Focusing Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention for Target Audiences and Intentions

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Background

Illicit prescription drug use among college students has recently been thrust to the forefront of drug and alcohol research on college campuses.

While previous investigations of substance use focused on binge drinking, marijuana and other types of drug use, recent studies have found an increasing trend in the misuse of prescription drugs (Johnston et al. 2007, McCabe et al., 2007) as well as use of these drugs with other types of substances (McCabe & Teter, 2007).

This poster describes how one university undertook a problem analysis, identified key target groups and motivations for use, and developed a strategic plan in response.
Study Design

Utilizing a self-report survey with a convenience sample of Southeastern university students this study examines:

1) the extent of illicit prescription drug use by prescription type,

2) the differences in illicit prescription drug use between demographic subgroups, and

3) the relationship between illicit prescription drug use and self-report use of other drug types.

A total of 15 introduction to criminal justice and introduction to sociology courses over a 2-week period (n=601).
Table 1: Demographic Variables for Sample (N=599)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>87.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G.P.A.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 and above</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 and below</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-classman</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Past Year Illicit Prescription Drug Use

% Sample Male* Female White Other 3.0 above Below 2.9 Freshman Upper*
34 42 28 35 26 31 38 38 30 30

* p < .05  ** p < .001
Figure 1
- 34% (N=204) of the total sample report using at least one illicit prescription drug within the past year.

Chi-square analysis reveals:
- Males (42%) were significantly more likely to report using at least one illicit prescription drug in the past year compared to females (28%)
- Upperclassman (38%) were also significantly more likely than freshman (30%) to report using at least one illicit prescription drug in the past year.
Figure 2: Past Year Illicit Prescription Drug Use by Type Among Users (N = 204)*

*mark all the apply response choice
The most-used illicit prescription drugs are Ritalin/Adderall/Strattera with over 60% of the subsample of users reporting taking these drugs within the past year. Followed by Xanax (40%), Vicodin (36%), codeine/Tylenol w/ codeine (34%), Percocet/ Percodan (29%), and OxyContin (26%).

It is important to note that respondents could select more than one drug and in fact, 57% reported using more than one illicit prescription drug in the past year.

Chi-square analysis reveals significant differences in reported use among males and females with males reporting more use of OxyContin, Vicodin, and Darvon/Darvocet/Endocet than females (results not shown).
Figure 3: Past Year Substance Use Among Students by Past Year Illicit Prescription Drug Use

- Students who report using illicit prescription drugs are significantly more likely, based on a chi-square analysis, to engage in binge drinking (87% vs. 47%), use marijuana (86% vs. 32%), and other illicit drugs (43% vs. 4%).

**p < .001
Figure 4: Past Year and Past Month Illicit Drug Use in Key Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Past Year</th>
<th>Past Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downers</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painkillers</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD Meds</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Male
- Downers: 13%
- Painkillers: 13%
- ADHD Meds: 15%

Overall Female
- Downers: 6%
- Painkillers: 3%
- ADHD Meds: 3%

Past Year
- Overall: 15%
- Male: 18%
- Female: 13%

Past Month
- Overall: 5%
- Male: 6%
- Female: 7%
Sex differences are statistically significant based on chi-square statistic; $p < .05$
Sex differences are statistically significant based on chi-square statistic; $p < .05$

Note: Responses drawn from mark all that apply question q31. Within q31 15% chose one prescription drug type, 19% chose two or more, and 66% did not chose any options.
Target Groups

- Males, particularly white males (downers, painkillers, ADHD meds)
- Students on anxiety or depression medication (downers, painkillers, ADHD meds)
- First generation students (downers, painkillers)
- High-risk drinkers
- Students reporting other drug use

Trends reveal need for further investigation:
- Greek men
- Academically underperforming students (lower GPA)
TRENDS IN TARGET POPULATIONS: How does Gender Mediate the Effects of Greek Status?

Note: This sample is comprised of only those individuals who reported using any illicit prescription drug, ever (n=204).
TRENDS IN TARGET POPULATIONS: How does Gender Mediate the Effects of Academic Status?

• Note: This sample is comprised of only those individuals who reported using any illicit prescription drug, ever (n=204).
TRENDS IN TARGET POPULATIONS: How does Gender Mediate the Effects of Athletic Status?

Note: This sample is comprised of only those individuals who reported using any illicit prescription drug, ever (n=204).
Motives Top 5

Percentage of endorsement of motives named by students who have used illicit prescription drugs in the last year

- Getting High
- Increasing Concentration
- Help to Stay Awake or Sleep
- Enhance the Effects of Alcohol
- Relieving Pain

Overall | Male | Female
---|---|---
Getting High | 20 | 28 | 14
Increasing Concentration | 21 | 26 | 16
Help to Stay Awake or Sleep | 19 | 8 | 19
Enhance the Effects of Alcohol | 13 | 20 | 8
Relieving Pain | 21 | 21 | 21
Motives Bottom 4

Percentage of endorsement of motives named by students who have used illicit prescription drugs in the last year

- Treating an Illness
- Adding Muscle
- Relieving Depression or Anxiety
- To Lose Weight

Overall  Male  Female
Significant Differences in Motives: Do They Predict Risky Alcohol & PolyDrug Use?

- Individuals who use **FOR FUN** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased Alcohol Use, # of Drinks when they Party, # of Drinks in a Week, and # of Binge Drinking Days in the Last Two Weeks
  - Increased Marijuana, Ecstasy, Hallucinogen, Street Upper, Inhalant, and Powder Cocaine Use

- Individuals who use to **RELIEVE DEPRESSION/ANXIETY** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased # of Binge Drinking Days in the Last Two Weeks
  - Increased Marijuana, Hallucinogen, Inhalant, and Powder Cocaine Use
  - Decreased Crack Use

- Individuals who use to **ENHANCE ALCOHOL** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased Alcohol Use, # of Drinks when they Party, # of Drinks in a Week, and # of Binge Drinking Days in the Last Two Weeks
  - Increased Marijuana, Ecstasy, Hallucinogen, Street Upper, Inhalant, and Powder Cocaine Use
Significant Differences in Motives: Do They Predict Risky Alcohol & PolyDrug Use?

- Individuals who use to **RELIEVE PAIN** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased Marijuana, Hallucinogen, Street Upper, and Powder Cocaine Use

- Individuals who use to **TREAT INFECTION** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Decreased Powder Cocaine Use

- Individuals who use to **ADD MUSCLE** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased Alcohol Use, # of Drinks when they Party, # of Drinks in a Week, and # of Binge Drinking Days in the Last Two Weeks

- Individuals who use to **INCREASE CONCENTRATION** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased # of Binge Drinking Days in the Last Two Weeks

- Individuals who use to **SLEEP/STAY AWAKE** are significantly more likely to have:
  - Increased Marijuana, Street Upper, and Powder Cocaine Use

- Individuals who use to **LOSE WEIGHT** do not have any significant differences from those who do not use for that reason.
Applying a Strategic Planning Process:

Steps:
1. Problem analysis
2. Establish goals and objectives
3. Research potential strategies
4. Create a strategic plan
5. Execute an iterative evaluation process

Derived from 2007 U.S. Dept. of Ed. publication, “Experiences in Effective Prevention.”
Strategic Plan: Prevention & Intervention

Prior to 07-08:
- Prescription Drug Information Delivered to: First Year Seminars
- Substance Abuse Counseling, Consultation and Referral Available

New initiatives for 08-09:
- Significant Prescription Drug Section in Alcohol Conduct Classes
- Train academic advisors
- Develop contacts with students on academic probation
Strategic Plan: Environmental Management

Individual:
- Media literacy about prescription drug ads

Group:
- Normative Feedback within Greek chapter education

Institution Level:
- Alcohol-free Options = Drug-free Options (UNC Weekends, etc)
- Student Health & Counseling Center Provider Training

Policy:
- UNCW Drug Policy delivered to students, faculty, and staff
Lack of Normative Misperception:
Mean Comparison of Students Perceptions of the Percentage of Friends vs. UNCW Students Who Use Prescription Drugs Recreationally vs. Actual Use Pattern

![Graph showing perception vs. actual use of prescription drugs]

Perception of Friends: 19%
Perception of UNCW Students: 31%
Actual Number of UNCW Students: 34%
Conclusion

- White men continue to be a high-risk population.
- Poly-drug users are confirmed as a sub-population of concern.
- Addressing motives can deepen our understanding of who uses prescription drugs of abuse and how to address the concern.
- Question for further research: Are some identities for males protective (athlete or honors)?

- Strategic planning process can be used in response to prescription drug abuse.