.

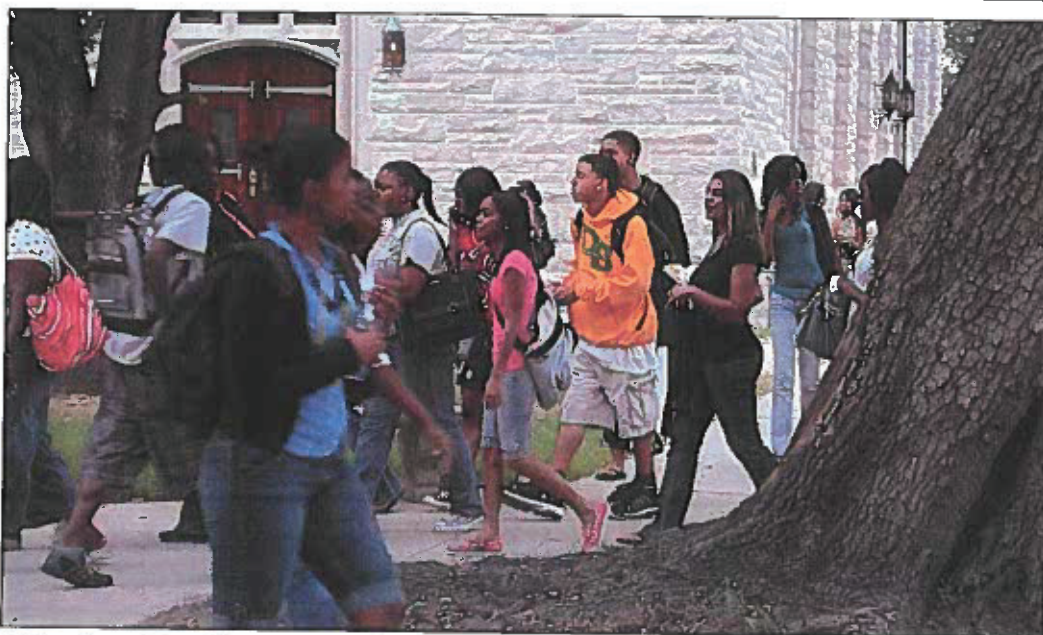
"Though 67 percent of those surveyed said they were registered to vote, only 48 percent said they 'definitely' plan to vote on Nov. 6."

said they are registered, compared to 79 percent in 2008. Only 48 percent said the "definitely" plan to cast a ballot on election day.

"Unfortunately I think we're headed for a serious step back in participation and turnout," said John Della Volpe, the IOP's director of polling, who oversaw the survey. "We're looking at 4-5 million fewer voters under 30 years old," he added. The reason, IOP Director

is broken. Additionally, 31 percent agreed that neither of the candidates represent their views.

The IOP pollsters said this trend should be particularly troubling for Obama, who relied heavily on young people in 2008. While 52 percent of those surveyed said they think Obama will win re-election, Romney voters seem more committed to showing their support with 65 percent saying



Many young people do not feel this year's election will inspire change in Washington.

Bart Everson, Flickr

Nicholas P. Fandos is a reporter for the Harvard Crimson of Harvard U.

the forum is looking for reporters!

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- Bob Shieffer*

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PVCC THEATRE TAKES CHANCE ON 'CHANCE'

ZOE JONES
FORUM STAFF WRITER

Piedmont Virginia Community College Theatre is performing a unique, but relatable, play: "Chance" by Jason Averett, a former UVA student. The play focuses on a group of college friends and their struggles with "mistaken identity, misplaced romance, and missing laundry," according to the show's producer, Brad Stoller.

"It highlights all of the small hectic parts of college,

too," said Madhuri Bertram, a PVCC student who plays Diane in the play. "It's not like there's this overall big picture, but instead analyzing all the small things. It makes it very interesting, because it's very different from the typical Hollywood big-screen production."

As for the overall theme of the play, Bradley Carter, who plays the character of Phillip, said, "We all think we know what we want...but it's not really what we want in the end."

"It seems very nostalgic for the sit-com age of 'Friends' and 'Seinfeld,'" said Ian Wendell, who plays Brian, when asked about the play's intended audience.

"I think it's going to be very fun for the community to come and see. With every line and with every moment they're going to say, 'I can connect to that,'" added Carter.

When Doug Grissom, the play's director, was asked why he chose "Chance" as the fall production, he replied,

"I wanted to do something where actors would be playing their own age. I remembered the play back when one of my students had written it, and I think that it's fun for both the students and the audience."

The show will run Nov. 15-17 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on Nov. 17 at 2:30 p.m. in the V. Earl Dickinson Building in the Maxwell Theatre (Black Box). Tickets cost \$5, and there will be no late seating. Student vouchers are not valid for this performance.



Producer Brad Stoller discusses the script with actors Bradley Carter, Madhuri Bertram and Ian Wendell.

Porter Dickie

LOCAL BREWERIES FEATURE SEASONAL FAVORITES

MAX COLLINS
FORUM STAFF WRITER

The last of the summer peaches have fallen, and now pumpkins and apples are ripe for the picking. But, the aroma of autumn is wafting not only from kitchens and orchards; the flavors people tend to associate with the holidays are enjoyed not just in dining rooms and restaurants. Craft breweries across the country are whipping up small batches of their seasonal

offerings to be enjoyed by beer enthusiasts far and wide, especially in central Virginia.

"Fall is the biggest season for craft beer," said Mark Thomson, brew master of Starr Hill Brewery in Crozet, Va. "Each brewery has their own thing."

Starr Hill Brewery has a very popular "thing:" their Boxcar Pumpkin Porter, a deep brown English-style porter. Boasting flavors of pumpkin and spice and an alcohol content of 4.7

percent, the Boxcar has quickly become a favorite of craft beer connoisseurs across the Piedmont and the East Coast. The Boxcar Pumpkin Porter was released on Aug. 1, and while there were an estimated 3,000 cases produced, it is almost completely out of stock. "People can still find it at some select retail stores, but we're totally sold out at the brewery itself," said Thompson.

Those who missed this year's pumpkin porter need

not fear. Starr Hill's winter brew (The Gift) will be released on Nov. 1 and will be available through Jan. 15.

Only a few miles west of the Starr Hill brewery, in Afton, VA, Taylor Smack, master brewer at Blue Mountain Brewery, is concocting his own craft specialties for the holiday season. Seasonal craft brews are "big-time," remarked Smack. And though most people tend to drink more beer during the summer months, the cold-weather seasonals are actually more popular than the lighter pilsners and wheat beers offered during the summer.

"Beer always moves in cycles," said Smack. "Brewers and consumers get a little more amped up for the cold-weather season...everyone gets excited for the special beers they can share with friends or drink around the table with holiday meals."

Blue Mountain Brewery's most popular seasonal offering is called "Lights-Out." Available from October to Christmas, on tap and by bottle, "Lights-Out" is a mahogany-brown, malty English-style ale with an alcohol content of 7 percent.

Starr Hill Brewery is open Wednesday through Sunday for tastings and retail sales, and offers tours of the brewery from noon to 5 p.m. (tours begin on the hour); Blue Mountain Brewery is open every day of the year, excluding Christmas and Thanksgiving, and offers tours on Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. To find out more about these local breweries, stop by and have a taste, or find them on the web at starrhill.com and bluemountainbrewery.com.



Gabe Strauss pours a Northern Lights IPA at Starr Hill Brewery.

Max Collins

EDITORIAL: DEPRESSION SEEN AS 'LESS THAN' ILLNESS

R.T. PACKARD
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I am depressed. Not literally at this moment, while I write these words, but in general. I am one of approximately 15 million Americans who suffer from clinical depression and yet, by some sardonic twist of irony, my diagnosis, by its very nature, makes me feel all alone.

But, I am not alone. At least, I am consciously aware that I am not. See, the nature of depression is that it tricks one's mind into a bleak prison where one's own thoughts play both inmate and warden: interest becomes something to be feigned, not felt; motivation becomes a taunting reminder of one's perceived shortcomings; even hope and self-worth become more foreign concepts than physics to a poetry major.

Like cancer, depression metastasizes, silently seeping into every aspect of one's life. What starts as a melancholy disposition grows — festers — until it is overwhelming. Forget holding down a job, or even doing chores around the house; for the sufferer of depression, just crawling out of bed to take a shower seems a Herculean task akin to climbing Mount Everest.

Also like cancer, the threat of recurrence remains ever present. One is never "cured" of the illness fully, he or she only learns to manage it. Just as a cancer survivor should regularly visit a doctor for blood work to determine if the cancer is returning, those suffering from depression must be vigilant in their care, lest they fall back into the hole they have tried to escape.

Unfortunately, however, there is a very significant area in which those fighting cancer and depression differ: their public perception. The physiological effects of cancer



Depression affects approximately 15 million Americans.

Justin Scott Campbell, Flickr

are usually readily noticeable, and those fighting them are given a due sense of respect and care. Cancer is, after all, a physically identifiable invader.

Depression sufferers are not so, for lack of a better word, lucky; theirs is an illness that hides. It is an invisible invader. There is no "depression tumor" that can be surgically removed and examined; no treatable parasite dictating the woebegone whims of the mind. But, depression does not exist solely as a figment of the imagination. It exists as surely as does cancer and, for its victims, is no less real.

Although its causes are not yet fully understood, we can point to the symptoms of depression. According to the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, these include "feeling guilty, hopeless, and worthless; having recurring suicidal thoughts; having trouble sleeping, either too much or too little; experiencing appetite [or] weight changes; having trouble paying attention and concentrating; feeling

little energy or unexplained tiredness; [and] agitation or slowing down of body movements." Experiencing a combination of these for five weeks or more would meet the requirements to be diagnosed depressed.

At this point, I should mention that the exact causes of cancer are also still under study. Cancer is diagnosed when it presents symptoms — benign or malignant — and treatment is taken from there. Friends and families are often more than happy to point these out and advise a medical consultation, as they should, but when it comes to pointing out the signs of depression, the same advice is seldom given.

I cannot, nor will I, claim to speak for everyone here, but my own experience is that depression, and other mental illness, is viewed as somehow less "real" than its physical counterparts. The victim often falls prey to the false belief that, through behavior modification or mere "positive thoughts," the depression will abate. Further, should this fail,

the problem lies not with the method of recovery, but with the patient, who has failed to magically moderate his or her maladies with meditation.

This kind of thinking is worse than misguided, it is dangerous and potentially lethal. Medications to lessen the effects of depression are available, as are therapists with whom feelings can be worked out. Treatment does exist and, quite frankly, the prognosis is far better for a victim of depression than one of cancer. But, just as cancer gone undetected can quickly kill, depression left unattended can easily lead to suicide.

I know these things because, as I said at the beginning of this article, I suffer from depression. I share them with you, dear reader, to preface a humble request: If you think you may be depressed, please go see a doctor; if you think your friend may be, urge him or her to make that appointment. Depression is more than just being sad, it is a real, debilitating illness. One as real, and sometimes as deadly, as cancer.

COLUMN: A FARCE OF A PRIZE

MICHAEL BEECHERT
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
VIA UWIRE

The Nobel Peace Prize, perhaps at one time a universally admired achievement, has managed to take yet another step toward becoming a complete farce. Just three years after granting a newly elected Barack Obama the Prize for little more than the content of his campaign speeches, the Norwegian politicians that comprise the Nobel Committee gave the award to the European Union, a decision that left much of the world scratching its collective head in confusion.

According to the Nobel Committee, the EU deserved the honor for having “over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.” Essentially, the committee deemed it appropriate to reward most of the members of an entire continent for behaving exactly as they should — for not attacking one another. Of course, many EU member states have engaged in some sort of armed conflict in the past six decades. But an undistinguished history of participation in international military operations is not enough to discredit the EU alone; after all, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and not the EU serves as the military coordinator for much of the continent. No, the Nobel Committee’s decision is flawed for two main reasons: It affords the shared ideals of the EU too much credit for the continuing peace on the continent, and it



This year's Nobel Peace Prize went to the European Union.

Yanni Koutsomitis, Flickr

completely ignores the present-day quagmire in which the EU finds itself.

The idea that the European peace is a direct result of the liberal values shared throughout the continent is a nice one. This type of thinking appeals to our idealism as good Westerners and to our senses of democracy, freedom and fairness. But solely concentrating on the proliferation of liberalism as the cause for peace, as the Nobel Committee does, leaves a much more visceral factor out of the equation — the rather large United States military presence in Europe. From the end of World War II to the modern day, the United States has maintained significant amounts of personnel and equipment across the European continent. The explicit purpose of such an expensive and large force — approximately 90,000 men and women — is not to prevent, for example, France and Germany from attacking one another again.

Rather, the preservation of such a presence grants the United States easier access to the Middle East and offers the military a better position from which to respond to emergency situations.

Regardless of U.S. intention, however, European states are the beneficiaries of such a security blanket. They have to worry less about providing for their own defenses and can concentrate funds and efforts on welfare programs or other potentially stabilizing projects. And of course, a large and capable American military presence is likely to deter an unfavorable balance of power from materializing in Europe — just in case, say, Germany started wondering about exactly how much it could flex its ever-growing muscles. So perhaps the Nobel Committee should have awarded the prize to the U.S. Army as a joint declaration for having “over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation,

democracy and human rights in Europe.”

And of course, the EU as it exists now is in rather poor shape. Anyone not living under a rock is aware that the EU is still in the midst of a fiscal crisis that has been ongoing for several years. Less wealthy and less financially competent countries, such as Greece and Spain, have been forced by more wealthy and more financially competent countries, mainly Germany, to impose strict austerity measures on irate populations, which have responded with protests that have at times devolved into violent riots. At this point, it is not unreasonable to state that the only glue holding the EU’s fiscal union together is German willingness to act as a bailout fund; nor is it unreasonable to assume that German tolerance and patience will eventually evaporate. If this happens and chaos results, the financial pact between EU nations will be abandoned, and the entire ideal of European unity will have been dealt a death blow.

The Nobel Committee is obviously well aware of the fragile state of the EU. Perhaps it felt that a Nobel Prize would do something for morale on the continent. But there were other, more deserving candidates. And how such an esteemed body could so blatantly ignore the harsh status quo of its chosen winner, in the form of current unrest and possibly impending pandemonium, is inexplicable.

Michael Beechert is a reporter for The Dartmouth of Dartmouth College.



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(HSR#12656 and #14427)

COLLEGE DATES AND EVENTS

What: Advance registration for spring classes

When: Oct. 29 - Nov. 25

What: Last day to withdraw from 14 week classes without grade penalty

When: Nov. 5

What: Thanksgiving Break

When: Nov. 21-25



Do you drink a lot at least one day per week?

If you are 18 to 25 years of age you may be interested in participating in a clinical trial. The University of Virginia Health System Center for Addiction Research and Education, UVA C.A.R.E., is conducting clinical research to see if an investigational medication helps reduce the cravings for alcohol.

Participants receive study-related medication or placebo, physical exam and study-related tests provided at no cost. Compensation for study completion is \$260.

Contact UVA C.A.R.E. | Charlottesville / Richmond
434.243.0541 or toll-free 1.888.882.2345

Principal Investigator: Bankole Johnson, MD | IRB-HSR # 13610

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

AIM Benefit Concert
Sunday, Oct. 28
3 p.m.

The Alliance for Interfaith Ministries invites the community to attend a benefit concert on Sunday, Oct. 28 at 3 pm at the Meadows Presbyterian Church on Angus Road in Charlottesville. Musical groups from 12 faith-based congregations in the local area will participate in the concert. Refreshments will be served. The Alliance provides financial support to local families who are at risk of becoming homeless or losing electricity due to a loss of income. For more information, call 434-972-1704.

Science Fiction Readings
Sunday, Oct. 28
7 p.m.

Members of WriterHouse Science Fiction/Fantasy Writing Group will read short selections of their work on Sunday, Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. They hope their tales will take listeners away to lands both strange and familiar, just over the horizon and right around the corner. Light refreshments will be provided. This event is free and open to the public. Writer House is located at 508 Dale Avenue in Charlottesville. For more information, see writerhouse.org or call 434-296-1922.

Concerto Koeln
Tuesday, Oct. 30
8 p.m.

The Tuesday Evening Concert Series presents Concerto Koeln, a 14-member group of musicians from across Europe, presenting works by Handel, Vivaldi, Telemann, and others. The concert takes place at Old Cabell Hall on Tuesday, October 30th at 8 p.m. For ticket information, visit artsboxoffice.virginia.edu or call 434-924-3376. Listeners can also hear an interview with the group by Deborah Murray on Sunday, Oct. 28th at 8 a.m. at 91.1 FM WTJU or on wtju.net.

Virginia Film Festival
Nov. 1-4
The Virginia Film Festival will celebrate its 25th anniversary by featuring over 100 films from Nov. 1 to Nov. 4. For film and special event schedules, information and tickets, visit virginiafilmfestival.org or call 434-924-3376.

Free Fall Workshops
Nov. 3 and Nov. 10
10 a.m.

Children, Youth and Family Services will be offering free workshops in Charlottesville this fall on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon, including a class on Nov. 3 to "Learn About Raising a Healthy Eater" and a Nov. 10 class titled "Beyond Chicken Nuggets" There is free, but limited, childcare. Please register early for all classes by calling 434-296-4118 or visiting cyfs.org.

Salute to Swing Big Band
Saturday, Nov. 3
8 p.m.

The Municipal Band of Charlottesville presents the Salute to Swing Big Band on Saturday, Nov. 3rd from 8 to 10 p.m. at PVCC's Earl V. Dickinson Auditorium. Tickets are available at civilband.org.

Assistance with Home Heating Bills
Through Nov. 9

The home-heating season is here, and for some, it means an additional financial hardship to pay the fuel bill. Both Charlottesville and Albemarle County have Fuel Assistance Programs to help eligible households with their heating expenses. Applica-

tions for these programs are now being accepted through November 9th. Applicants may apply online at commonhelp.virginia.gov or call to request an application. In Charlottesville, call 434-970-3401. Those in Albemarle County can call 434-972-4010.

Chili Cook Off
Saturday, Nov. 10
11 a.m.

The second annual Discover Virginia Chili Cook Off will be held on Saturday, Nov. 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Greene County Community Park in Ruckersville, located just 5 miles West from the intersection of routes 29 and 33 at 379 Mays Road. General admission is free, but to purchase chili and wine tasting tickets in advance, visit discovervirginia.net. Proceeds will benefit the Greene County Fire Departments. Guests are encouraged to bring chairs and blankets to enjoy a day of food and entertainment.

Celebrate! 250 Gala
Sunday, Nov. 11
7:30 p.m.

On Sunday, Nov. 11 at 7:30 p.m., Kool & The Gang will headline the Celebrate! 250 Gala at the John Paul Jones Arena as the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia give area residents a chance to celebrate Charlottesville. Tickets are on sale now. For more information, call 434-970-3174.

The Forum offers classified space to the PVCC community free of charge. Please send announcements, along with full name, email, and phone number to theforum@pvcc.edu.

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