

PRESCRIPTION DRUG MISUSE: REASONS AND OUTCOMES

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance abuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 21 public and private colleges and universities in Missouri. In order to gain an understanding of the current health behaviors of college students, PIP implements the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS) each year. The information gained from the MCHBS allows PIP to learn more about the high-risk behaviors that students are engaging in, such as prescription drug misuse.

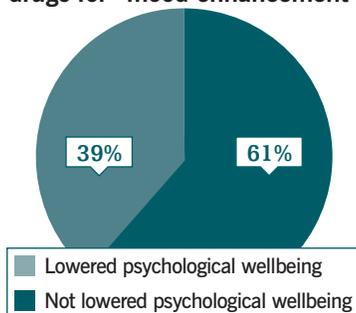
DISCUSSION

The MCHBS examines the reasons students give for misusing prescription drugs and the outcomes students experience as a result of misuse. "Mood enhancement", "stress reduction", "to fit in with friends", "to reduce pain", and "to improve academic performance" are among the reported reasons students misuse prescription drugs. While sometimes students experience the desired outcome, it does not always occur. Of the students who misused prescription drugs "to reduce pain", 14% of students did not experience a reduction in pain. Those who did experience reduced pain also reported suffering from "academic problems" (19%), "strained relationships" (20%), and a "lowered psychological wellbeing" (22%). Similarly, 14% of students who misused prescription drugs "to improve

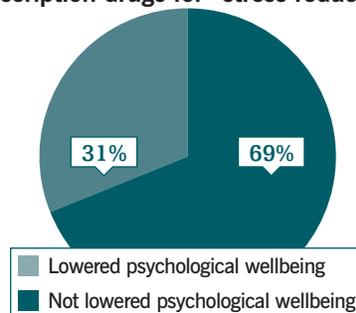
academics" did not experience an improvement. Additionally, those who did experience an improved academic performance also reported suffering from "strained relationships" (20%), "decreased physical health" (23%), and a "lowered psychological wellbeing" (25%).

Furthermore, some students even experience a converse outcome to the reason they gave for misusing prescription drugs. Of the students who reported misusing prescription drugs for "mood enhancement", 39% experienced a "lowered psychological wellbeing" as a result. Similarly, 31% of students who reported misusing prescription drugs for "stress reduction" instead experienced a "lowered psychological wellbeing". Of the students who reported misusing prescription drugs "to fit in with friends", 62% experienced "strained relationships".

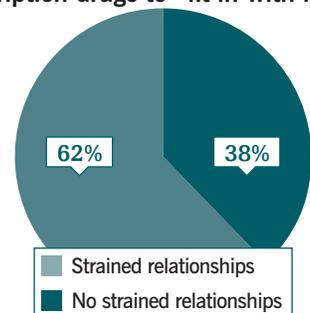
Students who reported misusing prescription drugs for "mood enhancement"



Students who reported misusing prescription drugs for "stress reduction"



Students who reported misusing prescription drugs to "fit in with friends"



SUMMARY

While students give a variety of reasons for misusing prescription drugs, unpredictable results remain a constant among all possible motives. Misusing prescription drugs is not creating the outcomes initially sought and is even causing conflicting effects. Rather than turning to prescription drugs, students have the option of practicing a healthy behavior alternative to produce the desired result. MoSafeRx is PIP's initiative to educate students on the dangers of misusing prescription drugs and offers healthy alternatives to the reasons behind misuse.

For more information on how to bring MoSafeRx to your campus, visit pip.missouri.edu/rx_info.html

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551. Report Prepared by Partners in Prevention Research & Evaluation Staff

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