A Focus on International Students at the University of Iowa
The UI College Health Assessment (NCHA)
Data on UI student health behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs

International students completed the survey

Student Wellness collects anonymous surveys, using a convenience sample of undergraduate academic courses. Our data collection occurs every year, and the information is used for needs assessment efforts to guide program development.

568 Undergraduates completed the survey, with a response rate of 99%

The NCHA survey allows us to compare our results with the national dataset including over 70,000 undergraduate students at institutions of higher education.

The UI undergraduate student reports can be viewed here. Questions can be directed to Trish Welter.

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STUDENT WELLNESS
**5 Year Trends**

- **Marijuana use (Last 30 days)**: 3.8% (2014), 12.1% (2019)
- **High risk drinking (Last 2 weeks)**: 20.3% (2014), 14.3% (2019)
- **Cigarette use (Last 30 days)**: 12.7% (2014), 20.7% (2019)
- **Diagnosed or treated for depression (Last 12 months)**: 7.0% (2014), 19.3% (2019)
COMPARISONS TO UI STUDENTS

Compared to the general UI student population, international students (INTL) are...

**+ BETTER**
- Less likely to use alcohol or engage in high risk drinking
- More likely to wear a helmet while riding a bike or a motorcycle
- Less likely to use marijuana or other illicit drugs
- More likely to use protection when engaging in sexual activities

**- WORSE**
- More likely to smoke cigarettes
- More likely to vomit, use laxatives, or use diet pills to lose weight
- Less likely to meet aerobic and strength training recommendations
- More likely to engage in self harm and show suicidal tendencies
- Less likely to have been tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

### HEALTH ISSUES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Back Pain</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Allergies</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Migraine Headache</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strep Throat</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sinus Infection</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACADEMIC IMPEDIMENTS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sleep difficulties</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Concern for a troubled friend or family member</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Death of a friend or family member</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Eating disorder/problem</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*last 12 months

78.3% of international students reported their health as good, very good, or excellent, compared to 88.7% of general UI students.
USE IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

**ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS**

**ALCOHOL**

High risk drinking
- **14.3%** 5+ drinks on one occasion in last 2 weeks
  - **UI: 47.7%**
- **8.8%** 10+ days of drinking in the last 30 days
  - **UI: 18.1%**
- **21.1%** 1+ negative consequence from use in last 12 months
  - **UI: 56.5%**

**TYPICAL USE**

Average blood alcohol content (B.A.C.) of users
- **0.09**
- **UI: 0.09**

Average # of drinks
- **2.7**
- **UI: 5.2**

**TOBACCO & E-CIGS**

**Cigarettes**
- **15.5%** 10+ days in last 30 days
  - **UI: 4.5%**
- **15.5%** Daily use
  - **UI: 2.9%**

**E-cigarettes**
- **8.6%** 10+ days in last 30 days
  - **UI: 14.9%**
- **5.2%** Daily use
  - **UI: 7.5%**

**OTHER DRUGS**

**Marijuana**
- **5.1%** 10+ days in last 30 days
  - **UI: 16.8%**
- **1.7%** Daily use
  - **UI: 7.0%**

**Other illicit drug use (last 30 days)**
- **0.0%** Cocaine
  - **UI: 2.9%**
- **0.0%** Hallucinogens
  - **UI: 2.3%**
- **0.0%** MDMA
  - **UI: 1.1%**

**Illegal prescription drug use (last 12 months)**
- **1.8%** Stimulants
  - **UI: 15.1%**
- **1.8%** Sedatives
  - **UI: 5.8%**
- **5.5%** Pain killers
  - **UI: 4.6%**
NUTRITION, ACTIVITY & WEIGHT

FRUIT & VEGGIE INTAKE

1.8% of international students meet the recommendation for fruit/veggie intake (5+ servings/day)

UI: 4.3%

WEIGHT LOSS

55.4% of international students are currently trying to lose weight

UI: 51.8%

MEASURES TO LOSE WEIGHT IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

- 47.3% Exercised
- 44.6% Dieted
- 10.9% Vomited or used laxatives
- 8.9% Used diet pills

UI: 56.6% UI: 40.6% UI: 41% UI: 3.6%

BODY MASS INDEX

The average BMI for international students is 22.7

UI: 24.3

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Meets Aerobic Recommendations

- 2011: 30.4%
- 2012: 33.3%
- 2013: 27.8%
- 2014: 26.4%
- 2015: 27.8%
- 2016: 30.8%
- 2017: 32.4%
- 2018: 31.9%
- 2019: 34.7%

Meets Strength Recommendations

- 2011: 29.1%
- 2012: 20.8%
- 2013: 31.9%
- 2014: 34.7%
- 2015: 32.4%
- 2016: 30.8%
- 2017: 29.0%
- 2018: 33.3%
- 2019: 40.7%

UI: 53.9% UI: 49.5%

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends getting:

- One OR a combination of the following for aerobic activity:
  - ≥30 mins of moderate intensity activity ≥5 days/wk
  - ≥20 mins of vigorous intensity activity ≥3 days/wk
- Strength training ≥2 days/wk
STRESS, SLEEP & MENTAL HEALTH

OVERALL STRESS LEVEL
(Last 12 months)

- More than average: 33.9%
- Average: 30.4%
- None/Less than Average: 28.6%
- Tremendous: 7.1%

TOP STRESSORS
(Difficult to handle in last 12 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>INTL</th>
<th>UI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career-related issue</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep difficulties</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate relationships</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social relationships</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family problems</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal health issue</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DIAGNOSED/TREATED CONDITIONS
(Last 12 months)

- Anxiety: 21.1%
  - UI: 25.6%
- Depression: 19.3%
  - UI: 17.6%
- Panic attacks: 7.0%
  - UI: 9.7%
- ADHD: 5.4%
  - UI: 9.4%
- Insomnia: 8.8%
  - UI: 4.5%
- 26.3% INTL students diagnosed/treated for at least one mental health condition
  - UI: 30.4%

60.7% of international students felt tired or sleepy during the day at least 3 of the last 7 days.
- UI: 61.8%

15.8% report getting enough sleep to feel rested at least 6 of the last 7 days.
- UI: 10.6%

FEELINGS
(Last 30 days)

- Exhausted: 44.7%
- Overwhelmed: 44.6%
- Very lonely: 42.8%
- Overwhelming anxiety: 42.6%
- Very sad: 41.1%
- So depressed that it was difficult to function: 33.3%
- Hopeless: 32.1%
- Overwhelming anger: 25.5%

SELF HARM & SUICIDALITY
(Last 12 months)

- Seriously considered suicide: 14.3%
- Self harm: 12.5%
- Attempted suicide: 7.1%

EVER RECEIVED SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>INTL</th>
<th>UI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselor/Psychologist</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Health/Counseling</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatrist</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Medical Provider</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67.9% of international students said they would consider seeking help from a mental health professional in the future if they had a personal problem that was bothering them, compared to 77.1% of UI students.
**Sexual Health, Safety & Violence**

### Sexual Health

**Number of Partners**
- (Last 12 months)
  - None: 22.9% (UI), 39.4% (INTL)
  - 1: 22.6% (UI), 11.7% (INTL)
  - 2: 18.8% (UI), 18.9% (INTL)
  - 3 or more: 54.7% (UI), 34.5% (INTL)

**Sexual Activity**
- (Last 30 days)
  - Oral sex: 55.0% (UI), 34.5% (INTL)
  - Vaginal sex: 58.6% (UI), 29.1% (INTL)
  - Anal sex: 5.6% (UI), 9.4% (INTL)

**Protection**
- 50.0% used birth control the last time they had sex
  - UI: 78.7%

**Top Choices Include:**
1. Male condoms 84.2%
2. Birth control pills 37.5%
3. Withdrawal 14.3%

### Safety

**Report Feeling “Very Safe”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INTL</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Night</strong></td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UI</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day</strong></td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Night</strong></td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Violence & Abuse

**Incidents of Violence**
- Verbal threat 10.5%
- Physical fight 1.8%
- Stalking victim 5.6%
- Physical assault 3.5%

**In Absence of Consent**
- Sexual touching 5.3%
- Sexual penetration attempt 1.8%
- Sexual penetration 1.8%

**Abusive Relationships**
- Emotionally 10.3%
- Physically 2.0%
- Sexually 3.4%

### Helmet Use
- Bicycle 72.4% (UI: 31.7%)
- Motorcycle 95.2% (UI: 69.9%)

### Seatbelt Use
- 96.4% (UI: 95.7%)

1 in 10 INTL students (12.5%) have been tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) compared to 38.9% of UI students.

11.4% have used emergency contraception in the past 12 months.

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