Prescription Drug Misuse (PDM) involves three behaviors: medical misuse, nonmedical use and diversion of medications. Prescriptions for stimulants and PDM continue to increase. Stimulant medications have a high potential for abuse. Rates of nonmedical use of prescription stimulants (NPS) among college-aged individuals (18-25) are greater than in all other age groups, and nonmedical use is on the rise. Individuals who report NPS generally have lower GPAs, and groups were independent.

STUDY AIMS

Using a population-based sample of undergraduate nursing students enrolled in one Midwestern University, the study aimed to determine:

1. The prevalence of medical misuse and nonmedical use of ADHD stimulant medications.
2. The association between medical use, medical misuse and nonmedical use of scheduled ADHD stimulant medications and CRAFTF scores (see Figure 3 for CRAFTF items).

DEFINITIONS

- Medical Use: using one’s own prescription medication as prescribed.
- Medical Misuse: using one’s own prescribed medication in a manner unintended by the prescriber (e.g. snorting using to get high, using too much).
- Nonmedical Use: using another person’s prescription medication.
- CRAFTF Screening Tool (See Figure 3).

METHODS

- A cross-sectional, population-based sample of undergraduate nursing students at a large Midwestern University during the winter semester of 2017 was examined.
- Data were collected January through February 2017 via a 28-question, web-based survey adapted from the Student Life Survey.
- The cumulative sample was 249 undergraduates.
- Respondents were asked about past 12-month use of ADHD medications and the five-item CRAFTF Screening Tool.

DATA ANALYSES

- Groups were independent.
- The prevalence of ADHD stimulant use was assessed in three groups: medical users, medical misusers and nonmedical users (Figure 1).
- Logistic regression and chi-square analyses were conducted (see Figure 3).

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- The demographic characteristics of the sample (N=249) closely resembled the overall population of undergraduate nursing students. (Response rate = 38%).
- The sample was comprised of 22.5% Freshmen, 31.3% Sophomores, 18.1% Juniors, and 28.1% Seniors.
- Over 76% of respondents reported a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

RESULTS

- As seen in Figure 1, 10.4% of respondents reported nonmedical use in the past 12 months, compared to 6.6% medical use only, 1.2% medical misuse, and 81.7% no stimulant use.
- 51.5% of all respondents screened positive on the CRAFTF, indicating behaviors associated with substance misuse.
- Results from chi-square analyses (Figure 2) indicated that 86.4% of those who reported nonmedical use of prescription stimulants in the past 12 months also had positive scores on the CRAFTF.
- Results from the multi-variate logistic regression analyses were robust when accounting for covariates (sex, grade level, and GPA), and supported the association between nonmedical use and positive CRAFTF scores.

CONCLUSIONS

- Past 12-month nonmedical use of prescription stimulants (10.4%) was higher than that of the general 2013 population of students (9.3%) at the same Midwestern University. This difference may be attributed to the rising rates of NPS in college populations or differences between nursing and other students.
- The high prevalence of positive CRAFTF scores (51.3%) poses a concern for substance misuse problems among nursing students. Our results suggest a strong association between the nonmedical use of prescription stimulants and positive CRAFTF screenings.
- Substance misuse and impairment, especially when on the job, should be addressed before nursing students enter the workplace.
- Conclusions are constrained by the response rate and regional sample.

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