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The Use of Marijuana and Abuse of Prescription Drugs at Clemson University

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Abstract

Prescription drugs and marijuana have been used and abused across college campuses for many years, but recent data show that usage has been increasing. This goal of this research project has been to understand the perceptions of prescription drugs and marijuana among users within a college setting, and compare the results with a similar study conducted at Duke and UNC Greensboro. A quarter of the Clemson University undergraduate student population was administered a survey, with nine percent response rate. Respondents included a range of diverse ethnic origins, genders, class standings, and fields of study. The questions specifically focused on student opinions, perceptions, and behaviors concerning the illegal use of marijuana and abuse of prescription drugs. Nearly 40% of students surveyed indicated that use of marijuana and abuse of prescription drugs are major issues facing students at Clemson. Approximately 11% of respondents have been diagnosed with ADHD and have prescriptions for ADHD meds. Data correlated very closely with results of studies at other institutions, indicating that Clemson students share the same perceptions and potential for prescription abuse as students at other institutions. Results will be used for further research and implementation of action to provide educational resources to Clemson students.

Introduction

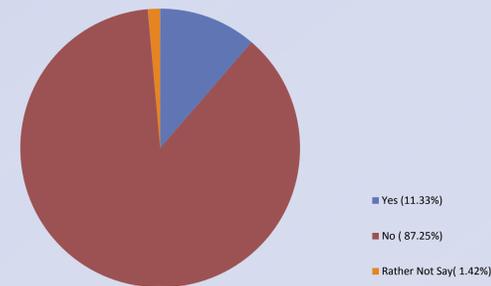
Prescription drugs and marijuana have been used and abused across college campuses for many years, but recent data show that usage has been increasing. This goal of this research project has been to understand the perceptions of prescription drugs and marijuana among users within a college setting, and compare the results with a similar study conducted at Duke and UNC Greensboro. A quarter of the Clemson University undergraduate student population was administered a survey, with nine percent response rate. Respondents included a range of diverse ethnic origins, genders, class standings, and fields of study. The questions specifically focused on student opinions, perceptions, and behaviors concerning the illegal use of marijuana and abuse of prescription drugs. Nearly 40% of students surveyed indicated that use of marijuana and abuse of prescription drugs are major issues facing students at Clemson. Approximately 11% of respondents have been diagnosed with ADHD and have prescriptions for ADHD meds. Data correlated very closely with results of studies at other institutions, indicating that Clemson students share the same perceptions and potential for prescription abuse as students at other institutions. Results will be used for further research and implementation of action to provide educational resources to Clemson students.

Methods

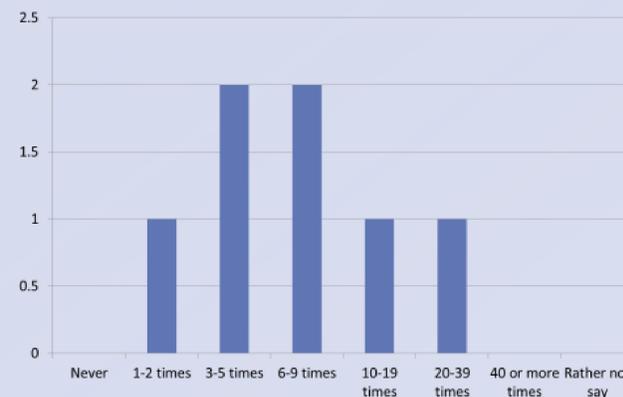
- A survey was distributed via email to a portion of the undergraduate student body at Clemson University.
 - A modification of the survey developed by Rabiner, et al., 2009.
- The survey reached 3,995 students and 356 (8.91%) responded.
- Survey results were assessed and analyzed.

Results

Are you currently diagnosed with ADHD-also referred to as ADD- by a health car professional such as a physician, psychiatrists or psychologist or have you been diagnosed in the past 6 months?



In the past 6 months, how many times have you taken a larger dose than what your prescription calls for?



What do you perceive to be the biggest drug and alcohol issue facing students at Clemson University?

Count	Respondent %	Drug
261	79.82%	Alcohol
123	37.61%	Marijuana
123	37.61%	Prescription Drug Abuse
45	13.76%	Cocaine
41	12.54%	MDMA (ecstasy, Molly)
27	8.26%	Other(please specify)

Survey Summary and Comparisons

- The National average for young adults diagnosed with ADHD is approximately 10 % (NAMI website). Duke/UNC Greensboro reported having 4.6 % of respondents that were currently diagnosed with ADHD in 2008. We found that 11.3 % of our student respondents were currently diagnosed with ADHD in 2013. However, only 2.2 % of the student body is registered with CU Student Disability Services (SDS) for accommodations for ADHD.
- The percentage of students diagnosed with ADHD that had taken medication at a higher dose than prescribed was 22 % at Duke/UNC Greensboro (Rabiner, et al., 2009) and was 17.5 % at Clemson University.
- 5.3 % (n=23) of CU respondents knew at least one student who had been harmed by taking ADHD medications without a prescription.
- 79.82 % (n=356) of our respondents believe that alcohol is a big issue facing students at Clemson and over a third (37.61 %) of respondents believe the same about marijuana as well as prescription drug abuse.

Conclusions

A smaller percentage of Clemson Students reported taking more ADHD medications than prescribed than did students at Duke and UNC Greensboro, (17.5 % vs. 22 %). Students at Clemson self report abusing prescription medications at approximately the same rate as students at other institutions. Some students do use medications not prescribed to them. In general Clemson students feel alcohol is a major issue facing students. There is also concern about marijuana use and prescription drug abuse.

Next Steps

This semester the CI team has concluded its research. The next step is to create an action plan using data from three semesters to move forward with providing a better educated and healthier campus at Clemson University. The team will use the results gained from this Creative Inquiry to work with other parts of campus to implement possible new methods of education about drugs and alcohol.

References

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