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Work-related psychological health and psychological type among Lead Elders within the  
Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom

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### Abstract

Building on a series of recent studies concerned with assessing work-related psychological health and psychological type among various groups of church leaders, this study reports new data provided by 134 Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom who completed the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS) together with the two scales of the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) concerned with emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry. Compared with other groups of church leaders, Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches reported lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of satisfaction in ministry. Compared with other groups of church leaders, there was a higher proportion of extraverts among Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches. There was only a weak association between psychological type and burnout.

*Keywords:* burnout, psychological health, clergy, psychological type, Newfrontiers

**Comment [RJP1]:** Maybe add one more sentence to the abstract that comments on the relationships between psychological type and burnout being weak. Because you mention the type scale in the first sentence of the abstract, as a reader I expect to hear the findings.

### **Introduction**

Within the caring professions, the notion of work-related psychological health has been usefully conceptualised and operationalised through the work of Christina Maslach and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI: Maslach & Jackson, 1986). According to this model, burnout is identified by high scores on two dimensions defined as emotional exhaustion and as depersonalisation and by low scores on a third dimension defined as personal accomplishment. The items of the emotional exhaustion subscale describe feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work. Depersonalisation describes an unfeeling and impersonal response towards the individuals in one's care. Personal accomplishment describes feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work with people.

### **Maslach Burnout Inventory**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory has been used in its original form among clergy by a number of studies, including Warner and Carter (1984), Strümpfer and Bands (1996), Rodgeron and Piedmont (1998), Stanon-Rich and Iso-Ahola (1998), Virginia (1998), Evers and Tomic (2003), Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, and Rodgeron (2004), Raj and Dean (2005), Miner (2007a, 2007b), and Doolittle (2007). When Rutledge and Francis (2004) tested the Maslach Burnout Inventory among clergy in the United Kingdom, they discovered that some of the items failed to reflect the situation, culture and vocabulary that clergy recognised to describe their situation. With permission from (and appropriate fees charged by) the Consulting Psychologists Press, they re-shaped items to reflect the experience and language of the clerical profession. A series of studies has reported findings employing this modified form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in the United Kingdom among Roman Catholic priests engaged in parochial ministry (Francis, Loudon, & Rutledge, 2004; Francis, Turton, & Loudon, 2007), among

Anglican parochial clergy (Francis & Rutledge, 2000; Francis & Turton, 2004a, 2004b; Randall, 2004, 2007; Rutledge, 2006; Turton & Francis, 2007), and among Pentecostal pastors (Kay, 2000).

The studies employing the modified form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory among clergy in the United Kingdom have been employed to test six main hypotheses concerned with the influence on burnout of the following factors: personal characteristics like age, personality differences, contextual and locational issues, denominational differences, lifestyle choices, and professional strategies. The following main conclusions have emerged.

First, in terms of age, the data consistently demonstrated that levels of burnout decrease with age. Compared with younger clergy, older clergy demonstrate higher levels of personal accomplishment and lower levels of emotional exhaustion and of depersonalisation (see Rutledge & Francis, 2004; Francis, Loudon, & Rutledge, 2004). Because these findings are based on cross-sectional surveys it is not possible to adjudicate whether this is an aging effect suggesting that with age clergy learn better coping strategies and develop mechanisms for dealing with burnout, or a cohort effect suggesting that those clergy most susceptible to burnout will already have dropped away from the more senior cohorts.

Second, in terms of personality factors, this body of research has drawn on the three-dimensional model of personality operationalised through Eysenck's family of personality measures (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985). Eysenck maintains that individual differences in personality can be most adequately and economically summarised in terms of three higher order orthogonal dimensions (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism). Two dimensions (extraversion, neuroticism)

**Comment [RJP2]:** I think these changes would save 3 lines.

consistently explain a significant proportion of the variance recorded by the three Maslach scales (see Rutledge & Francis, 2004; Francis, Loudon, & Rutledge, 2004).

Third, in terms of denominational differences, Francis, Loudon, and Rutledge (2004) compared the profiles of Roman Catholic parochial priests and Anglican clergymen serving in parish ministry in England. The Roman Catholic priests recorded significantly higher scores than the Anglican clergymen on all three indices of the Maslach Burnout Inventory: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment. For Roman Catholic priests, parish ministry was both more stressful and more rewarding than was the case for Anglican parish clergymen.

In terms of professional strategies, two issues have been explored. The first issue concerned the role of professional supervision. After controlling for individual differences in personality, Francis and Turton (2004a) found that Anglican clergy who engaged in the process of professional supervision recorded significantly lower levels of burnout. The second issue concerned the role of personal prayer. After controlling for individual differences in personality, Turton and Francis (2007) found that Anglican clergy who valued their personal commitment to prayer recorded significantly lower levels of burnout.

### **Balanced affect model of burnout**

One of the theoretical problems with the Maslach model of burnout concerns giving an account of the relationship between the three component parts. One account of this relationship is to offer a sequential progression, according to which emotional exhaustion leads to depersonalisation and depersonalisation leads to loss of personal accomplishment. Recognising the apparent independence of personal accomplishment from the other two components (emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation), Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005) re-examined the insight of Bradburn's (1969) classic

notion of ‘balanced affect’ in order to give a coherent account of the observed phenomena of poor work-related psychological health. Drawing on Bradburn’s notion of balanced affect, they proposed a model of clergy work-related psychological health according to which positive affect and negative affect are not opposite ends of a single continuum, but two separate continua. According to this model it is reasonable for individual clergy to experience at one and the same time high levels of positive affect and high levels of negative affect. According to this model of balanced affect, warning signs of poor work-related psychological health occur when *high* levels of negative affect coincide with *low* levels of positive affect. In terms of the work-related experiences of clergy, Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005) translated the notion of negative affect into emotional exhaustion (measured by the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry: SEEM), and the notion of positive affect into ministry satisfaction (measured by the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale: SIMS). Put together, these two 11-item scales form the Francis Burnout Inventory.

The internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the two component scales of the Francis Burnout Inventory have been recently tested and supported in a study by Francis, Village, Robbins, and Wulff (in press). More importantly, this study has tested and supported the balanced affect model of work-related psychological health by demonstrating how high levels of positive affect serve to offset high levels of negative affect to maintain a form of psychological equilibrium. Although a relatively new measure, the Francis Burnout Inventory has already been included in a number of studies concerning clergy work-related psychological health, including Francis, Wulff, and Robbins (2008), Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, and Castle (2009), Brewster, Francis, and Robbins (in press), Robbins and Francis (2010), and Robbins, Powell, and Francis (in press).

### **Psychological type**

In order to explore the connection between personality and burnout, a series of recent studies has employed the Francis Burnout Inventory alongside a measure of psychological type theory. Psychological type theory was originally proposed by Carl Jung (1971) and subsequently developed and modified by a series of type indicators, temperament sorters, and type scales, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI: Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998) and the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005). Psychological type theory has been widely used in studies concerned with the psychology of clergy (for review see Francis, 2009).

At its core, psychological type theory suggests that individuals differ in terms of four bipolar preferences: two orientations, two perceiving preferences, two judging preferences, and two attitudes toward the outer world. Taken together, these four bipolar preferences generate 16 discrete psychological types. The two orientations are defined as introversion (I) and extraversion (E). Introverts draw their energy from the inner world of ideas, while extraverts draw their energy from the outer world of people and things. The two perceiving processes are defined as sensing (S) and intuition (N). Sensors perceive their environment through their senses and focus on the details of the here and now, while intuitives perceive their environment by making use of the imagination and inspiration. The two judging processes are defined as thinking (T) and feeling (F). Thinkers reach their judgements by relying on objective logic, while feelers reach their judgements by relying on subjective appreciation of the personal and interpersonal factors involved. The two attitudes toward the outer world are defined as judging (J) and perceiving (P). Judgers use their preferred judging process (either thinking or feeling) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is organised, scheduled, and planned. Perceivers

use their preferred perceiving process (either sensing or intuition) to deal with the outside world. Their outside world is flexible, spontaneous, and unplanned.

In the wider research literature concerning psychological type, some evidence has been produced linking psychological type with individual differences in work-related psychological health. For example, Reid (1999) reviewed a series of four unpublished doctoral dissertations and one published study which had assessed the relationship between psychological type and scores recorded on the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The stable finding across four of these five studies was that individuals with a preference for extraversion appeared to be less prone to burnout than people with a preference for introversion. More detailed findings reported by Lemkau, Purdy, Rafferty, and Rudisill (1988) noted that extraverts recorded significantly higher scores on personal accomplishment than introverts, that thinkers recorded significantly higher scores on depersonalisation than feelers, and that judgers recorded significantly higher scores on emotional exhaustion than perceivers. Findings reported by Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, and Hammer (1998, p. 238) noted that introverts recorded significantly higher scores than extraverts on emotional exhaustion and on depersonalisation.

The five studies that have so far reported on the connection between psychological type and scores recorded on the Francis Burnout Inventory among clergy have all agreed that the distinction between introversion and extraversion is a stable predictor of individual differences in work-related psychological health. Compared with introverts, extraverts tend to record significantly higher scores on satisfaction in ministry and significantly lower scores on emotional exhaustion in ministry.

### **Research question**

Against this background, the aim of the present study is to build on previous research by examining work-related psychological health among Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers

network of churches in the United Kingdom. This group may be of particular interest since it represents a relatively new stream of churches, in which the leadership is neither selected nor offered seminary training in ways comparable with longer-established denominations. The ecclesiology of Newfrontiers locates authority wholly within the local church. This study sets out to: test the internal consistency reliability of the Francis Burnout Inventory among this group of church leaders; compare the levels of work-related psychological health reported by this group of church leaders with data reported from other studies in this series; and to test the association between work-related psychological health and psychological type among this group of church leaders.

### Method

#### Procedure

A database of names and postal addresses of the Lead Elders of all the 198 Newfrontiers churches in England was obtained from the Newfrontiers website in February 2007. These leaders were mailed the 16-page survey along with a return postage-paid envelope and covering letter. In accordance with ethical approval, participants were assured of **anonymity** and freedom not to take part in the study. No incentive or reward was offered for participation. Over a three month period two follow-up letters were sent resulting in the return of 134 thoroughly completed surveys (68% response).

#### Measures

*Psychological type* was assessed by the Francis Psychological Type Scales (FPTS: Francis, 2005). This 40-item instrument comprises four sets of 10 forced-choice items related to each of the four components of psychological type.

*Work-related psychological health* was assessed by the two scales reported by the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI: Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, & Castle, 2005). This 22-item instrument comprises the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) and

**Comment [RJP3]:** Isn't it either confidential or anonymous and not both

the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS). Each item is assessed on a five-point scale: ranging from agree strongly (5) to disagree strongly (1).

### Sample

Of the 134 Lead Elders who participated in the project, all were male; 4 were in their twenties, 28 in their thirties, 50 in their forties, 44 in their fifties, and 8 in their sixties; none were single, 131 were married, and 3 were divorced and remarried; 15 were in part-time secular employment, 8 were in full-time secular employment, and the remaining 111 were employed full-time in ministry.

### Results

Table 1 presents the scale properties of the Francis Burnout Inventory in terms of the item rest-of-test correlations, together with the item endorsement as the sum of the agree

- insert table 1 about here -

strongly and agree responses. Both scales function with a high level of internal consistency reliability: SIMS,  $\alpha = .85$ ; SEEM,  $\alpha = .83$ . The item endorsements suggest that overall the Lead Elders display a high level of satisfaction in ministry, coupled with significant indicators of emotional exhaustion in ministry.

Table 2 presents the mean scale scores recorded by the present sample of Lead Elders

- Insert table 2 here -

on the SEEM and the SIMS alongside the scores recorded by previous studies. These data demonstrate that the Lead Elders, as a group, recorded significantly lower levels of emotional exhaustion and significantly higher levels of satisfaction in ministry than recorded by the other four groups.

The Francis Psychological Type Scales demonstrated that, as a group, the Newfrontiers Lead Elders displayed preferences for extraversion (52%) over introversion (48%), for sensing (52%) over intuition (48%), for thinking (54%) over feeling (46%), and

**Comment [RJP4]:** Note that these 3 "insert table about here" saves you 3 of needed 23 lines

for judging (78%) over perceiving (22%). The two predominant types among the Lead Elders were ISTJ (16%) and ESTJ (13%).

Table 3 examines the relationship between the dichotomous type preferences and

- Insert table 3 about here -

scores recorded on the SEEM and the SIMS. Overall these data suggest that among these Lead Elders there is a small, but statistically significant link between extraversion and lower scores of emotional exhaustion, but no statistically significant link between extraversion and satisfaction in ministry scores. These data also fail to find any link between work-related psychological health and the two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition), the two judging functions (thinking and feeling), and the two attitudes (judging and perceiving).

### **Discussion**

Building on a series of recent studies concerned with the psychological type profile (employing the Francis Psychological Type Scales) and the work-related psychological health (employing the Francis Burnout Inventory) of church leaders, the present study reported new data provided by a sample of 134 Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches in the United Kingdom. These data offer an important and secure contribution to knowledge for two reasons: the Newfrontiers network of churches is a new and growing body of churches not as yet conforming to established ways of selecting and training church leaders; and the survey received a 68% response rate from the current generation of Lead Elders. Four main conclusions can be drawn from these data.

First, the two scales of the Francis Burnout Inventory (Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry and Satisfaction in Ministry Scale) both performed with satisfactory levels of internal consistency reliability among the present sample, comparable with its performance in other studies.

Second, the mean scale scores recorded by the Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers

network of churches demonstrated that this group of church leaders enjoyed a better level of work-related psychological health than experienced by the clergy within four other studies so far published using the same measures. Comparatively speaking, leaders within this new network of churches seem to be in good heart.

Third, the overall psychological type profile of Lead Elders within the Newfrontiers network of churches contains a higher proportion of extraverts than found in many other studies of church leaders. In the present study, 52% of the Lead Elders reported extraversion compared, for example, with 43% in the sample of Church of England clergymen reported by Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater (2007), and 38% in the sample of clergy from Australia, England, and New Zealand reported by Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, and Castle (2009). This new network of churches may be attracting a somewhat different type of leaders.

Fourth, in the present study the connection between psychological type and levels of work-related psychological health were weak. Compared with introverts, extraverts recorded a statistically significant lower score of emotional exhaustion, but the mean differences were very small. Moreover, there was no significant difference between introverts and extraverts in terms of scores of satisfaction in ministry. Overall, the Eysenckian dimensional model of personality, as used in the studies reported, for example, by Rutledge and Francis (2004) and Francis, Loudon, and Rutledge (2004), seems to have provided a much stronger and more consistent prediction of individual differences in burnout among clergy than that provided by psychological type theory. While the present study builds usefully on a growing body of previous research concerned with the association between work-related psychological health and personality among clergy, the main limitation of the study concerns the failure to have included a second personality measure among the instruments employed.

Future research building of the present family of studies would be advised to include the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (in order

**Comment [RJP5]:** Really nice

to compare levels of work-related psychological health across different groups of church leaders), the Francis Psychological Type Scales (in order to monitor the distinctive type profile of leadership within different denominations or streams or churches), and the Eysenck dimensional model of personality (in order to model the impact of personality on work-related psychological health before testing for the impact of other factors).

The broader body of research to which the present study contributes offers two main insights relevant to reducing levels of poor work-related psychological health among religious professionals and to promoting effective intervention strategies. The first insight concerns the potential for routine psychological assessment to identify individual differences in susceptibility to professional burnout. The series of studies employing the Eysenckian dimensional model of personality suggests that individuals scoring high on neuroticism and low on extraversion are more likely to suffer from signs of professional burnout. Church managers might be well advised to offer continuing professional development programmes for such individuals designed to enhance their personal and professional resilience. The second insight concerns the role of spiritual and professional practices capable of intervening in the path between personality predisposition and experienced levels of burnout. The key studies reported by Francis and Turton (2004a) and Turton and Francis (2007) demonstrate how the spiritual practice of prayer and the professional practice of supervision enhance resilience against poor work-related burnout. Church managers might be well advised to promote such practices among their clergy.

**Comment [RJP6]:** Thanks for adding this paragraph

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Table 1

*Francis Burnout Inventory: scale properties*

	r	%
<u>Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry</u>		
I feel drained by fulfilling my ministry roles	0.601	32
Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience	0.650	30
I am invaded by sadness I can't explain	0.594	14
I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work	0.605	7
I always have enthusiasm for my work*	0.549	71
My humour has a cynical and biting tone	0.279	12
I find myself spending less and less time with those among whom I minister	0.225	20
I have been discouraged by the lack of personal support for me here	0.494	9
I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me	0.505	37
I am less patient with those among whom I minister than I used to be	0.599	17
I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with those among whom I minister	0.473	12
<u>Satisfaction in Ministry Scale</u>		
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my current ministry here	0.460	91
I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people in my current ministry	0.690	89
I deal very effectively with the problems of the people in my current ministry	0.460	51
I can easily understand how the people here feel about things	0.145	71
I feel very positive about my ministry here	0.707	83
I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives	0.512	94
I feel that my teaching ministry has a positive influence on people's faith	0.431	94
I feel that my ministry is really appreciated by people	0.607	90
I am really glad that I entered the ministry	0.668	92
The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life	0.452	86
I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions here	0.729	88

\* Note. This item has been reverse coded to compute the correlations, but not the percentage endorsement.

Table 2

*Mean scores of SEEMS and SIMS recorded by Lead Elders and compared with other studies*

	N	SEEM				SIMS			
		mean	sd	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <	mean	sd	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <
Lead Elders	134	25.3	6.7			45.2	4.6		
Clergywomen <sup>1</sup>	874	27.6	6.6	3.8	.001	43.7	4.5	3.6	.001
United States <sup>2</sup>	748	27.8	7.9	3.9	.001	44.5	5.7	1.6	.05
Australia, etc. <sup>3</sup>	3,715	26.0	6.5	18.4	.001	43.2	4.9	5.0	.001
Rural England <sup>4</sup>	521	29.6	7.4	6.6	.001	39.5	4.9	12.7	.001

<sup>1</sup> from Robbins and Francis (2010)

<sup>2</sup> from Francis, Wulff, and Robbins (2008)

<sup>3</sup> from Francis, Robbins, Kaldor, and Castle (2009)

<sup>4</sup> from Brewster, Francis, and Robbins (in press)

Table 3

*Mean scores of emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry by dichotomous type preferences*

comparisons	mean	sd	N	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <
<i>Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry</i>					
extraversion	24.1	6.3	70		
introversion	26.8	7.2	64	2.3	.05
sensing	25.9	6.9	70		
intuition	24.9	6.8	64	0.8	NS
thinking	25.5	6.7	72		
feeling	25.2	7.1	62	0.3	NS
judging	25.5	7.0	105		
perceiving	25.2	6.3	29	0.2	NS
<i>Satisfaction in Ministry Scale</i>					
extraversion	45.6	4.3	70		
introversion	44.4	4.7	64	1.5	NS
sensing	45.0	4.4	70		
intuition	45.1	4.7	64	0.2	NS
thinking	44.6	4.8	72		
feeling	45.6	4.1	62	1.2	NS
judging	44.8	4.7	105		
perceiving	45.9	3.5	29	1.1	NS