Transcript of Postdoc Awareness poster by Dr Zoe Ayres for Accessibility

This poster explores some of the common stressors that postdoctoral researchers face during their undergraduate studies.

Number 1: Compete or perish.

With extremely limited tenure positions, postdocs can feel pitted against one another to achieve a permanent faculty position.

Number 2: Need for independence.

The need for independence in order to apply for fellowships is high, but stepping out from under a PIs shadow can be tough. Having a support to pursue an academic career from the PI is often essential.

With the increasing size of academic cohorts,

Number 3: Position instability.

The prevalence of short-term contracts can lead to anxiety and their inabilities to settle down in a particular location, having financial and personal impact.

Number 4: Alt-academia sell-out

The narrative often is that if you opt to choose an alternative career outside of academia you have failed and sold out.

Number 5: A star is born.

Corresponding author positions are often needed to show research independence but achieving this can be difficult without already having had a permanent faculty position.

Number 6: burnout or drop out.

The culture of research often implies that if you are not working 24/7 you are not passionate about research resulting in feelings of guilt and ultimately leaving academia.

Number 7: don't get stuck.

There is often pressure to not get stuck in a post doc and move on to the next opportunity else you may never make it.

Number 8: Global challenges.

The need to be mobile and get experience in different postdocs around the world is often emphasised. This can lead to culture integration issues and separation from loved ones

Number 9: teaching experience.

To progress in academia teaching experience is needed but opportunities to do so often very limited, ultimately affecting progression.

Number 10: Idea generation.

The pressure of having to propose the next big thing can lead to feelings of inadequacy and foster impostor syndrome.

Number 11: Family commitments.

Long hours, a ticking biological clock and better work life balance elsewhere can add pressure to leave the Academy. Caring sensibilities can add strain.

Part of the mental health series by Dr Zoë Ayres free to distribute.