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The National College Health Assessment (NCHA) survey was conducted between late February to mid-March of 2021, a period in which the COVID-19 pandemic was causing significant disruption and impacting the health and behaviors of the student body. Eight hundred seventy-two University of Iowa undergraduates completed the survey.

Important considerations should be taken into account:

• The findings from this study are impossible to compare to pre-pandemic NCHA survey results. For instance, at the time of survey, most classes at the University of Iowa were online, and many students lived out of the area with family members.

• Other limitations that hamper our ability to comparatively analyze this cycle’s findings include significant changes in:

  1. NCHA survey questions and format - Student Wellness administered the new version of the National College Health Assessment (NCHA-III) for the first time this year, after administering an older survey version (NCHA-II) for several years. Many questions on the NCHA-III survey were not the same as in previous years, which limited the ability to examine health behavior trends over time.

  2. Survey administration – The administration methods were very different from past years. In previous years, surveys took place in physical classrooms with students over a period of a few days, but in 2021, the survey moved online, and students answered over a three-week period.

  3. Response rate – The pandemic and survey changes likely contributed to far lower response rates compared to previous years (e.g., 9.7% in 2021 compared to 99% in 2019). The low response rates also make it difficult to know if those who responded were a good reflection of the entire student body.

Student Wellness plans to administer the NCHA-III again in spring of 2023.

This report & NCHA-II reports from previous years can be viewed at https://studentwellness.uiowa.edu/ui-health-data. Questions can be directed to Trish Welter at trisha-welter@uiowa.edu.
**COMPARISON TO NATIONAL UNDERGRADUATE SAMPLE**

UI undergraduate students are...

- more likely to report a sense of belonging at the college/university
- more likely to meet the physical activity recommendations
- less likely to report issues with stress
- more likely to report getting adequate sleep
- more likely to use alcohol, drink in high-risk ways and report negative consequences from use
- more likely to use cannabis
- more likely to report using e-cigarettes and tobacco products
- more likely to drive while distracted (texting, app use, etc.)

*compared to spring 2021 national sample of undergraduate students (70,087 students from 137 schools)*

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**COMPARISON TO UI GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS**

UI undergraduate students are...

- less likely to report driving after alcohol use
- more likely to meet the physical activity recommendations
- more likely to report getting the recommended amount of sleep on weeknights
- less likely to report feeling safe on campus and in the surrounding community
- more likely to report high-risk drinking and negative consequences from alcohol use
- more likely to use e-cigarettes and cannabis in last 3 months
- less likely to wear a helmet on a bicycle, scooter or motorcycle
- more likely to experience violence
- more likely to report psychological distress, self-injury and suicide attempts
GENERAL HEALTH

90.3% of UI undergraduate students report being in good, very good or excellent health.

ACADEMIC IMPEDIMENTS*

1. Procrastination: 53.6%
2. Stress: 45.3%
3. Anxiety: 37.4%
4. Chronic health conditions: 29.7%
5. Depression: 28.0%
6. Sleep difficulties: 24.5%
7. Headaches/migraines: 14.1%
8. ADHD: 12.2%
9. Finances: 10.9%
10. Career: 9.7%

*Top ten of 49 items that negatively impacted academic performance in the last 12 months

CAMPUS CULTURE*

73.4%
42.9%
57.7%
42.6%

I feel like I belong at my university
I feel that student health and well-being is a priority
The campus climate encourages free and open discussion about student health and well-being
I feel we are a campus where we look out for each other

*percent of students who responded “agree” or “strongly agree”
ALCOHOL USE

Negative Consequences
43.7% of undergraduate students who used alcohol in the last 12 months experienced at least one negative consequence from their use.

1. Brownout: 27.3%
2. Did something I regretted: 25.2%
3. Blackout: 15.0%
4. Unprotected sex: 14.4%
5. Physically injured myself: 8.4%
6. Seriously considered suicide: 2.5%
7. Someone had sex with me without my consent: 2.2%
8. Trouble with police: 0.7%
9. Needed medical help: 0.7%
10. Trouble with university: 0.6%
11. Physically injured another person: 0.4%
12. Had sex with someone without their consent: 0.1%

High-risk Drinking
33.0% of all undergraduate respondents and 58.2% of undergraduate students who reported alcohol use in the last two weeks have had at least one instance of high-risk drinking in that time frame (females: 4+ drinks / males: 5+ drinks).

Number of Drinks*
3.9: average number of drinks last time they drank alcohol in a social setting
67.8% of students drank 4 or fewer drinks the last time they drank alcohol in a social setting
*of those who used alcohol in the last 3 months

Blood Alcohol Concentration*
0.06: average blood alcohol concentration (BAC)
73.4% of students had an average BAC of <0.08
*of those who used alcohol in the last 3 months

ASSIST Scores
7.1: average alcohol score on the Alcohol, Smoking & Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)
14.8% of students had a moderate-risk ASSIST score
0.9% of students had a high-risk ASSIST score

2.9% reported that their alcohol use negatively impacted their academics
31.8% of students under 21 have used a fake ID
47.3% reported drinking to get drunk the last time they drank*
46.0% reported getting drunk the last time they drank*
0.8% are in recovery from at least one substance

*of those who have used alcohol in the last 3 months
**Other Substance Use**

### Cannabis

- **Used ever**: 48.5%
- **Used in last 3 months**: 35.0%
- **Used in last 30 days**: 23.4%

35.5% of undergraduate students reporting cannabis use in the last 30 days have driven within 6 hours of use at least once.

2.6% of all undergraduate student respondents reported that cannabis had negatively impacted their academics in the last 12 months.

**Cannabis ASSIST Scores**

- **Average score**: 5.9
- **Moderate-risk**: 20.6%
- **High-risk**: 1.1%

### Other Illicit Drugs

- **Cannabis**
  - **Used Ever**: 6.1%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 2.4%

- **Hallucinogens**
  - **Used Ever**: 8.7%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 4.1%

- **Heroin**
  - **Used Ever**: 0.0%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 0.0%

- **Inhalants**
  - **Used Ever**: 2.0%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 0.7%

- **Meth**
  - **Used Ever**: 0.5%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 0.0%

### Nicotine

37.7% have ever used nicotine. 25.6% have used at least one nicotine product in the last 3 months:

1. E-cigarettes or other vape products: 21.9%
2. Cigarettes: 8.3%
3. Cigars: 3.2%
4. Chewing/Snuff: 1.9%
5. Hookah: 1.5%

### Illegal Use of Prescription Drugs

- **Opioids**
  - **Used Ever**: 2.6%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 1.3%

- **Sedatives**
  - **Used Ever**: 4.9%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 2.1%

- **Stimulants**
  - **Used Ever**: 9.9%
  - **Used in Last 3 Months**: 4.1%
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Percent of Students Meeting Recommendations*

- **Aerobic activity**: 75+ min of vigorous intensity activity, 150+ min of moderate intensity activity or a combination of the two per week
- **Strength training**: 2+ days per week of moderate or greater intensity activities for all major muscle groups
- **Active adults**: meeting both the aerobic & strength training recommendations
- **Highly active adults**: meeting the strength training recommendation and attaining more than double the recommended amount of aerobic activity

**Percent of Students Meeting Recommendations**

- **Aerobic activity**: 67.7%
- **Strength training**: 55.1%
- **Active adults**: 47.7%
- **Highly active adults**: 35.2%

NUTRITION & FOOD SECURITY

Average Daily Fruit & Vegetable Intake**

- **Fruit**: 10.5% (0), 66.7% (1-2), 20.1% (3-4), 2.8% (5+)
- **Vegetable**: 9.1% (0), 59.6% (1-2), 25.8% (3-4), 5.5% (5+)

Food Security* (USDA Food Security Index)

- **High or marginal**: 71.0%
- **Low**: 19.5%
- **Very low**: 9.5%

WEIGHT

- **64.2%** drink 1+ sweetened beverage per day**
- **9.0%** have had energy drinks/shots at least 5 days in the last month
- **32.2%** were unable to afford to eat balanced meals*
- **22.3%** cut the size of or skipped meals*
- **9.3%** reported going hungry*
- **14.5%** reported eating less*

Average USDA Food Security Index Score* **1.19**

Average Daily Fruit & Vegetable Intake**

- **Fruit**: 63.3%
- **Vegetable**: 64.2%

UI undergraduate students are in the desired weight range (BMI of 18.5-24.9), with an average BMI of 24.5. Despite that, 50.5% are trying to lose weight.
MENTAL HEALTH

Psychological Distress

On the Kessler-6, 24.9% and 21.7% of undergraduate students reported moderate and serious psychological distress, respectively.

Self-Harm

10.6% of undergraduate students have attempted self-injury and 2.0% have attempted suicide in the last 12 months.

Conditions

13.0% of UI undergraduate students reported having one mental health condition, and 29.1% reported having two or more.

Top conditions ever diagnosed include:

1. Anxiety: 33.8%
2. Depression: 26.6%
3. ADD/ADHD: 10.5%

Services

50.1% of UI undergraduate students reported receiving psychological or mental health services in their lifetime, and 33.1% reported using them in the last 12 months. Of those who have received services in the last 12 months, 41.3% reported receiving on campus services.

Flourishing*

59.6% Lead a purposeful & meaningful life
66.2% Have supportive & rewarding relationships
62.6% Are optimistic about the future

*S percent of students who agree or strongly agree

STRESS

78.8% of UI undergraduate students reported a moderate or high stress level in the last year.

Top Stressors (last 12 mos)

1. Procrastination: 76.3%
2. Personal appearance: 56.6%
3. Academics: 52.8%
4. Health of someone else: 38.6%
5. Finances: 37.6%
6. Intimate relationships: 36.6%
7. Roommate/housemate: 35.6%
8. Family: 33.6%
9. Career: 30.6%
10. Death of family or friend: 22.5%

92.7% reported at least one thing (of 18) to be difficult or challenging, with the average undergraduate student reporting experiencing 4.8 challenges/stressors in the last 12 months.

SLEEP

73.0% feel tired or sleepy 3+ days/week

57.6% nap at least once a week

69.5% of undergraduate students get the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep on weeknights, compared to 72.9% on weekends.

Stressors:

1. Procrastination: 76.3%
2. Personal appearance: 56.6%
3. Academics: 52.8%
4. Health of someone else: 38.6%
5. Finances: 37.6%
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9. Career: 30.6%
10. Death of family or friend: 22.5%
**SEXUAL HEALTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Had Sex in Last 30 Days</th>
<th>Mostly/Always Use Barrier*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal Sex</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Sex</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal Sex</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*among sexually active students

- 9.0% were called names, insulted or put down
- 5.0% had partner(s) who insisted on knowing who they were with and where they were or who tried to limit contact with family/friends
- 2.4% were pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, choked or hit without consent
- 1.3% were forced into unwanted sexual contact by being held down or hurt in some way
- 2.8% were pressured into unwanted sexual contact by threats, coercion, alcohol or other drugs

**SAFE T**

**Feelings of Safety**

- In the Surrounding Community: 52.6% During the Day, 12.0% At Night
- On Campus: 76.1%

**Behaviors**

- Mostly or Always Wear a Helmet*: Motorcycle or scooter: 45.0%, Bicycle: 39.3% *last 12 months, of those who have ridden

**Driving**

- While texting/emailing/using apps**: 60.0% **last 2 weeks, of those who have driven
- Had an accident***: 6.3% ***last 12 months, of those who have driven

**VIOLENCE* **

**Intimate Partner Violence**

- 9.0% were called names, insulted or put down
- 5.0% had partner(s) who insisted on knowing who they were with and where they were or who tried to limit contact with family/friends
- 2.4% were pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, choked or hit without consent
- 1.3% were forced into unwanted sexual contact by being held down or hurt in some way
- 2.8% were pressured into unwanted sexual contact by threats, coercion, alcohol or other drugs

**Violence Outside Intimate Relationships**

- In a physical fight: 1.9%
- Physically assaulted: 1.8%
- Verbally threatened: 8.8%
- Sexually touched w/o consent: 5.8%
- Sexual penetration attempt w/o consent: 2.6%
- Sexually penetrated or made to w/o consent: 1.9%
- Victim of stalking: 3.2%

*last 12 months
**COVID-19 Experience**

19.2% of UI undergraduate students reported that they had COVID-19 (confirmed by a healthcare provider) and another 12.3% suspected they had COVID-19. Of those who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, 43.4% reported moderate and 3.6% reported severe symptoms, and 1.8% reported that they had been hospitalized from COVID-19.

24.9% of students had a loved one who had long-term effects and 10.6% had a loved one who died from COVID-19.

**Perceptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus has done enough to protect students</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are taking precautions to protect one another</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measures I can take protect the health of others on campus</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus policies implemented can reduce the spread</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow campus COVID-19 policies</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Protective Behaviors***

- Disinfect hands & avoid touching face: 84.8%
- Maintain 6 feet distance: 74.2%
- Wear mask when can't maintain distance: 90.8%

*often/frequently

74.8% said they would be likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine once available, and another 13.9% had already been vaccinated before taking the survey (Feb-Mar 2021).

**Pandemic Impact**

70.6% of UI undergraduate students reported that their professors were supportive.

3.8% reported that they were at a different college/university than intended.

36.8% reported that as a result of the pandemic, they had witnessed discriminatory or hostile behavior towards others based on race/ethnicity, and 3.3% said they experienced discrimination or hostile behavior because of their race/ethnicity. 23.1% of Asian or Pacific Islander students reported experiencing this kind of behavior as a result of the pandemic.

52.0% of those who have received counseling or therapy thought access to mental health services became more difficult during the pandemic.

55.5% had more financial stress and 88.6% had more overall stress due to the pandemic.