

2021

COLLEGE PRESCRIPTION DRUG STUDY

KEY FINDINGS: SORORITY AND FRATERNITY LIFE

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- 21.4% of students in SFL reported stimulant misuse, compared to 12.1% of non-SFL students
- Students in SFL were more likely to perceive stimulants as “very easy” to access (17.8% vs. 10.6%) than non-SFL students, despite similar reports of prescription access.
- While a majority of both SFL and non-SFL students overestimated rates of stimulant misuse of typical students on their campus, SFL students were more likely to misperceive frequency of use.

INTRODUCTION

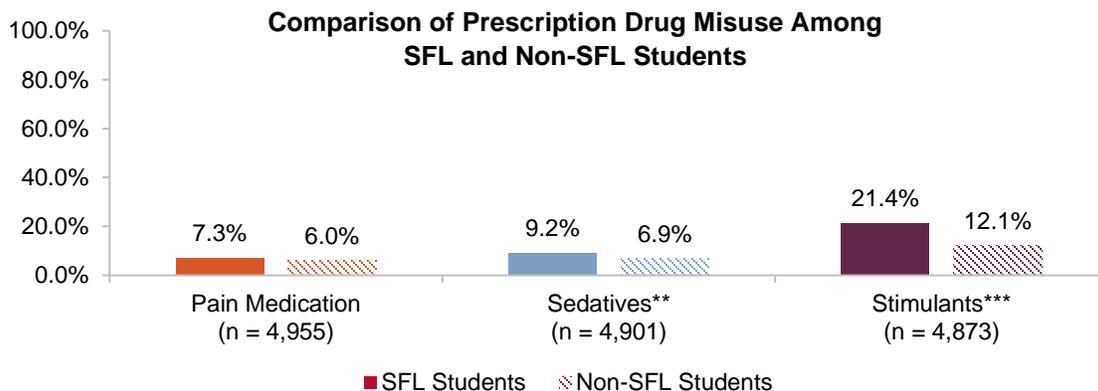
This report uses data from the 2022 administration of the College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) to examine non-medical prescription drug use among college students. The CPDS surveyed students at 15 U.S. colleges and universities; 6,510 students completed the survey overall and 4,967 undergraduates completed the survey and responded to the Sorority and Fraternity Life (SFL) question. Of this sample, 1,081 (21.8%) students responded that they were a member of either a fraternity or a sorority. Students were not required to answer every question on the survey. This report summarizes differences between undergraduate students involved in SFL and the rest of the undergraduate population.

FINDINGS

Sorority and Fraternity Life and Prescription Drug Misuse

Among undergraduate students in SFL, 7.3% reported that they had ever used pain medications for non-medical reasons, compared to 6.0% of non-SFL students. In terms of sedative misuse, 9.2% of students in SFL reported ever using misusing, compared to 6.9% of non-SFL students. Among students in

SFL, 21.4% reported ever using stimulants for non-medical reasons, compared to 12.1% of non-SFL students. The differences between students involved in SFL and their peers on sedative and stimulant misuse were statistically significant, while differences in pain medication misuse was not.



Note. Sample sizes represented for each medication type are the combined samples of SFL and non-SFL students

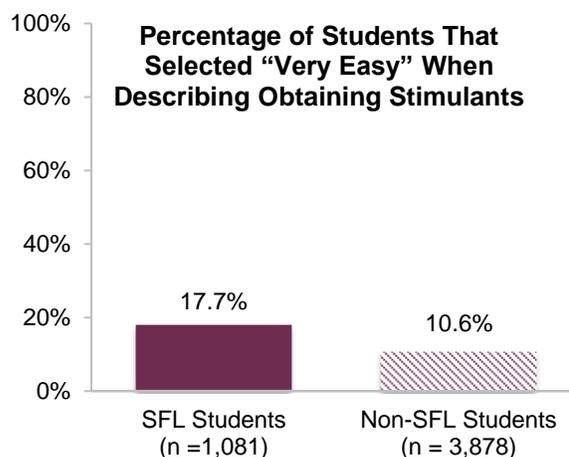
* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Access to prescription drugs

The CPDS asked questions relating to prescription drug access. In contrast to the 2018 findings, SFL and non-SFL undergraduate students reported similar prevalence of ADHD diagnoses (13.2% vs 13.6%) and reported no statistically significant difference in likelihood of having prescriptions for stimulants in the past 12 months (11.0% vs 9.9%). SFL-students also reported no difference in likelihood of selling or giving a prescription drug to people who were not prescribed them (4.0 vs. 3.4%). However, when asked how easy it is to obtain stimulants without a prescription, students involved in SFL were more likely to select “Very easy” (17.7% vs 10.6%), a statistically significant difference.

Starting Misuse

A majority of undergraduate students who misused started misusing while in college. In contrast to 2018 findings, there was no difference in reported start of misuse by SFL and non-SFL students. This was true for all three categories of prescription drugs. Interestingly, out of the population of SFL students that reported misusing stimulants, 59.7% of them first started while in college (versus 61.5% for non-SFL students that reported misusing stimulants). This is the first CPDS administration where non-SFL students were more likely to report starting stimulant misuse in college.



Where to obtain

Across the full sample, students were more likely to get prescription drugs from a friend than from anywhere else. Among SFL students who reported misusing stimulants, 76.4% get those stimulants from friends, compared to 73.9% of non-SFL students that reported misusing stimulants.

Perceived use vs. actual use

Across the full sample, students overestimated the use of prescription drugs for non-medical reasons by a typical student on their campus. Out of the population of SFL students that reported misusing stimulants, 12% reported using a stimulant for non-medical reasons at least once per year, while 6.8% of non-SFL students reported use at least once per year. However, 77.3% of SFL students perceived that a typical student at their institution misused a stimulant at least once per year or more, compared to non-SFL students (72.5%). While the frequency of actual use was not statistically different between SFL and non-SFL students, the different perception of use by a typical student was statistically significant.

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.