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Study of 10,000 psychologists shows that striving for perfection leaves the job undone

Perfectionist academics are less productive, when it comes to research publications, than their peers, according to a recent study headed by Dalhousie University psychologist Simon Sherry. Sherry and his team surveyed 10,000 psychology professors at universities in Canada and the United States. What they found was that "Self-oriented perfectionism was negatively related to total number of publications, number of first-authored publications, number of citations, and journal impact rating." To sum up his findings, Sherry told University Affairs that "Perfectionists tend to do things perfectly – or not at all." He added that "perfectionists are often very reluctant to seek help because they see it as tantamount to being imperfect."

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