

2022

COLLEGE PRESCRIPTION DRUG STUDY

KEY FINDINGS: DIFFERENCES BY DEMOGRAPHICS

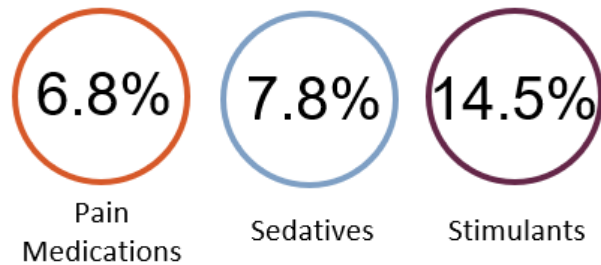
INTRODUCTION

This report uses data from the 2022 administration of the College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) to examine non-medical prescription drug use among college students. The CPDS surveyed students at 15 U.S. colleges and universities; 6,510 students completed the survey overall. Of this sample, 4,967 (76.3%) participants were undergraduate students, 1,538 (23.6%) were graduate or professional students. Students were asked several demographic questions at the beginning and end of the survey to help determine the representativeness of the sample and assess differences among groups. Demographic questions analyzed in this research brief include racial and ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, military/veteran status, international student status, fraternity or sorority affiliation, and athletic affiliation. This report summarizes differences in lifetime prescription drug misuse, past-year misuse, and misuse with alcohol.

Aggregate Data

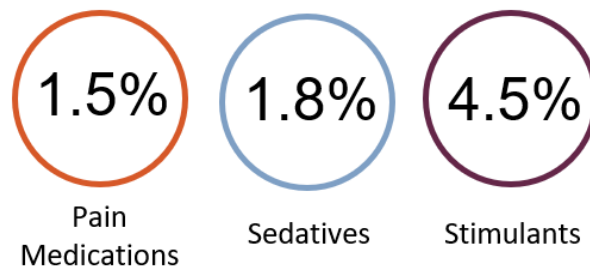
Lifetime Prescription Drug Misuse

Of the 6,510 student responses, 6.8% of respondents reported that they had ever misused pain medications, 7.8% had ever misused prescription sedatives and 14.5% had ever misused prescription stimulants.



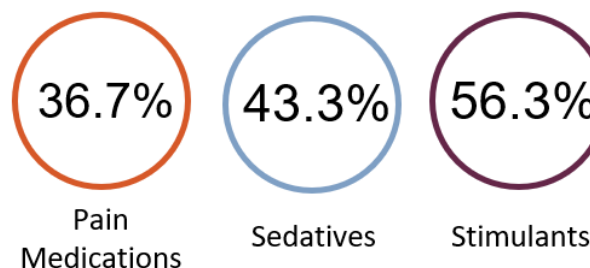
Past Year Prescription Drug Misuse

In the past year, only 1.5% of students had used a pain medication for nonmedical reasons, 1.8% had misused prescription sedative, and 4.5% had misused a prescription stimulant. Among only the students who reported ever misusing, 36.7% reported misusing pain medications in the past year, 43.3% misused sedatives, and 56.2% misused prescription stimulants.



Prescription Drug Misuse with Alcohol

Among students who reported ever misusing a prescription drug, 36.7% of students have misused a pain medication while drinking alcohol, 43.3% have misused prescription sedative with alcohol, and 56.3% have misused a prescription stimulant with alcohol.



Key Demographics

	%	N
Racial/Ethnic Identity		
Asian/Asian American	9.9%	635
Black/African American	10.5%	675
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<0.1%	1
Hispanic/Latino	9.9%	640
Native American	0.2%	14
Middle Eastern/Arab American	2.0%	129
White	53.6%	3,445
Multiracial	10.5%	676
Another Race Not Listed	13.2%	847
Gender Identity		
Female	65.1%	4,227
Male	30.4%	1,975
Genderqueer/Nonbinary	2.6%	167
Intersex	<0.1%	2
Transgender Male	0.4%	26
Transgender Female	0.2%	13
Another Gender Not Listed	0.9%	53
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	73.8%	4,370
Bisexual	12.9%	762
Gay	2.0%	119
Lesbian	2.0%	117
Queer	2.8%	163
Questioning	2.2%	133
Pansexual	0.9%	51
Asexual/Aromantic/Demisexual	1.0%	62
Another Orientation Not Listed	0.2%	13
Additional Group Identities		
Fraternity/Sorority Affiliation	21.2%	1,381
Student Athlete	10.0%	652
International Student	6.2%	406
Veteran/Service Member	4.5%	293



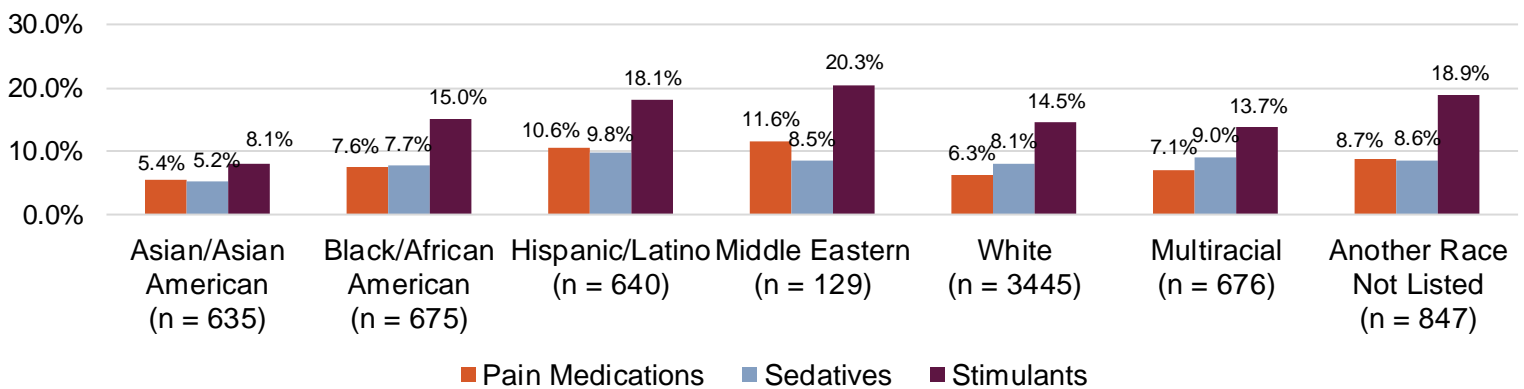
Lifetime Prescription Drug Misuse

Among all participants, 6.8% reported that they had ever used pain medications for non-medical reasons, 7.8% reported ever using a prescription sedative for non-medical reasons, and 14.5% reported ever using prescription stimulants for non-medical reasons. These aggregate data were stratified by key demographic information.

By Racial/Ethnic Identity

Across all racial/ethnic groups, students were most likely to ever use a prescription stimulant for nonmedical reasons. Figure 1 shows the percentage of students within each racial/ethnic identity that reported ever using a pain medication, prescription sedative, or prescription stimulant for nonmedical reasons. Students who identified as Middle Eastern or Hispanic/Latino had the highest within-group percentages of ever misusing prescription pain medications or prescription stimulants.

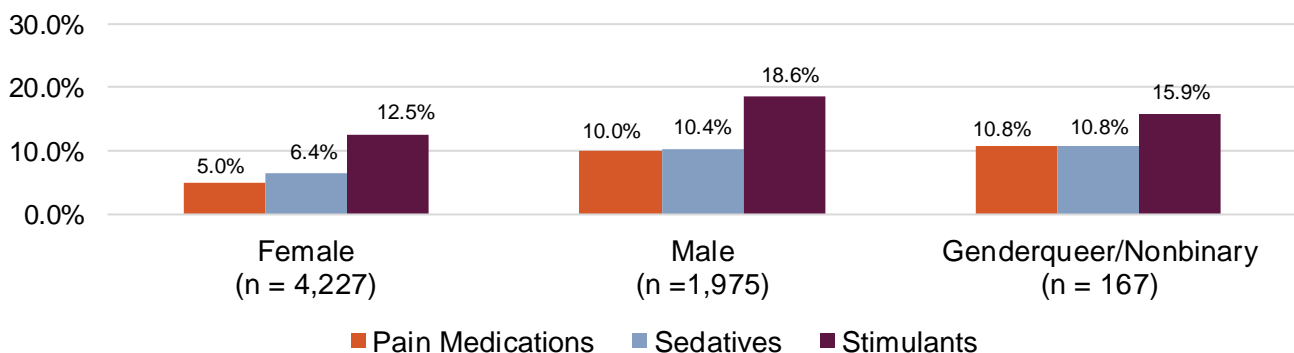
Figure 1. Percentage of students by racial/ethnic group who have ever misused a prescription drug



By Gender Identity

Figure 2 shows differences between lifetime prescription misuse by self-reported gender identity. Over 10% of students who identified as genderqueer or nonbinary reported ever misusing a prescription pain medication or prescription sedative, with 15.9% reporting ever misusing prescription stimulants. Similarly, approximately 10% of students who identified as male reported ever misusing prescription pain medication or sedatives and 18.6% of reported ever misusing prescription stimulants. Students who identified as female had the lowest within-group percentages across all three prescription drug classes.

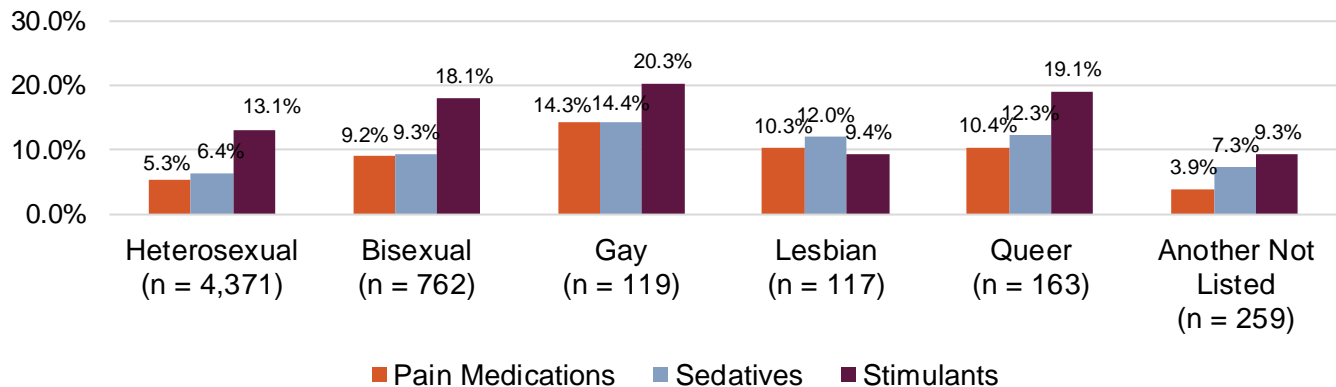
Figure 2. Percentage of students by gender identity who have ever misused a prescription drug



By Sexual Orientation

Figure 3 shows differences in reported lifetime prescription drug misuse by self-reported sexual orientation. Students who identified as pansexual, demisexual, asexual, or more than one gender are included within “another orientation not listed.” Students who identified as lesbian or another sexual orientation not listed reported the lowest within-group percentages of prescription stimulant misuse. On the other hand, over 20% of student who identified as gay, 19.1% of students who identified as queer, and 18.1% of the students who identified as bisexual reported ever misusing a prescription stimulant.

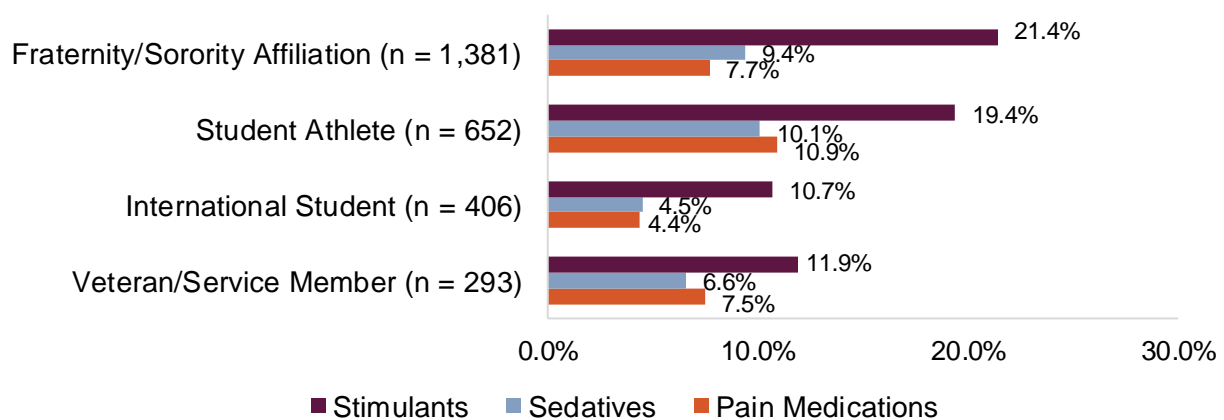
Figure 3. Percentage of students by sexual orientation who have ever misused a prescription drug



By Group Membership

Fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students and student athletes are more likely to report using a prescription drug for nonmedical reasons in comparison the aggregate data. Of the 1,381 students affiliated with a fraternity or sorority, 21.4% reported ever misusing a prescription stimulant, 9.4% ever misused a prescription sedative, and 7.7% reported misusing a pain medication.

Figure 4. Percentage of students by group membership who have ever misused a prescription drug



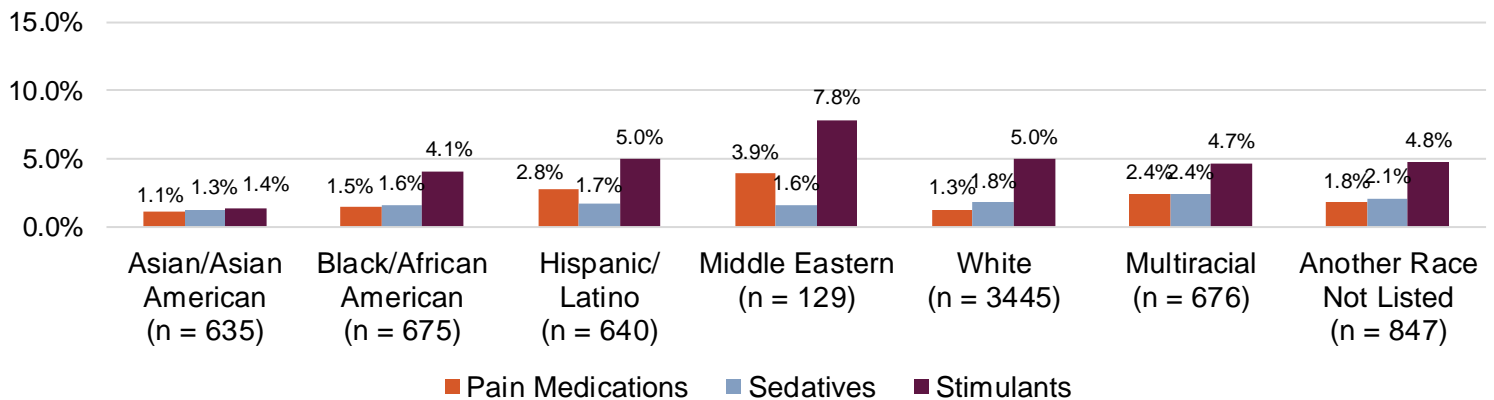
Past-year Prescription Drug Misuse

For students who report ever using a prescription drug for nonmedical reasons, we inquired about nonmedical use within the past 12 months. For prescription pain medications, 1.5% of students reported using for nonmedical reasons in the past year, equating to 36.7% of the students who have ever used a pain medication for nonmedical reasons. For prescription sedatives, 1.8% of students reported misusing in the past year, roughly 43.3% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative. Lastly, 4.5% of students reported using a prescription stimulant in the past year, equating to 56.3% of the students who reported having ever misused.

By Racial/Ethnic Identity

The majority of students who reported ever misusing a prescription drug for nonmedical reasons have not misused in the past year. However, 7.8% percent of students who identify as Middle Eastern misused a prescription stimulant in the past year and 3.9% have misused a pain medication. On the other hand, students who identify as Asian or Asian American are the least likely to report misusing any prescription drug in the past year.

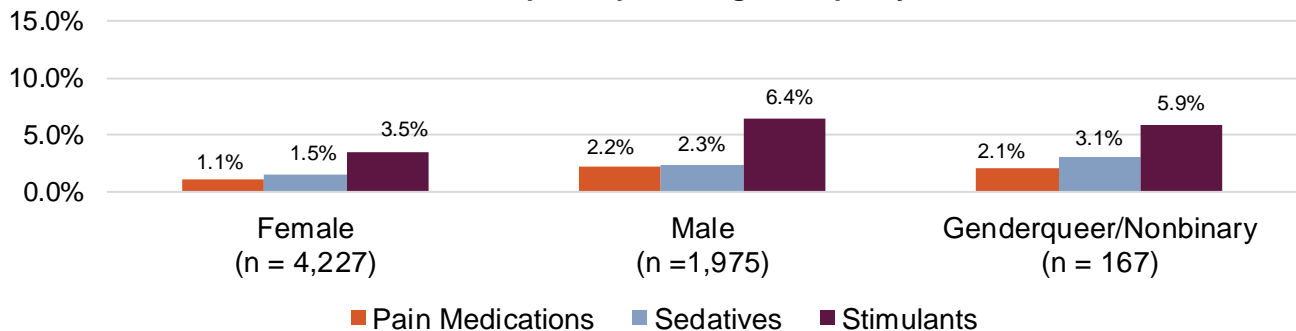
Figure 5. Percentage of students by racial/ethnic identity who misused a prescription drug in the past year



By Gender Identity

Similar to lifetime prescription drug misuse, students who identify as males or agender or nonbinary have comparable proportions of students who have misused prescription pain medications, sedatives, and stimulants in the past year. Students who identified as female reported the lowest within-group proportions for past-year prescription drug misuse.

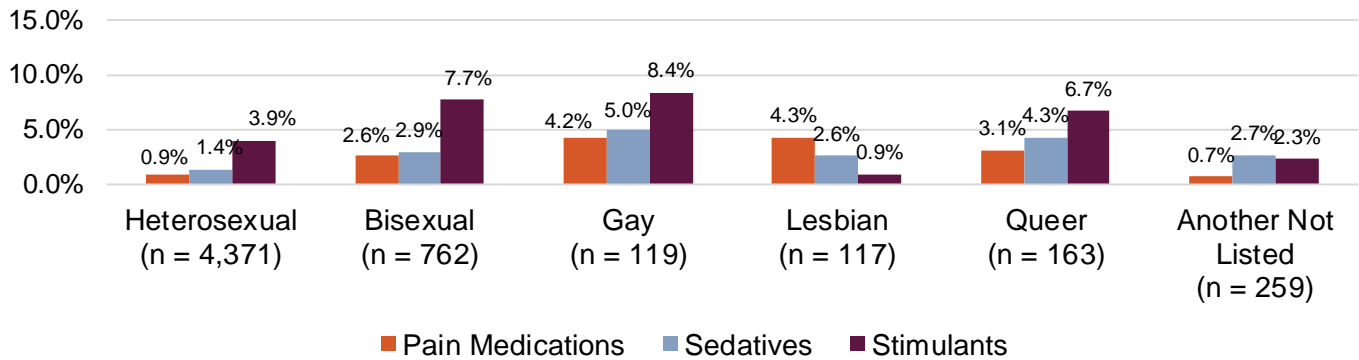
Figure 6. Percentage of students by gender identity who misused a prescription drug in the past year



By Sexual Orientation

Similar to lifetime prescription drug misuse, students who identified as bisexual, gay, or queer were more likely to report misusing a prescription stimulant or prescription sedative. For pain medication, 4.3% of students who identified as lesbian have used a pain medication for nonmedical reasons in the past 12 months.

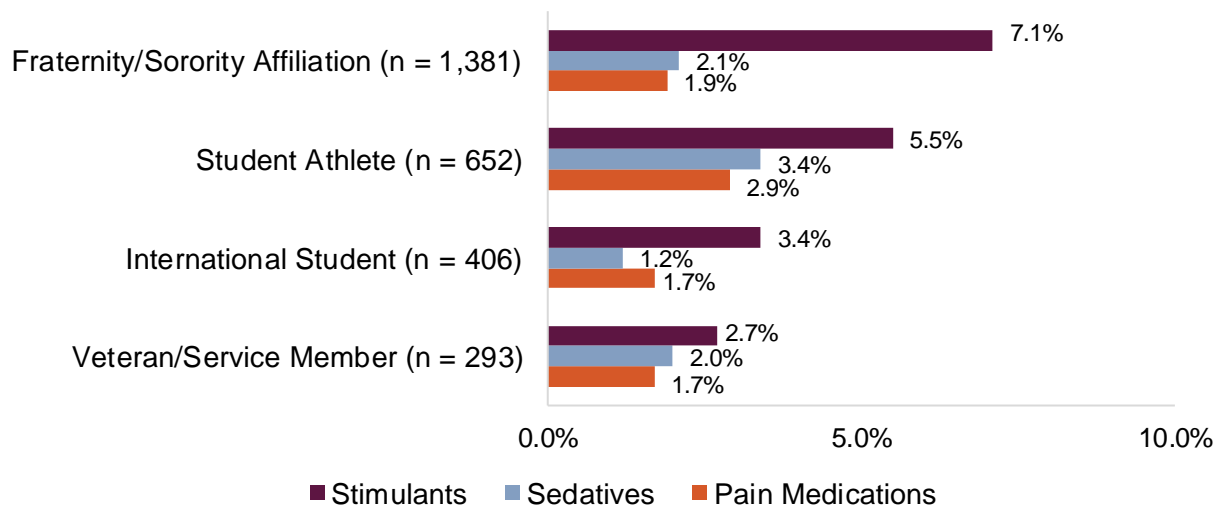
Figure 7. Percentage of students by sexual orientation who misused a prescription drug in the past year



By Group Membership

Over 7% of fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students reported misusing a prescription stimulant in the past year. Despite representing 21% of the sample, fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students represent 33.6% of all students who reported misused a prescription stimulant in the past year.

Figure 8. Percentage of students by group membership who misused a prescription drug in the past year



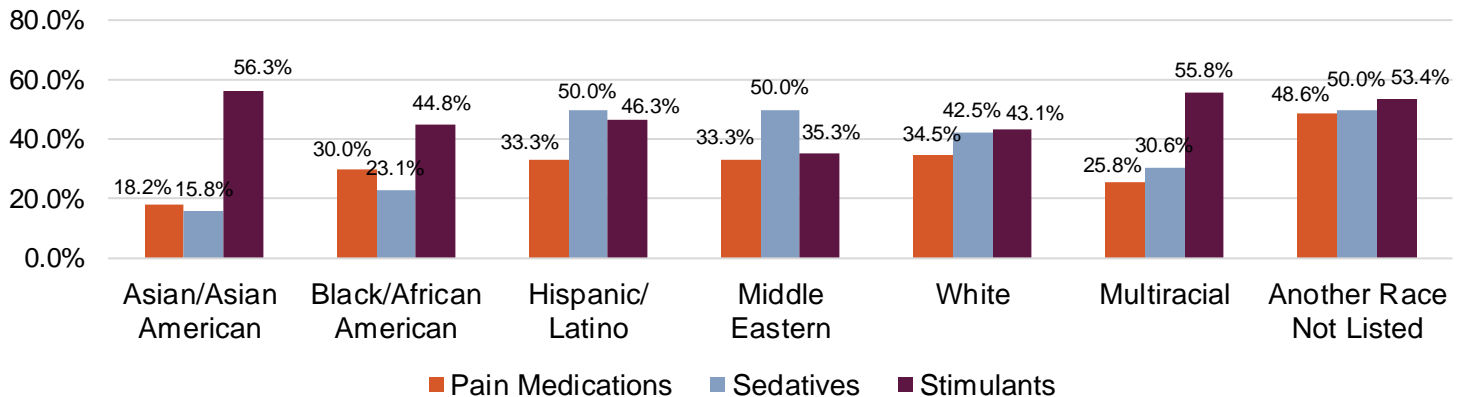
Prescription Drug Misuse with Alcohol

For students who reported ever using a prescription medication for nonmedical reasons, we inquired about the misuse occurring with alcohol intake. Overall, 37.7% of the students who reported ever misusing a pain medication had misused while drinking alcohol. 43.3% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative had misused with alcohol, and 56.3% of students who ever misused a prescription stimulant had misused while drinking alcohol.

By Racial/Ethnic Identity

Among students who had ever reported misusing a prescription drug, the percentages of those who misused concurrently with alcohol are stratified by self-reported racial/ethnic identity. Notably, over half the Multiracial and the Asian/Asian American students that had ever used a prescription stimulant for nonmedical reasons had done so while drinking alcohol. Similarly, half of the students identifying as Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, or another race not listed who reported ever misusing prescription drug had misused while drinking alcohol.

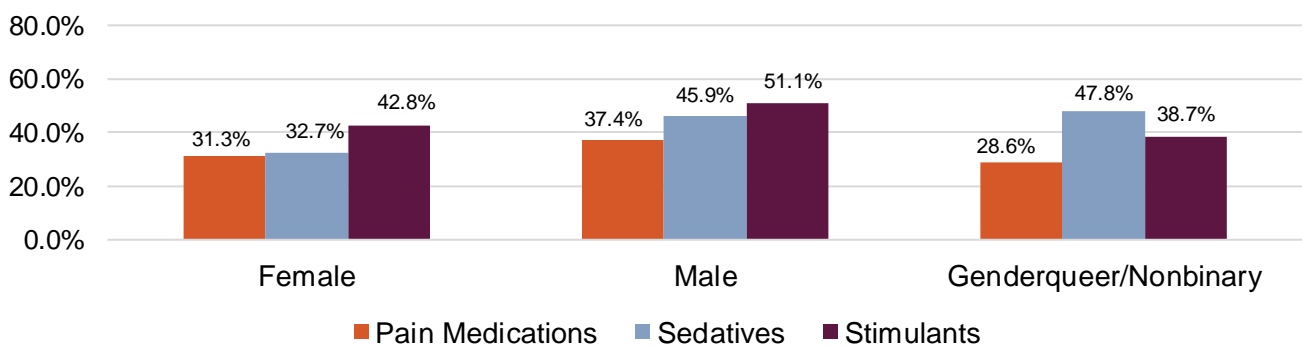
Figure 9. Percentage of students who ever misused a prescription drug with alcohol by racial/ethnic identity



By Gender Identity

Among students who had ever misused a prescription drug, students who identified as male were most likely to report misusing prescription stimulants and prescription pain medications with alcohol. Students who identified as genderqueer or nonbinary were most likely to misuse prescription sedatives with alcohol.

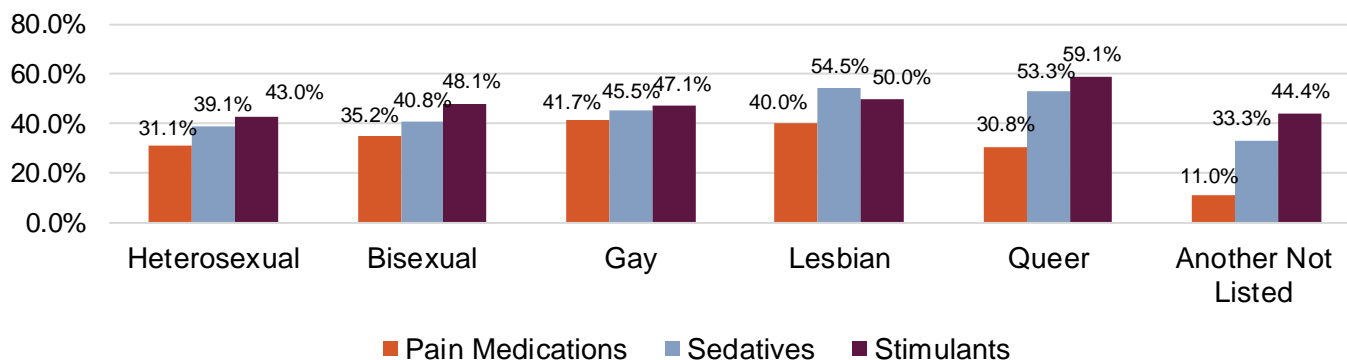
Figure 10. Percentage of students who ever misused a prescription drug with alcohol by gender identity



By Sexual Orientation

Among students who ever misused a prescription drug, students who identified as queer or lesbian were more likely to report misusing prescription stimulants and prescription sedatives. For pain medications, student who identified as gay or lesbian were more likely to misuse pain medication while drinking alcohol.

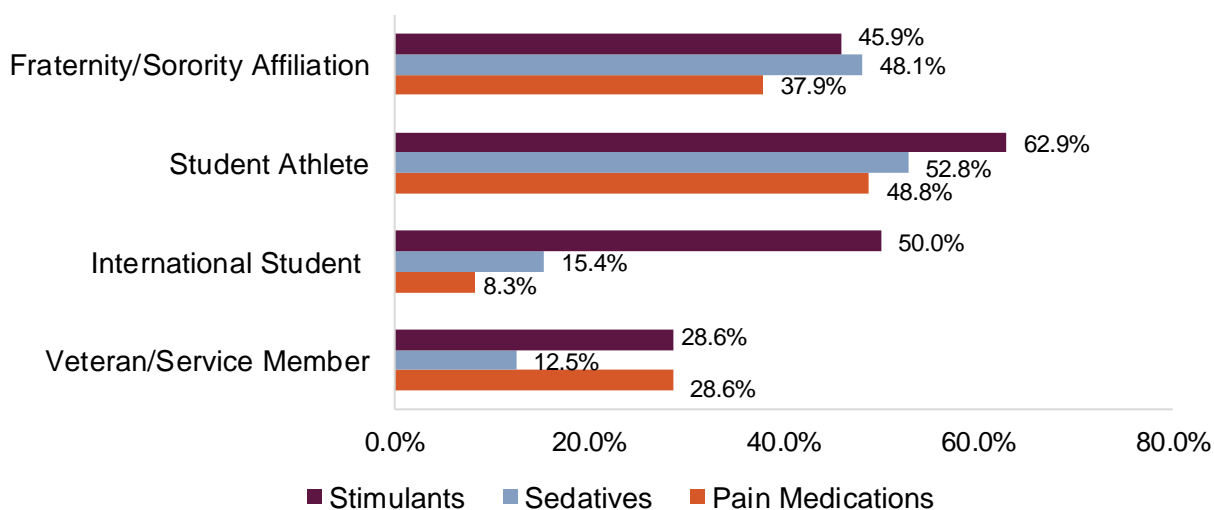
Figure 11. Percentage of students who ever misused a prescription drug with alcohol by sexual orientation



By Group Membership

Lastly, among student athletes that reported ever misusing a prescription stimulant, 62.9% misused while drinking alcohol. Similarly, 52.8% of student athletes that ever misused a prescription sedative have misused with alcohol and 48.8% of student athletes that ever misused a prescription pain medication have done so while drinking alcohol. Half of the international students who reported ever misusing a prescription stimulant have done so with alcohol. Fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students report high rates of misusing each prescription drug class with alcohol but report lower proportions than student athletes.

Figure 12. Percentage of students who ever misused a prescription drug with alcohol by group membership



ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS

By Racial/Ethnic Identity

Students who identified as another race not listed made up 13.2% of the sample yet made up 16.9% of the students who reported ever misusing a pain medication, 14.3% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 17.2% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant. Students who identified as Hispanic or Latino had similar patterns. Despite making up 9.9% of the sample, students who identified as Hispanic or Latino made up 15.5% of the students who ever misused a prescription pain medication, 12.4% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 12.3% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant. Students who identified as Middle Eastern or Arab American made up 2.0% of the sample yet made up 3.4% of the students who ever misused a prescription pain medication. On the other hand, despite making up 9.9% of the sample, students who identified as Asian or Asian American made up 7.7% of the students who ever misused a pain medication, 6.6% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 5.6% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant.

Students who identified as Hispanic or Latino also reported higher proportions of misusing prescription drugs with alcohol. Students who identified as Hispanic or Latino made up 16.1% of the students who misused a pain medication with alcohol, 14.8% of the students who misused a prescription sedative with alcohol, and 11.8% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant with alcohol.

Gender Identity

Students who identified as genderqueer, nonbinary, or agender made up 4.3% of the students who ever misused a pain medication, 3.2% of the students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 2.8% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant, despite only making up 2.6% of the sample. Further, students who identify as genderqueer/nonbinary also make up 4.3% of the students who misused pain medication with alcohol, 4.3% of the students who misused prescription sedatives with alcohol, and 3.4% of the students who misused prescription stimulants with alcohol.

Despite making up nearly 65% of the sample, students who identified as female only account for 51% of the students who have misused a prescription stimulant in the past year, indicating that students who identify as male or genderqueer/nonbinary are more likely to have misused in the past year. These results are similar for pain medication and prescription sedatives.

Sexual Orientation

Despite only making up 12.9% of the sample, students who identified as bisexual made up 19.4% of the students who ever misused a pain medication, 16.7% of students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 17.1% of students who ever misused a prescription stimulant. Similar misuse patterns are seen for students who identified as gay or queer. Students who identified as gay represented 2.0% of the sample yet made up 4.7% of the students who reported ever misusing prescription pain medications, 4.0% of students who ever misused a prescription sedative, and 3.0% of the students who ever misused a prescription stimulant.

Students who identified as bisexual also reported higher proportions of prescription drug misuse with alcohol and made up 23.8% of the students who misused pain medications with alcohol, 18.0% of the students who misused prescription sedatives with alcohol, and 21.2% of the students who misused prescription stimulants with alcohol.

Group Membership

Despite making up 10.0% of the sample, student athletes made up 16.2% of the students who reported ever misusing pain medication, 12.9% of the students who ever misused prescription sedatives, and 13.5% of the students who misused prescription stimulants. Student athletes may be at particular risk for prescription drug misuse with alcohol, making up 26.6% of the students who misused pain medication with alcohol, 31.9% of the students who misused prescription sedatives with alcohol, and 14.9% of the students who misused prescription stimulants with alcohol.

Students affiliated with a fraternity or sorority reported higher proportions of lifetime prescription drug use. Despite making up 21.2% of the population, fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students made up 24.1% of the students who ever misused pain medications, 25.5% of the students who ever misused prescription sedatives, and 31.3% of the students who ever misused prescription stimulants. Further, fraternity- and sorority-affiliated students make up 26.6% of the students who misused pain medications with alcohol, 31.9% of the students who misused prescription sedatives with alcohol, and 32.4% of the students who misused prescription stimulants with alcohol were affiliated with a fraternity or sorority.

MORE INFORMATION

The College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) is a multi-institutional survey of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The purpose of the CPDS is to gain a more thorough understanding of the non-medical use of prescription drugs among college students. Results provide a better understanding of the current state of non-medical use of prescription drugs on college campuses, including information on the types of prescription drugs misused, attainment of drugs, reasons for use and consequences of use. During spring 2022, the CPDS was administered to random samples of students attending institutions across the United States via an online anonymous survey.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Baker, Emily A. (2022). *College Prescription Drug Study: Differences by Demographics Research Brief*. College of Pharmacy, The Ohio State University: Columbus, OH.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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