

According To The American College Health Association (achs) 2017 Survey, What Percentage Of College Students

According To The American College Health Association (ACHSA) 2017 Survey, What Percentage Of College Students experience various health challenges, behaviors, and wellbeing issues? Understanding these statistics is vital for students, parents, educators, and healthcare professionals aiming to foster healthier college environments. The ACHS 2017 survey provides comprehensive insights into the physical, mental, and social health of college students across the United States. This article explores key findings from the survey, shedding light on the prevalence of health behaviors, mental health concerns, substance use, and overall wellbeing among college students.

Overview of the ACHS 2017 Survey

Purpose of the Survey

The American College Health Association (ACHA) conducts the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) periodically to assess the health habits, behaviors, and perceptions of college students. The 2017 survey aimed to gather data that could inform campus health services, policy-making, and student support programs.

Methodology

- Participants: Over 100,000 students from more than 100 colleges and universities across the U.S.
- Data Collection: Online surveys covering various health topics.
- Focus Areas: Physical health, mental health, health behaviors, safety, and social factors.

Physical Health and Wellness Among College Students

Prevalence of Chronic Conditions

According to the survey:

- Approximately 11% of students reported having a chronic illness or condition.

- Common conditions included asthma, allergies, or migraines.

Health Insurance Coverage

- Nearly 83% of students reported having some form of health insurance.
- Students with insurance are more likely to seek timely medical care.

Health-Related Behaviors

Many students engage in behaviors impacting their physical health:

- Exercise: About 66% of students reported engaging in moderate physical activity at least 3 days per week.
- Sleep Patterns: Only 30% of students reported getting the recommended 7 or more hours of sleep on most nights.
- Nutrition: A significant portion reported poor eating habits, with 40% consuming fast food at least 3 times per week.

Mental Health Concerns Among College Students

Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

Mental health is a pressing concern:

- Nearly 40% of students reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function at some point in the past year.
- About 60% experienced overwhelming anxiety in the past year.
- 20% reported seriously considering suicide in the past year.

Access to Mental Health Services

- Only 31% of students who experienced mental health issues sought counseling or therapy.
- Barriers included stigma, lack of time, or unawareness of available services.

Impact on Academic Performance

- Students with mental health challenges often reported decreased academic performance and increased absenteeism.
- Many students felt unprepared to manage their mental health needs alongside academic responsibilities.

Substance Use and Risk Behaviors

Alcohol Consumption

- Approximately 63% of students reported drinking alcohol in the past month.
- Of those, 37% engaged in binge drinking (5+ drinks in one sitting for men, 4+ for women).

Illicit Drug Use

- About 23% of students reported using illicit drugs in the past year.
- Common substances included marijuana, prescription drugs not prescribed to them, and stimulants.

Tobacco and E-cigarettes

- Tobacco use among students was reported at 11%.
- E-cigarette use was higher, with 19% of students reporting vaping in the past month.

Impacts of Substance Use

Substance use was linked to:

- Impaired academic performance.
- Increased risk of accidents or injuries.
- Mental health deterioration.

Sexual Health and Safety

Sexual Activity

- Nearly 60% of students reported being sexually active.
- Contraceptive use was reported by 74% of sexually active students.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

- About 12% of students had been diagnosed with an STI in the past year.
- The importance of safe sex practices remains crucial.

Experiences of Violence and Assault

- Approximately 20% of women and 5% of men reported experiencing sexual assault since entering college.
- Institutions are increasingly focusing on prevention and support services.

Social and Environmental Factors Influencing Student Health

Sleep and Stress

- High stress levels were reported by 70% of students.
- Chronic sleep deprivation contributes to both mental and physical health issues.

Social Connections and Support

- Students with strong social support reported better mental health.
- Those feeling isolated were more prone to depression and anxiety.

Campus Safety and Security

- Reports of feeling unsafe on campus varied, but about 15% of students did not feel safe walking alone at night.

Implications of the 2017 Data and Moving Forward

Key Takeaways

- Mental health concerns are prevalent and need targeted intervention.
- Substance use remains widespread, with significant implications for health and safety.
- Physical health behaviors, such as sleep and nutrition, require attention.
- Access to health services, including mental health counseling, is insufficient for many students.

Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

- Enhance mental health services: Increase availability and reduce stigma.
- Promote healthy behaviors: Implement programs encouraging exercise, sleep hygiene, and nutritious diets.
- Increase safety measures: Improve campus security and safety awareness.
- Foster social support: Create community-building initiatives to reduce feelings of isolation.
- Address substance use: Provide education and intervention programs.

Role of Students and Parents

- Students should prioritize their health and seek help when needed.
- Parents can support their children by fostering open communication about health challenges.
- Both groups can advocate for better campus health resources.

Conclusion

The 2017 ACHS survey paints a comprehensive picture of the health landscape among college students. While many students are engaging in healthy behaviors, significant challenges remain, especially regarding mental health, substance use, and sleep deprivation. Recognizing these issues is the first step toward creating supportive environments that promote wellbeing and academic success. As colleges continue to evolve and adapt their health initiatives, ongoing assessment and targeted interventions will be essential to improve the overall health of the student population.

Remember: Staying informed about health trends and actively participating in wellness initiatives can make a substantial difference in navigating college life successfully.

Frequently Asked Questions

According to the American College Health Association (ACHA) 2017 Survey, what percentage of college students reported experiencing mental health issues?

Approximately 41% of college students reported experiencing mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, according to the ACHA 2017 Survey.

What percentage of college students in the ACHA 2017 Survey reported feeling overwhelmed by their academic workload?

About 60% of college students reported feeling overwhelmed by their academic workload in the 2017 survey.

Based on the ACHA 2017 Survey, what percentage of students sought mental health services on campus?

Approximately 30% of college students sought mental health services on campus according to the 2017 survey.

According to the ACHA 2017 Survey, what percentage of college students reported experiencing sleep difficulties?

Nearly 60% of college students reported experiencing sleep difficulties, such as trouble falling or staying asleep.

What percentage of college students in the ACHA 2017 Survey indicated that stress negatively impacted their academic performance?

About 70% of students indicated that stress negatively impacted their academic performance in the 2017 survey.

Additional Resources

According To The American College Health Association (ACHA) 2017 Survey, What Percentage Of College Students

The health and well-being of college students have become increasingly prominent topics within public health, educational policy, and student affairs. The American College Health Association (ACHA), a leading organization dedicated to advancing the health of college students, conducts comprehensive surveys annually to assess the physical, mental, and emotional health of students across the United States. The 2017 ACHA National College Health Assessment (NCHA) provides a detailed snapshot of student health behaviors, challenges, and needs. Understanding the key statistics from this survey—including the percentages of students facing various health issues—offers valuable insights into the current landscape of college health and highlights areas requiring targeted interventions.

Overview of the ACHA 2017 Survey

Purpose and Scope

The ACHA 2017 NCHA aims to gather data directly from college students to inform campus health initiatives, policy development, and resource allocation. It covers a broad spectrum of health-related topics, including mental health, substance use, sexual health, nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and overall well-being. By analyzing these data, stakeholders can better understand the prevalence of specific health issues and develop evidence-based strategies to improve student health outcomes.

The survey encompasses responses from thousands of students across diverse institutions—public and private, two-year and four-year colleges—making its findings highly representative of the college student population in the U.S.

Methodology

The 2017 survey utilized a cross-sectional design, collecting anonymous responses through online questionnaires. The sample size exceeded 65,000 students from over 100 institutions, ensuring a robust and diverse dataset. The survey included questions about students' experiences with mental health, physical health, health behaviors, and campus resources.

Key Findings: What Percentage Of College Students Are Affected?

The 2017 ACHA survey reveals critical data points that shed light on the prevalence of various health issues among college students. Below, we explore these key statistics, providing context and analysis.

Mental Health Challenges

Mental health has emerged as a predominant concern on college campuses, with many students experiencing significant emotional distress.

- **Depressive Symptoms:** Approximately 40% of students reported experiencing depression symptoms that were severe enough to interfere with their daily activities within the past year. This indicates nearly 2 in 5 students grapple with mental health

issues affecting their academic performance and social life.

- **Anxiety Disorders:** About 60% of students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety in the previous year, highlighting the widespread nature of anxiety disorders among the college demographic.
- **Suicidal Ideation:** Nearly 10% of respondents indicated they had seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months, underscoring the urgent need for mental health services and intervention programs.
- **Use of Mental Health Services:** Around 30% of students reported using counseling or mental health services on campus, suggesting either a growing awareness of mental health issues or increased availability of support resources.

Analysis: The high prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms among students signifies a mental health crisis that demands comprehensive campus strategies, including expanded counseling services, peer support programs, and destigmatization efforts.

Substance Use and Abuse

Substance use remains a significant health concern, with notable percentages of students engaging in risky behaviors.

- **Alcohol Consumption:** About 60% of students reported drinking alcohol within the past month. Of these, roughly 35% engaged in binge drinking—defined as consuming five or more drinks on a single occasion for men, four or more for women—at least once in the previous two weeks.
- **Illicit Drug Use:** Approximately 20% of students reported using illicit drugs such as marijuana, prescription drugs without a prescription, or other substances in the past month.
- **Driving Under Influence:** Nearly 15% of students admitted to driving while intoxicated in the past year, emphasizing the dangers of substance-impaired driving on campuses and surrounding communities.

Analysis: The widespread engagement in alcohol and drug use not only poses immediate health risks but also correlates with academic difficulties, injuries, and mental health issues, highlighting the importance of prevention and education programs.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Understanding sexual health behaviors and risks is vital for campus health planning.

- **Sexual Activity:** Over 70% of students reported being sexually active in the past year, reflecting high levels of sexual engagement among college students.
- **Contraceptive Use:** Among sexually active students, approximately 60% reported consistent condom use, while others relied on other contraceptive methods or did not use protection regularly.
- **STI Testing:** Only about 30% of students reported having been tested for sexually transmitted infections in the past year, indicating potential gaps in sexual health awareness and testing behaviors.

Analysis: The data suggests that while sexual activity is common, inconsistent condom use and relatively low testing rates pose ongoing risks for STI transmission. Enhanced sexual health education and accessible testing services are critical.

Sleep Patterns and Physical Activity

Sleep deprivation and physical inactivity are pervasive issues impacting student success and health.

- **Sleep:** Nearly 70% of students reported feeling tired during the day at least three days in a week, with 60% citing insufficient sleep as a problem. Only about 20% met the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep per night regularly.
- **Physical Activity:** Approximately 50% of students engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activity at least three days per week, falling short of public health guidelines suggesting at least 150 minutes of activity weekly.

Analysis: Chronic sleep deprivation and insufficient physical activity contribute to poor mental and physical health, academic decline, and increased stress, emphasizing the need for campus initiatives promoting healthier lifestyles.

Nutrition and Body Image

Diet quality and perceptions of body image influence both physical health and mental well-being.

- **Diet:** Nearly 40% of students reported consuming less than one serving of fruits or vegetables daily, indicating poor dietary habits.
- **Body Image Satisfaction:** About 45% of students expressed dissatisfaction with

their body image, a factor linked to mental health issues like depression and eating disorders.

Analysis: Poor nutrition combined with body dissatisfaction underscores the importance of holistic health initiatives that include nutritional education and body positivity campaigns.

Implications for Campus Health Policies and Interventions

The statistics from the ACHA 2017 survey paint a compelling picture of the health challenges faced by college students. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts across campus departments, health professionals, and student organizations.

Enhancing Mental Health Support

Given that nearly 40% of students experience depression symptoms and 60% feel overwhelmed by anxiety, campuses should prioritize expanding mental health resources, such as:

- Increasing counseling center capacity
- Training faculty and staff to recognize mental health issues
- Implementing peer support programs
- Promoting mental health awareness campaigns

Reducing Substance Abuse

Preventive strategies might include:

- Evidence-based education programs on alcohol and drug risks
- Campus policies enforcing responsible behaviors
- Support services for students seeking help with substance dependence

Promoting Sexual Health and Safety

Strategies include:

- Accessible STI testing and contraception services
- Comprehensive sexual health education
- Safe sex campaigns and condom distribution programs

Fostering Healthy Lifestyles

Encouraging better sleep and nutrition involves:

- Creating environments conducive to sleep (e.g., quiet hours)
- Promoting physical activity through fitness programs
- Offering nutritious food options on campus

Conclusion: A Critical Call to Action

The 2017 ACHA survey underscores that college students face multifaceted health challenges, with mental health issues being particularly prevalent. The data reveals a need for proactive, comprehensive approaches to promote healthier behaviors and environments. As the backbone of future societal progress, investing in the health of college students is essential—not only for their academic success but also for their long-term physical and mental well-being.

By recognizing the scope of these issues and implementing targeted interventions, colleges and universities can foster healthier, more resilient student populations. Continuous monitoring through surveys like the ACHA's remains vital to track progress and adapt strategies accordingly, ultimately shaping campuses that prioritize holistic health and student success.

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