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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 undergraduates completed the survey. Of those, 30 students (or 3.4% of respondents) reported that they were international students.

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 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 the 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/uh-health-data. Questions can be directed to Trish Welter at trisha-welter@uiowa.edu.
COMPARISON TO UI DOMESTIC UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

UI international students are...

- less likely to use alcohol, e-cigarettes, and cannabis
- more likely to meet recommendations for physical activity
- more likely to report feeling safe on campus and in the surrounding community
- less likely to report having gotten COVID-19

- less likely to report a sense of belonging on campus
- more likely to report a loved one dying from COVID-19
- more likely to attempt suicide
- less likely to report having supportive and rewarding relationships
**Academic Impediments**

1. Procrastination: 46.7%
2. Stress: 30.0%
3. Anxiety: 20.0%
4. Chronic health conditions: 16.7%
   - Cold/Virus or other respiratory illness: 16.7%
   - Death of someone close: 16.7%
   - Depression: 16.7%
5. Headaches/migraines: 13.3%
6. Health of someone close: 13.3%
7. ADHD: 10.0%

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

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**General Health**

89.7% of UI international undergraduate students reported their health as good, very good, or excellent, compared to 90.3% of UI undergraduate students.

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**Campus Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel like I belong at my university</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that student health and well-being is a priority</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus climate encourages free and open discussion about student health and well-being</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel we are a campus where we look out for each other</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- **Number of Drinks**
  - 3.2 average number of drinks last time they drank alcohol in a social setting
  - UI undergraduate: 3.9

- **Blood Alcohol Concentration**
  - 0.04 average blood alcohol concentration (BAC)
  - UI undergraduate: 0.06

- **ASSIST Scores**
  - 5.6 average alcohol score on the Alcohol, Smoking & Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST)
  - UI undergraduate: 7.1

**High-risk Drinking**

23.3% of UI undergraduate international students had at least one instance of high-risk drinking in the last two weeks (females: 4+ drinks / males: 5+ drinks), compared to 33.0% of UI undergraduates.

**Negative Consequences**

42.9% of UI international undergraduate students who used alcohol in the last 12 months experienced at least one negative consequence from their use.

1. Did something I regretted: 23.8%
2. Unprotected sex: 20.0%
3. Brownout: 19.0%
4. Blackout: 9.5%
5. Physically injured myself: 4.8%
6. Trouble with university: 4.8%

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

**Cannabis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used ever</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used in last 3 months</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used in last 30 days</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50.0% of UI international undergraduate students reporting cannabis use in the last 30 days have driven within 6 hours of use at least once, compared to 35.5% of UI undergraduates who have used cannabis.

0.0% of UI international undergraduate students reported that cannabis had negatively impacted their academics in the last 12 months, compared to 2.6% of UI undergraduates.

**Cannabis ASSIST Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>International Students:</th>
<th>Undergraduate Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.8 average</td>
<td>5.9 average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate-risk</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-risk</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Illicit Drugs (last 3 mo)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meth</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nicotine**

20.0% of UI international undergraduates have used at least one nicotine product in the last 3 months, compared to 25.6% of undergraduates:

1. E-cigarettes or other vape products: 16.7%
2. Cigarettes: 6.7%
3. Chewing/Smokeless Tobacco: 6.7%
4. Cigars: 3.3%
5. Hookah: 0.0%

**Illegal Use of Prescription Drugs (last 3 mo)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opioids</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedatives</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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

**NUTRITION & FOOD SECURITY**

**Average Daily Fruit & Vegetable Intake**

- **Fruit International**: 83.3%
- **Fruit UI Undergraduate**: 63.3%
- **Vegetable International**: 66.7%
- **Vegetable UI Undergraduate**: 59.6%

**Food Security* (USDA Food Security Index)**

- **High or marginal**: 70.0%
- **Low**: 20.0%
- **Very low**: 10.0%

**WEIGHT**

- **60.0%** drink 1+ sweetened beverage per day**
  - UI: **64.2%**
- **3.3%** have had energy drinks/shots at least 5 days in the last month
  - UI: **9.0%**
- **Average USDA Food Security Index Score**: 1.43
  - UI: **1.19**
- **33.3%** out the size of or skipped meals*
  - UI: **22.3%**
- **10.0%** reported going hungry*
  - UI: **9.3%**
- **13.3%** reported eating less*
  - UI: **14.5%**
- **6.7%** drink 1+ sweetened beverage per day**
  - UI: **6.7%**
- **46.7%** were unable to afford to eat balanced meals*
  - UI: **32.2%**

**Average UI Undergraduate BMI: 24.5**

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*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.
STRESS
76.7% of UI international undergraduates & 78.8% of UI undergraduate students reported a moderate or high stress level in the last year.

Top Stressors (last 12 mo)
1. Procrastination: 63.3%
2. Academics: 56.7%
3. Personal appearance: 44.8%
4. Health of someone close: 40.0%
5. Finances: 33.3%
6. Career: 31.0%
7. Death of family or friend: 30.0%
8. Intimate relationships: 30.0%
9. Faculty: 16.7%
10. Family: 16.7%

90.0% of UI international undergraduates & 92.7% UI undergrads reported at least one thing (of 18) to be difficult or challenging, with the average UI international student reporting experiencing 4.1 challenges/stressors in the last year.

MENTAL HEALTH
Psychological Distress

On the Kessler-6, 33.3% and 13.3% of UI international undergraduate students reported moderate and serious psychological distress, respectively, compared to 24.9% & 21.7% of UI undergraduate students.

Conditions
20.0% of UI international undergraduate students reported having one mental health condition, and 13.3% reported having two or more, compared to 13.0% and 29.1% of UI undergraduate students. Top conditions ever diagnosed include:
1. Anxiety: 16.7% International & 33.8% UI
2. Depression: 13.3% International & 26.6% UI
3. ADD/ADHD: 13.3% International & 10.5% UI

SLEEP
63.3% of international students get the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep on weeknights, compared to 76.7% on weekends.

76.7% 72.9%
63.3% 69.5%

73.3%
70.0%

70.0% nap at least once a week
UI: 57.7%

SELF-HARM
10.0% of UI international undergraduates have attempted self-injury and 6.7% have attempted suicide in the last 12 months compared to 10.6% & 2.0% of UI undergraduate students.

SERVICES
40.0% of UI international undergraduates reported receiving psychological or mental health services in their lifetime, and 30.0% reported using them in the last 12 months, compared to 50.1% & 33.1% of UI undergraduate students.

FLOURISHING

56.7% 59.6% 60.0% 66.2% 53.3% 62.6%

56.7% 59.6% 60.0% 66.2% 53.3% 62.6%

Lead a purposeful & meaningful life
Have supportive & rewarding relationships
Are optimistic about the future

*percent of students who agree or strongly agree
### Sexual Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Had Sex in Last 30 Days</th>
<th>Mostly/Always Use Barrier*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Int’l</strong></td>
<td><strong>UI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal Sex</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Sex</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal Sex</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*among sexually active students

Average number of sexual partners in the last 12 months*  
**1.5**  
UI: **2.0**

21.1% have used emergency contraception in the last 12 months*

0.0% experienced unintentional pregnancy in the last 12 months*

10.0% have ever been tested for HIV

100.0% used pregnancy prevention the last time they had vaginal intercourse*

UI: **92.2%**

### Violence*

**Intimate Partner Violence**

- 3.3% were called names, insulted or put down, UI: 9.0%
- 3.3% had partner(s) who insisted on knowing who they were with and where they were or who tried to limit contact with family/friends, UI: 5.0%
- 0.0% were pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, kicked, bit, choked or hit without consent, UI: 2.4%
- 0.0% were forced into unwanted sexual contact by being held down or hurt in some way, UI: 1.3%
- 0.0% were pressured into unwanted sexual contact by threats, coercion, alcohol or other drugs, UI: 2.8%

*last 12 months

### Safety

#### Feelings of Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During the Day - International</th>
<th>At Night - International</th>
<th>During the Day - UI Undergraduate</th>
<th>At Night - UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Surrounding Community</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Campus</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Behaviors

**Mostly or Always Wear a Helmet***:  
Motorcycle or scooter: 40.0%, UI: 45.0%  
Bicycle: 35.7%, UI: 39.3%  
*last 12 months; of those who have ridden

**Driving**:  
While texting/emailing/using apps**: 63.6%, UI: 60.0%  
Had an accident**: 4.5%, UI: 6.3%  
**last 2 weeks; of those who have driven

**Violence Outside Intimate Relationships**

- In a physical fight  
- Physically assaulted  
- Verbally threatened  
- Sexually touched w/o consent  
- Sexual penetration attempt w/o consent  
- Sexually penetrated or made to w/o consent  
- Victim of stalking

International | UI Undergraduate
COVID-19 Experience

13.8% of UI international undergraduates reported that they had COVID-19 (confirmed by a healthcare provider; gold) and another 13.8% suspected they had COVID-19 (black). Of those who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, 37.5% of international undergraduates reported moderate and 0.0% reported severe symptoms, and 0.0% reported that they had been hospitalized from COVID-19.

20.7% of UI international undergraduates had a loved one who had long-term effects from COVID-19, compared to 24.9% of UI undergraduates.

24.1% of UI international undergraduates had a loved one who died from COVID-19, compared to 10.6% of UI undergraduates.

Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus has done enough to protect students</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are taking precautions to protect one another</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measures I can take to protect the health of others on campus</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus policies implemented can reduce the spread</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow campus COVID-19 policies</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Protective Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>UI Undergraduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disinfect hands &amp; avoid touching face</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain 6 feet distance</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear mask when can't maintain distance</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*often/frequently

International

UI Undergraduate

83.3% said they would be likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine once available (UI undergraduates: 74.8%), and an additional 6.7% had already been vaccinated before taking the survey (Feb-Mar 2021; UI undergraduates: 13.9%).

Pandemic Impact

72.4% of UI international undergraduates & 70.6% of UI undergraduates reported that their professors were supportive.

26.7% of UI international undergraduates & 36.8% of UI undergraduates reported that as a result of the pandemic, they had witnessed discriminatory or hostile behavior towards others based on race/ethnicity.

13.3% of UI international undergraduates & 3.3% of UI undergraduates said they experienced discrimination or hostile behavior because of their race/ethnicity.

66.7% of UI international undergraduates & 52.0% of UI undergraduates who have received counseling or therapy thought access to mental health services became more difficult during the pandemic.

53.3% of UI international undergraduates & 55.5% of UI undergraduates had more financial stress and 80.0% of UI international undergraduates & 88.6% of UI undergraduates had more overall stress due to the pandemic.