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Back Ground

Demographic Characteristics of Opioid Users in Southeastern, NC

Opioid use is a national, state and local problem. A large part of understanding the opioid problem is to gain knowledge concerning who uses opioids. This knowledge can assist in policy recommendations, including which groups to target for prevention and treatment. Previous research that examines demographic characteristics of opioid users has found significant variations among race, age and gender. Among heroin user's white men between the ages of 18-25 are at highest risk (CDC, Opioid Overdose, 2017). Regarding perscription opioid use, those at highest risk are white woman 40 and over (Jones, et al., 2011). The Community Survey examined opioid use in Southeastern, NC with the hope of gaining a greater understanding of use within the area.

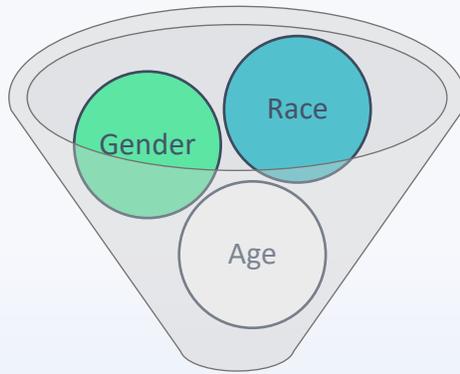
Methods

The community survey sought to answer the question of who uses opioids in Southeastern, NC. Particularly to see if there is a variation among race, gender or age. A random probability sample was used, giving residents of the Wilmington population an equal probability of being chosen to participate in the study. This was accomplished by using a phone list supplied by the Social Science Applied Research Center at UNCW. The study consists of phone interviews conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing software, in which Wilmington, NC residents were asked about their opioid use behavior. Demographic characteristics were obtained for both opioid users and non-users.

Results

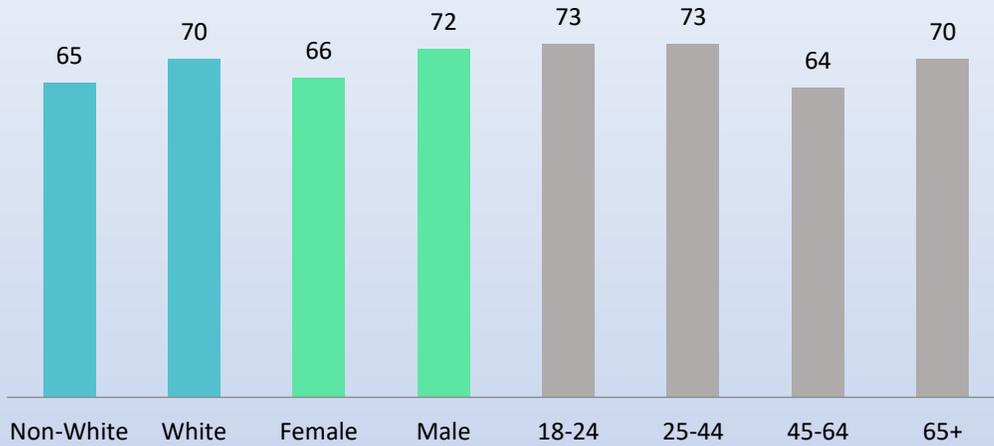
The results of the study showed no significant difference among age, race and gender for opioid use.

OPIOID USE AND ABUSE IN SOUTHEASTERN, NC



Opioid Use

Among Demographic Groups



Discussion/Implication

The data shows no significant difference among race, age, or gender within the sample in terms of opioid use. Although a sample of 500 individuals was the goal for this research, it was not reached and a total of 171 surveys were completed, with only 156 answering about their opioid use. The results of the study differed from previous research. Other studies have shown variations in demographics of opioid use. Heroin for instance is more common among white men between the ages of 18-25 (CDC, Opioid Overdose, 2017). Prescription use more common among white woman age 40 and old (Jones, et al., 2011). A limitation of the community survey research was the small amount of surveys completed which amounted to 171. Individuals refusal to participate or unwillingness to answer phone numbers they do not know could have attributed to this low response rate. This may have played a role in the difference in the results of this study compared to previous research. Further research is needed to be able to make policy implications on opioids within the Wilmington area.

Reference

Opioid Overdose. (2017, August 30). In Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 03, 2018, from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/prescribing.html>

Jones, C. M., Logan, J., Gladden, M., & Bohm, M. (2011, September 9). Vital Signs:

Demographic and Substance Use Trends Among Heroin Users — United States, 2002–2013. In Center for disease control and pervention. Retrieved July 10, 2015.

