

2016 Vermont College Health Survey

Executive Summary

Background and Participant Demographics

Beginning in 2013, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) worked with colleges and universities to develop a bi-annual statewide health survey plan for young adults enrolled in institutes of learning. The first survey was administered in the spring of 2014. The College Health Survey (CHS) measures the prevalence of specific health behaviors including the use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, sexual health, violence, nutrition, exercise, perceptions of the campus climate, and general well-being. In 2016, the CHS was expanded to include an optional sexual violence module.

In 2016 nine schools completed the CHS, eight completed the sexual violence module. The majority of students who participated were female (70%), full-time students (83%) from Vermont (65%). About half lived on campus (49%) and were between 18 and 20 years of age (47%). Nearly all (92%) said their typical grades were either A's or B's.

Substance Use

Most students said their use of alcohol and marijuana had not changed in the past year. During the past 30 days, 60% of student consumed alcohol, 30% used marijuana, 15% used cigarettes, 7% used electronic vapor products, 5% used cigars, and 3% used smokeless tobacco.

The most frequent reasons for using both marijuana and alcohol included to relax, to get high /drunk, and to have a good time, 38% of marijuana users used it because they were bored. About a quarter of current marijuana users vaped it (23%) or consumed it in food or beverages (23%), slightly fewer (20%) dabbled marijuana in the last month.

Weight, Nutrition, and Exercise

Most students do not meet current physical activity or nutritional guidelines. During the past week, nearly four in ten did not participate in any vigorous physical activity (35%), muscle strengthening activity (40%) or activities to increase flexibility (35%). One in five did not participate in any moderate intensity activities. During the past week, more than half of all students did not consume any fruit or vegetables on at least one day. Roughly one in twenty students did not eat any fruit or vegetables during the past week.

Sexual Health

During the past three months, nearly seven in ten students had vaginal intercourse. Among sexually active students, 57% used moderate or highly effective birth control to prevent pregnancy; less than half regularly used condoms when having vaginal intercourse (43%).

Campus Safety, Interpersonal Dating and Sexual Violence

Most students think that their school campus is safe during the day (87%). Just over half believe their school is safe at night (58%) and that their school does enough to protect the safety of students (56%). Nearly eight in ten students are aware of the school's policies around alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (79%), however, half as many believe their school enforces alcohol, tobacco, and other drug policies (38%). Likewise, six in ten students know where to get help on campus if they or a friend is sexually assaulted (60%) but only a third understand what happens when a student reports a sexual assault claim (37%).

During their lifetime, one quarter of students reported being in an emotionally abusive relationship (26%), 13% have been in sexually abusive relationships and 12% have experienced physically abusive relationships. Among students at schools completing the sexual violence module and who had experienced sexual violence while enrolled as a student, about half were assaulted in a dorm room or residence hall, a third said they told no one about the incident (32%).

Mental Health and Well-Being

About one in ten (11%) students reported moderately severe or severe symptoms of depression. During the past two weeks. Less than 10% reported self-harm (8%), making a suicide plan (5%) or attempting suicide (1%) during the past year.

Impact on Academic Success

Brief illnesses and injuries had significant impacts on students' academic performance in the last year. More than four in ten (45%) said a brief illness or injury caused them to miss class in the last year, while a third said it resulted in the inability to focus or think clearly and a quarter said they completed work late. In addition, more than one in five reported anxiety, depression, relationship issues, and internet use led to them not focusing on their school work or skipping classes.

Among current alcohol and marijuana users, more than one in ten students skipped a class (16% and 11%, respectively) and had difficulty focusing (12% and 15%, respectively) because of alcohol or substance use. Slightly fewer needed to complete late work (9% and 7%, respectively), received a lower grade on an exam (6% and 6%, respectively).

For more information and access to the full report visit:

<http://healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/population-health-surveys-data/young-adult-and-college-health>

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