

College Students and the Misuse, Abuse and Diversion of ADHD Prescription Stimulant Medications

Executive Summary
Research conducted by Harris Poll, 2014

The logo for CPAMM, consisting of the letters 'CPAMM' in a bold, red, sans-serif font with a small trademark symbol to the right. The text is contained within a white rectangular box with rounded corners, which is set against a grey background.

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Content Outline

- Research objectives
- Research methods and analytic approach
- Key takeaways
- Detailed findings

Research Objectives

- Measure college students' **awareness** of ADHD prescription medication and its misuse
- Gauge college students' **perceptions** of ADHD prescription medication misuse
- Assess college students' **potential motivations** for misusing ADHD prescription medication
- Evaluate how **different segments** of the college student population **vary** in their views on ADHD prescription medication misuse
- Results of this research are intended for **public release** and to **inform** the actions of CPAMM and our supporters
 - For the purpose of this survey, misuse refers to any time the medicine is used in a way that is different from the doctor's instructions and could include people who do not have a prescription for the medication but obtain it and use it, and people who have a prescription but do not use it as directed by their health care provider.

Research Method

- Online survey conducted May 15 – June 11, 2014
- Survey length = approx. 20 minutes
- n=2,056 U.S. college students, including 164 diagnosed with ADHD
 - 18-24 years old, enrolled and seeking a degree at a 4-year college or university and attending at least some in-person classes between January – June 2014
 - Sample included full-time (91%) and part-time (9%) students, living in a range of housing situations (e.g., on-campus, off-campus, with parents, etc.)
- Data weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region and propensity to be online to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population
- Statistical significance testing was conducted at the 95% level of confidence

Key Takeaways

- A majority of college students are familiar with ADHD prescription stimulant misuse and agree that it is unethical to take ADHD prescription stimulants that were not prescribed
 - However, approximately 4 in 10 agree that using ADHD prescription stimulants without a prescription is no more harmful than an energy drink or strong cup of coffee
- College students believe it's easy for non-ADHD students to obtain ADHD prescription stimulants
 - Most cite friends with prescriptions as a likely source, and almost half believe college students who misuse get them from a health care professional by pretending to have ADHD
- College students are busy and feel stressed – and ADHD prescription stimulant misuse is seen by many as a way to keep up



Key Takeaways

- Nearly three in ten college students can be considered to be at-risk for misuse – either because they say they are likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants or because they reported having misused any prescription medication in the past year
- A majority of college students believe that preventing misuse is not a priority at their school and that administration and professors are not aware of misuse on campus
- College students diagnosed with ADHD are less likely to view others their age using ADHD prescription stimulants not their own as harmful and more likely to say it is acceptable for a college student with ADHD to share or even sell ADHD prescription stimulants
 - Nearly half of ADHD college students with a prescription feel pressure to share or sell their ADHD prescription stimulant medication



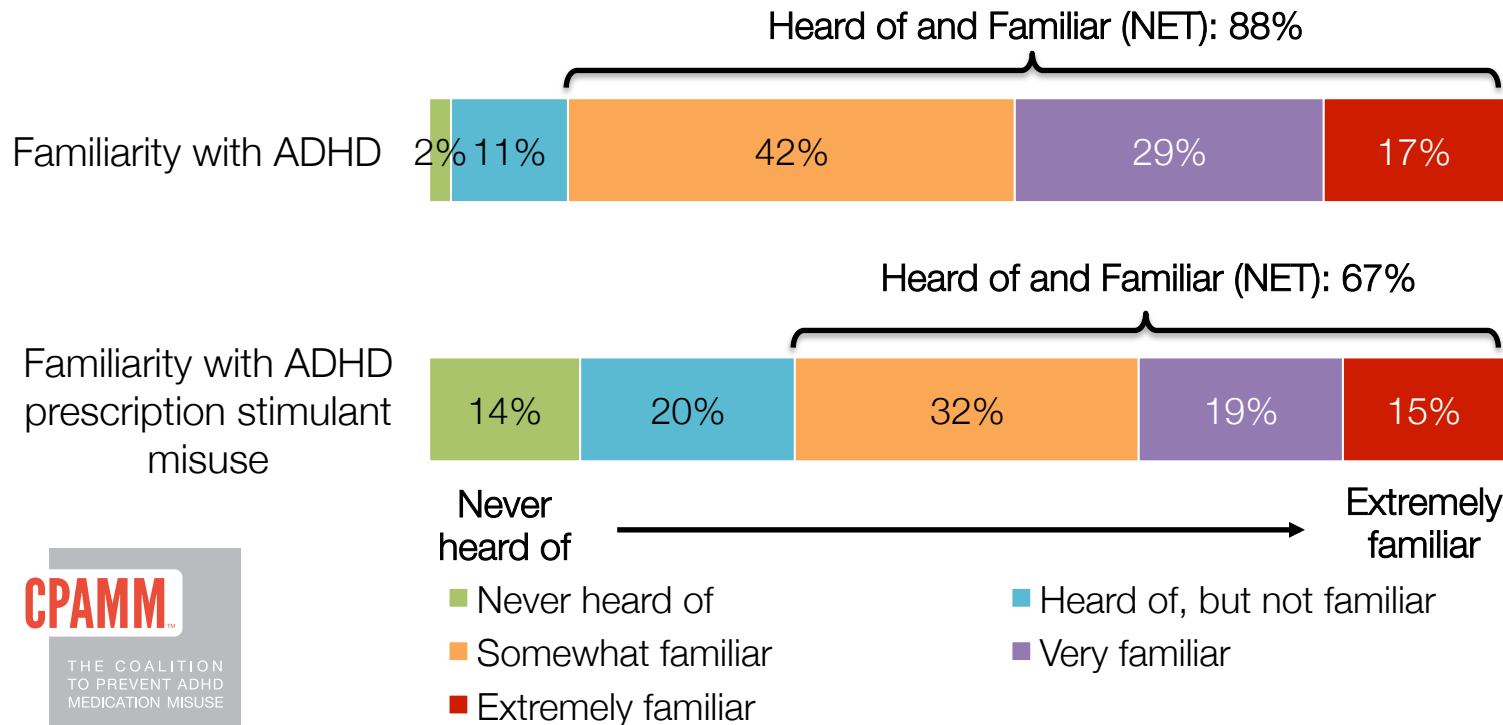
College Student Awareness and Attitudes about Misuse

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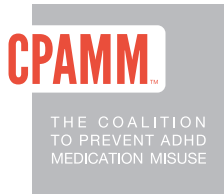
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Most college students are familiar with ADHD and believe it is a serious medical condition; two-thirds are familiar with ADHD prescription stimulant misuse

Familiarity with ADHD and Prescription Stimulant Misuse



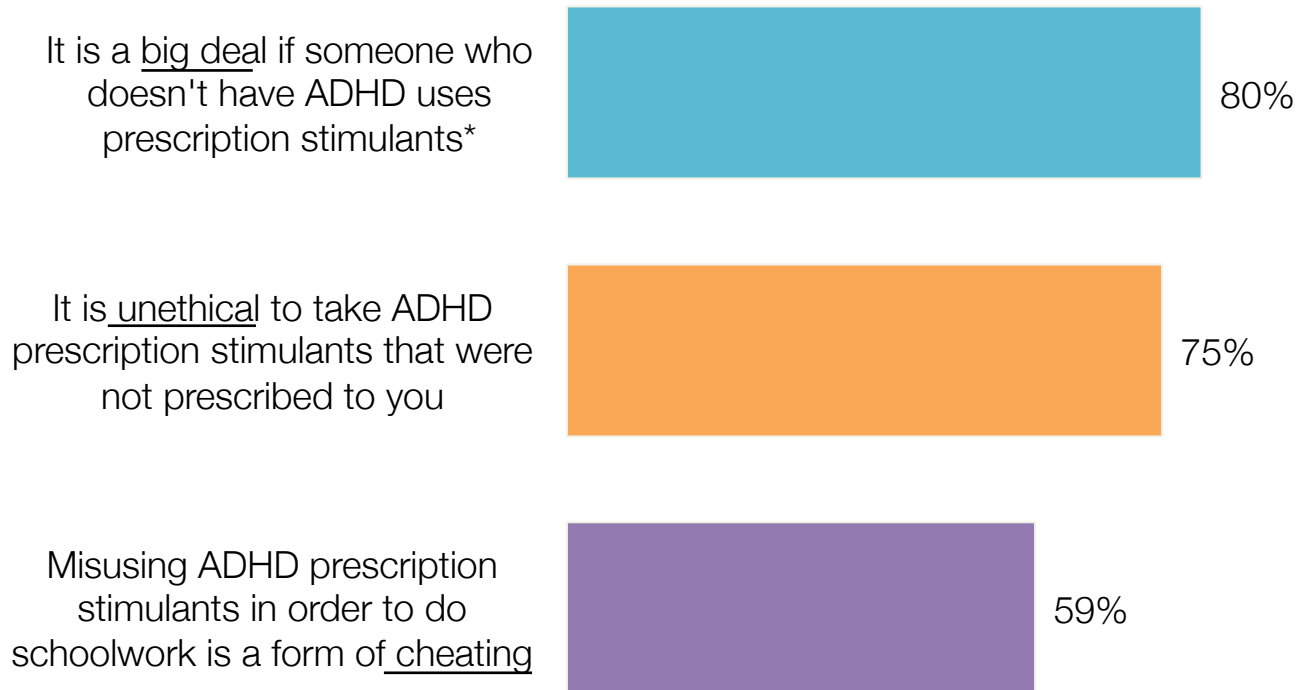
72%
agree ADHD is a serious medical condition.



Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting, computer rounding, and/or the acceptance of multiple responses. Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

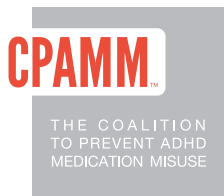
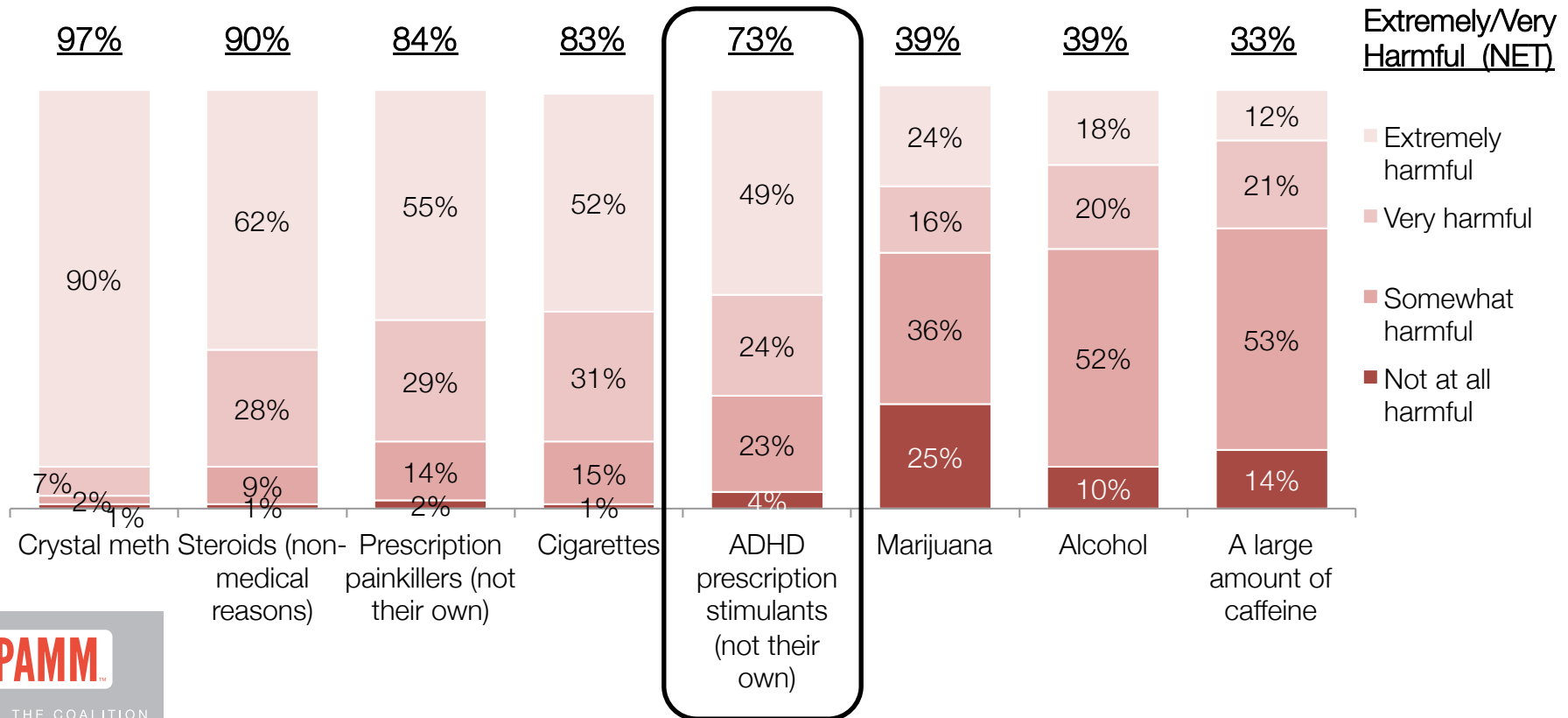
Most college students consider misuse to be unethical and a “big deal”

Attitudes about Misuse



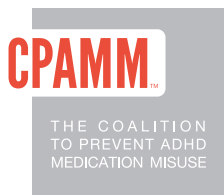
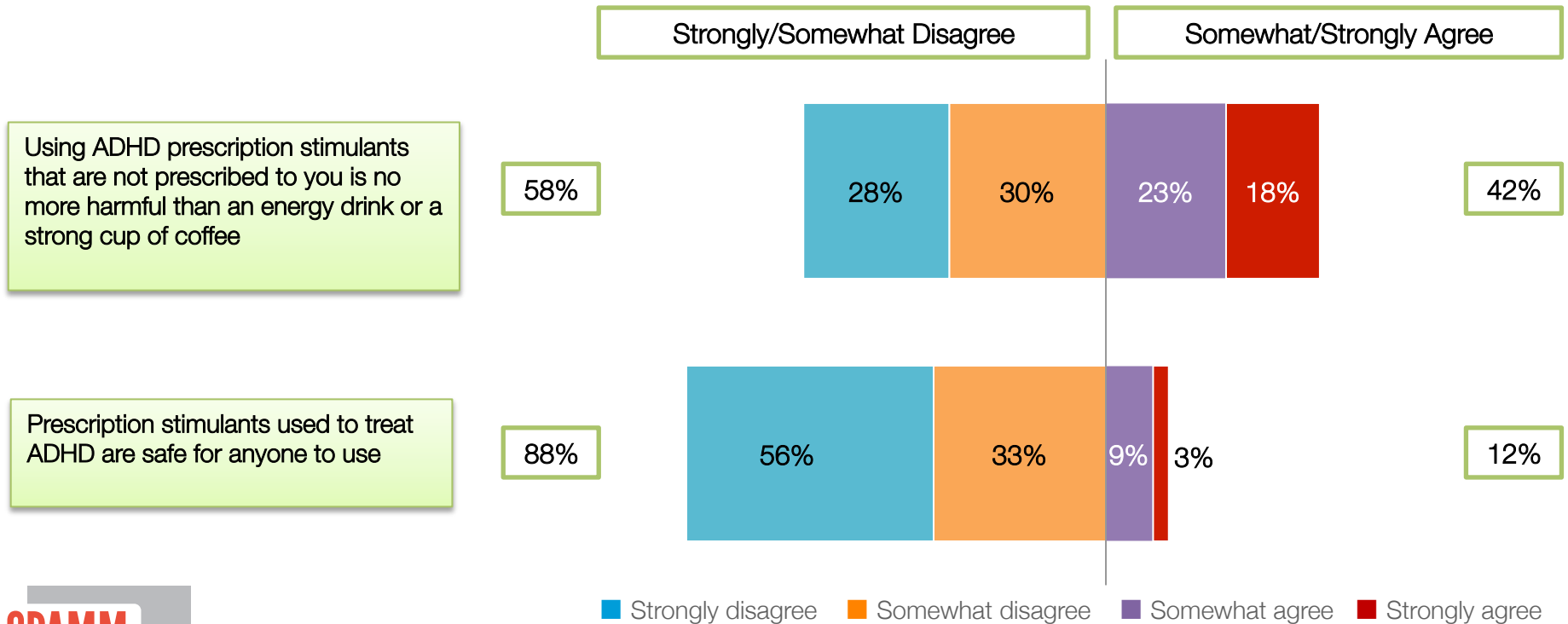
About three-quarters of survey respondents view ADHD prescription stimulant misuse as harmful to college students

Perceived Harmfulness of Substances



Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting, computer rounding, and/or the acceptance of multiple responses.
 Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

While nearly 9 in 10 college students know that ADHD prescription stimulants are not safe for everyone, 4 in 10 also say that misusing is no more harmful than an energy drink or a strong cup of coffee



Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting, computer rounding, and/or the acceptance of multiple responses.
 Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

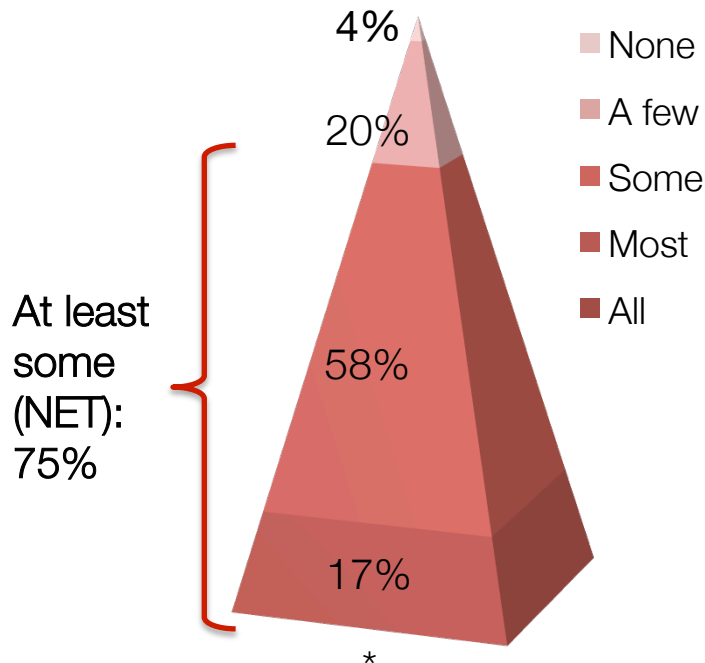
College Student Perceptions of Misusers

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College students believe misuse is somewhat common and that ADHD prescription stimulants are easy to obtain without a prescription

How Many College Students Do You Think Have Ever Used ADHD Prescription Stimulants Not Prescribed to them?



71% of college students think it is very or somewhat easy for college students who do not have a prescription for ADHD stimulants to obtain them

Only 3% say it would be very difficult

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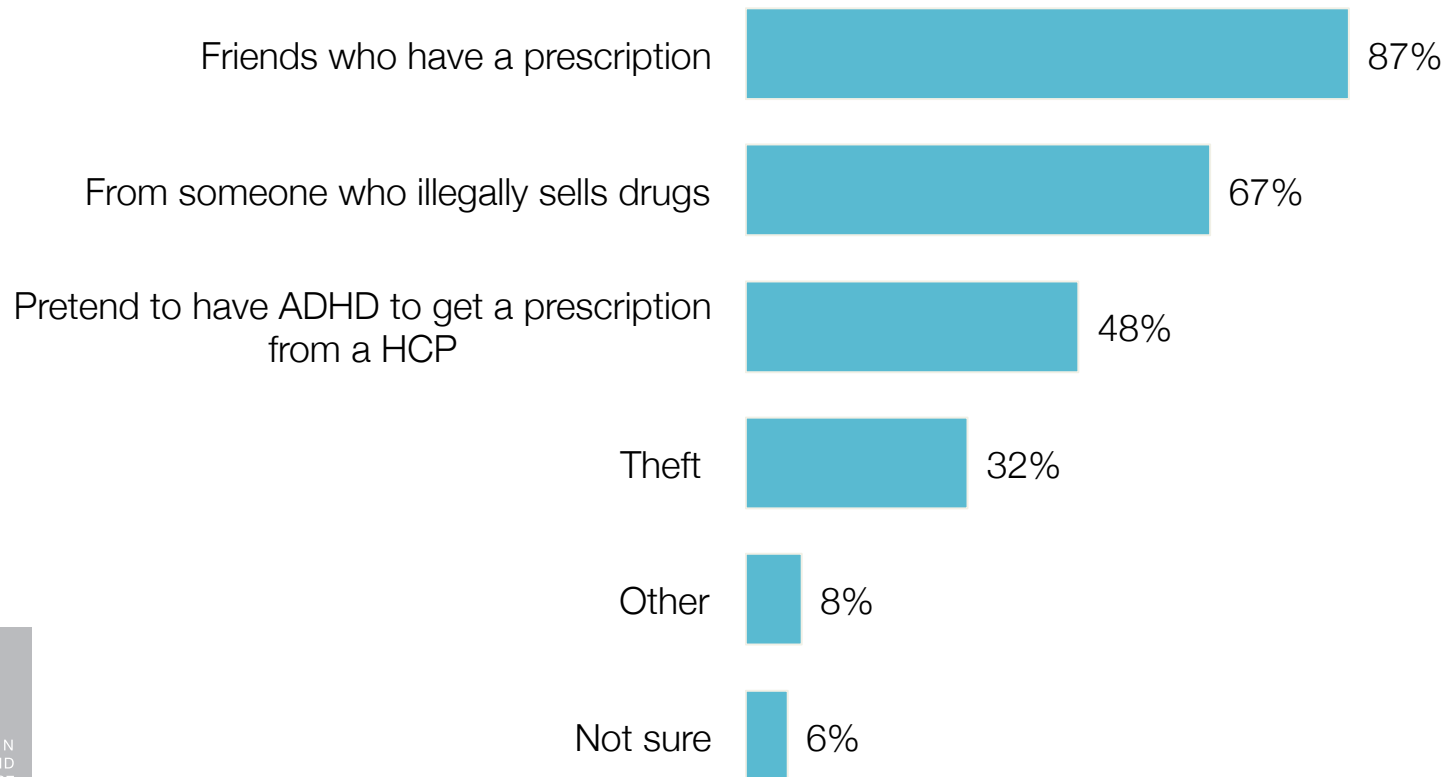
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The asterisk (*) represents <0.5% of students who think all students have ever used ADHD prescription stimulants not prescribed to them. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting, computer rounding, and/or the acceptance of multiple responses.

Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

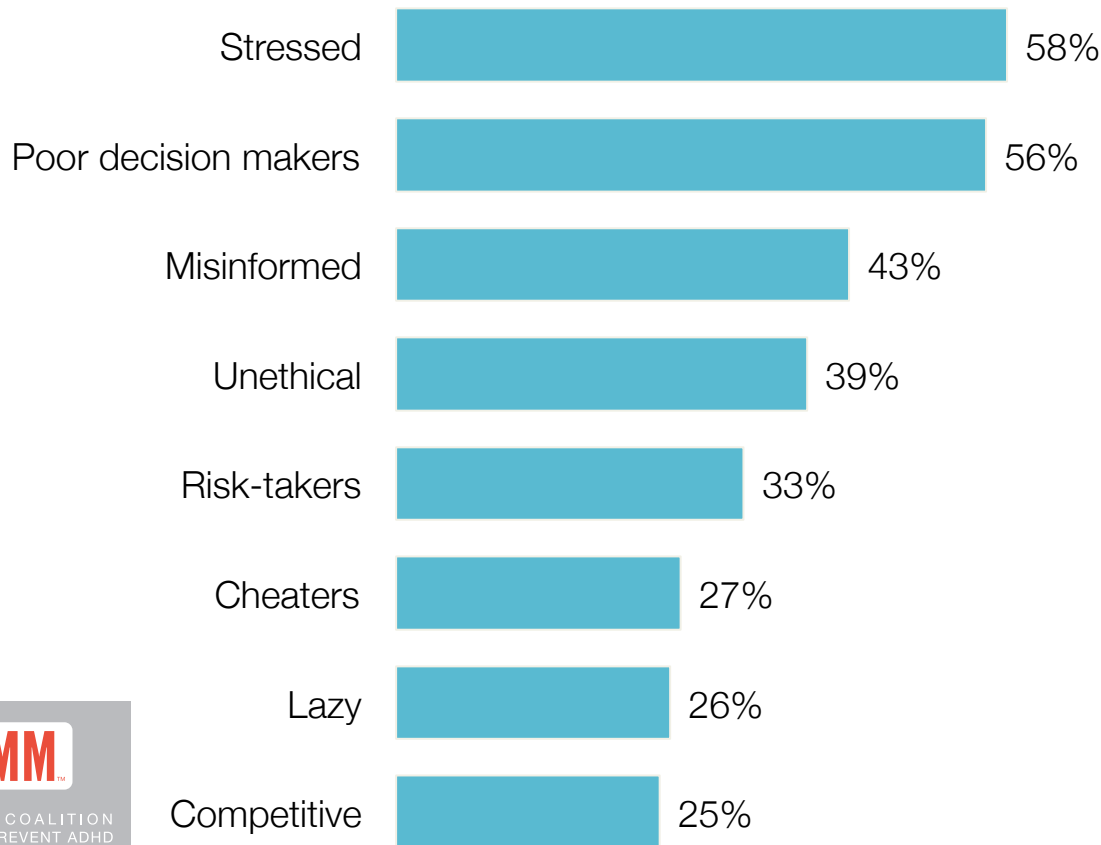
Friends with a prescription are perceived as top source for college students who misuse

Where Do You Think College Students Who Misuse ADHD Prescription Stimulants Get Them?*



College students who misuse ADHD prescription stimulants are seen as stressed and poor decision makers

Feelings about Misusers
Top 8 Characteristics*



48%

believe that college students who misuse are just doing what they have to do to keep up with the pressures of college.

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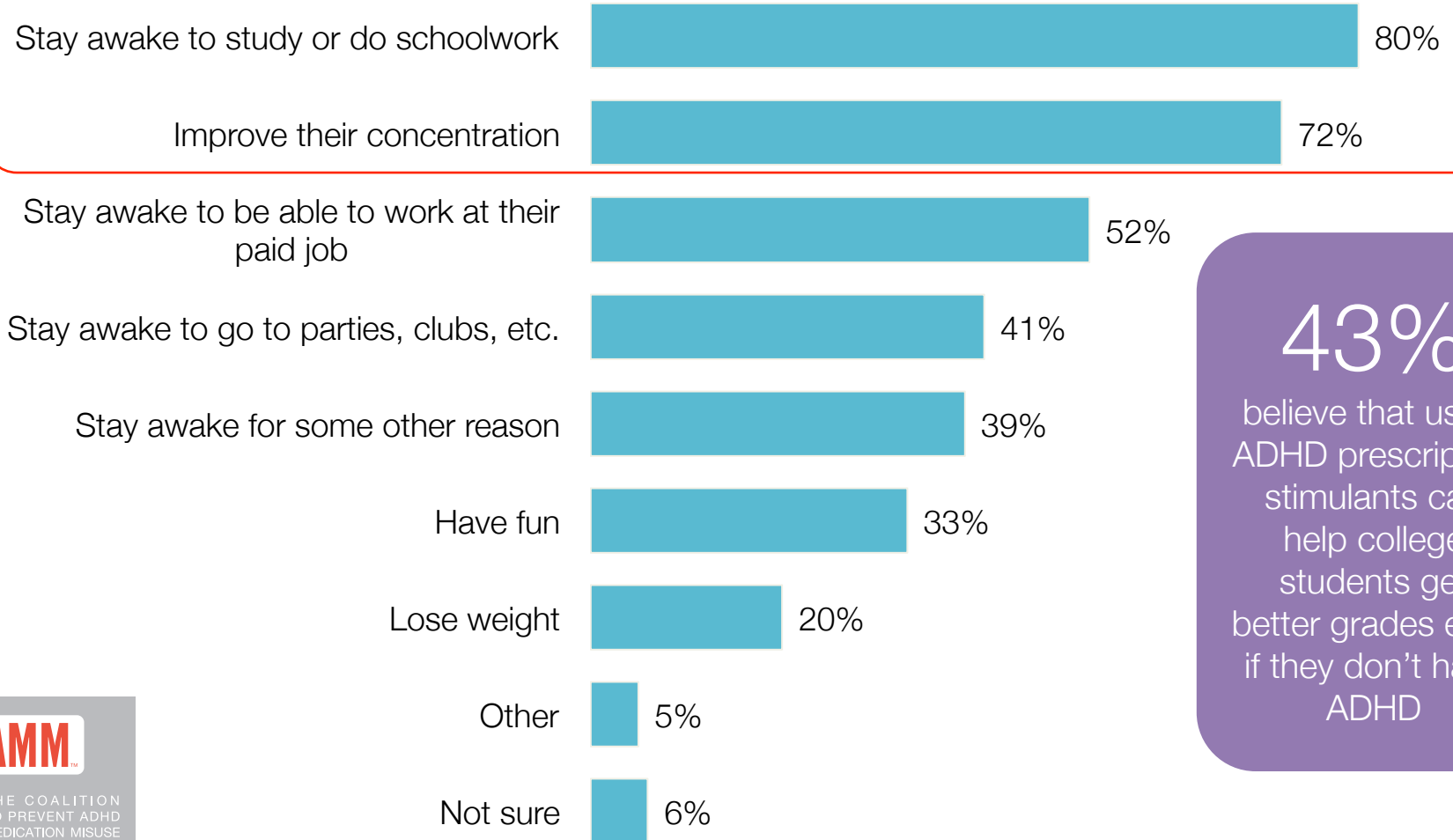
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*Multiple responses accepted.

Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

College students think ADHD stimulant medication is most commonly misused for academic purposes

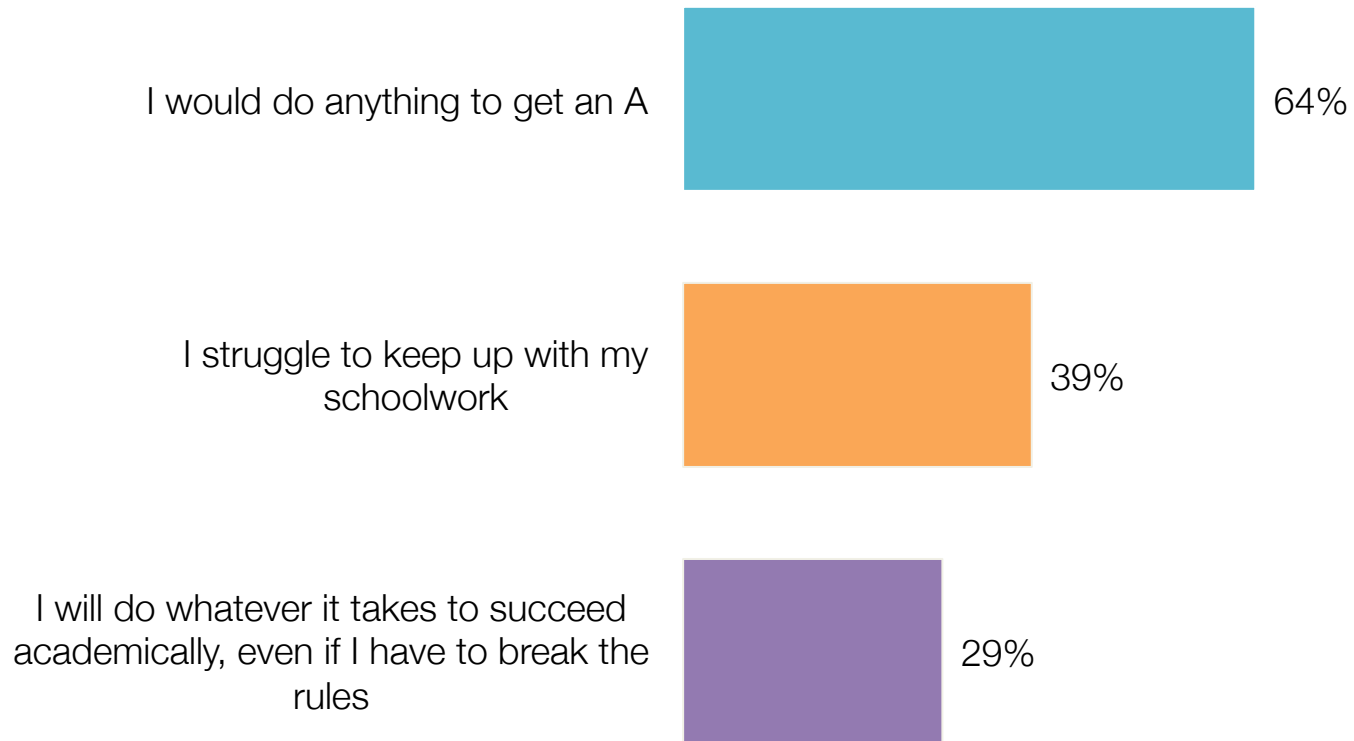
Perceived Reasons for Misuse*



43%
believe that using ADHD prescription stimulants can help college students get better grades even if they don't have ADHD

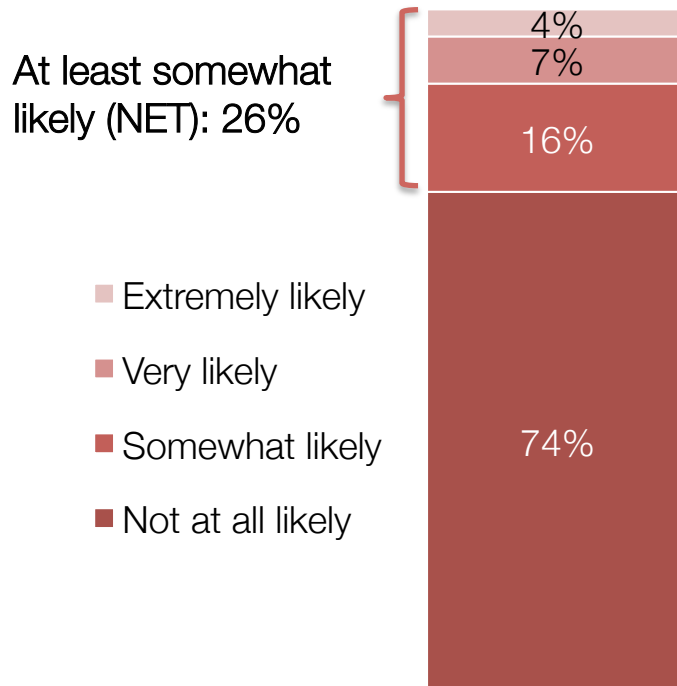
And many college students feel pressured to succeed – at any cost

Attitudes About the Pressure of Academics and Stress



A quarter of college students say they are at least somewhat likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants

Likelihood to Use ADHD Prescription Stimulants in a Way That is Different from a Doctor's Instructions



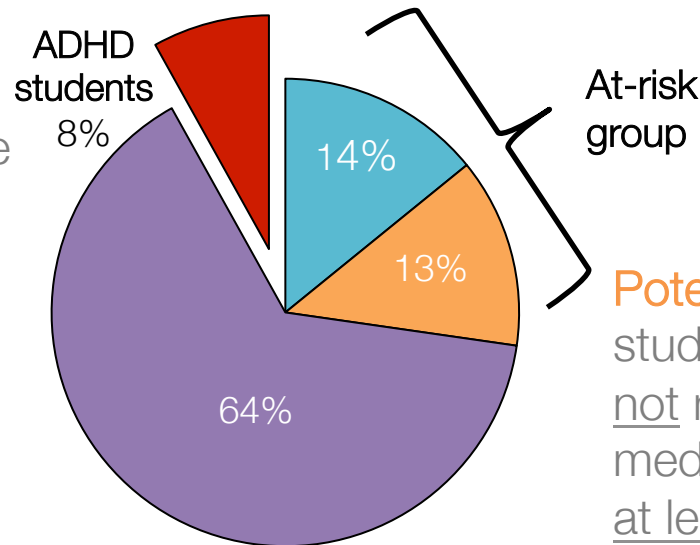
*Decline to answer: 1%

Nearly 3 in 10 college students can be considered at-risk for misuse

College Students At-Risk for Misuse

Past Misusers are college students who say they have used any prescription medications not prescribed to them in the past school year

Unlikely Misusers are college students who say they have not misused prescription medications and say they are not at all likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants



Potential Misusers are college students who say they have not misused prescription medications, but say they are at least somewhat likely to misuse ADHD prescription stimulants



College Engagement with the Issue

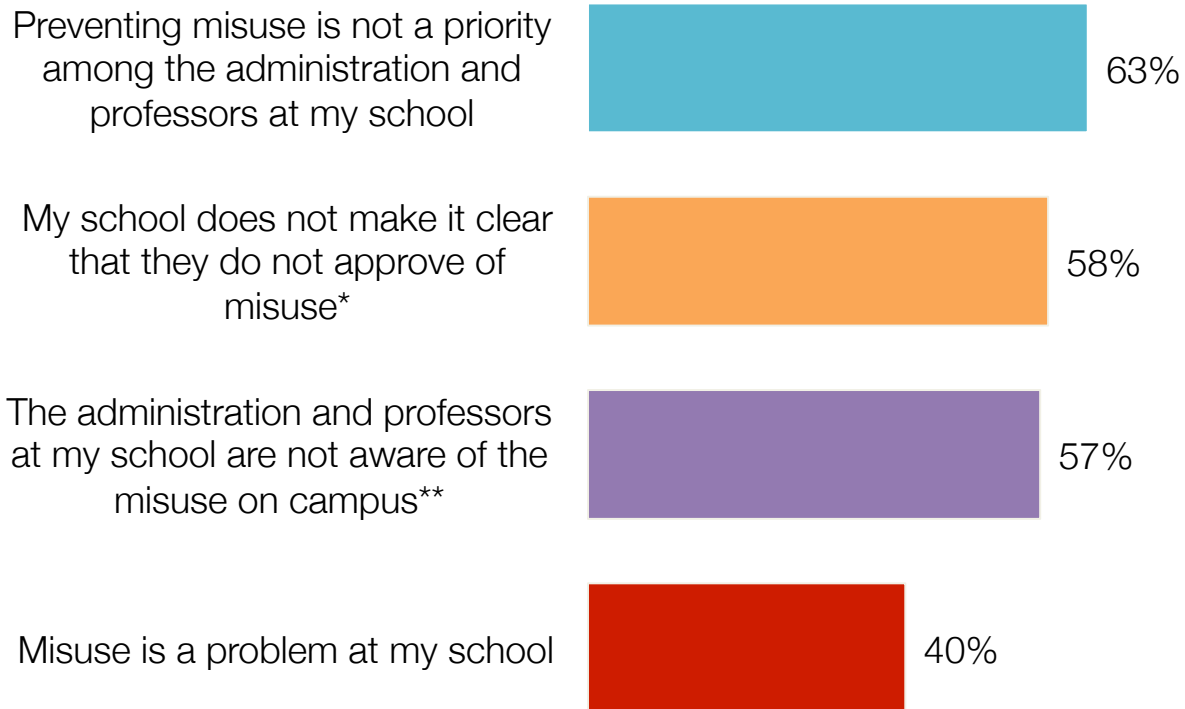
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Many college students see their schools as unaware of student misuse and not making prevention a priority

Beliefs About ADHD Prescription Stimulant Misuse at College



*Results shown indicate percentage of respondents who disagreed with the statements "My school makes it clear that they do not approve of misuse." and **"The administration and professors at my school are aware of the misuse on campus."

Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

Spotlight on Members of Greek Organizations* and Athletes**

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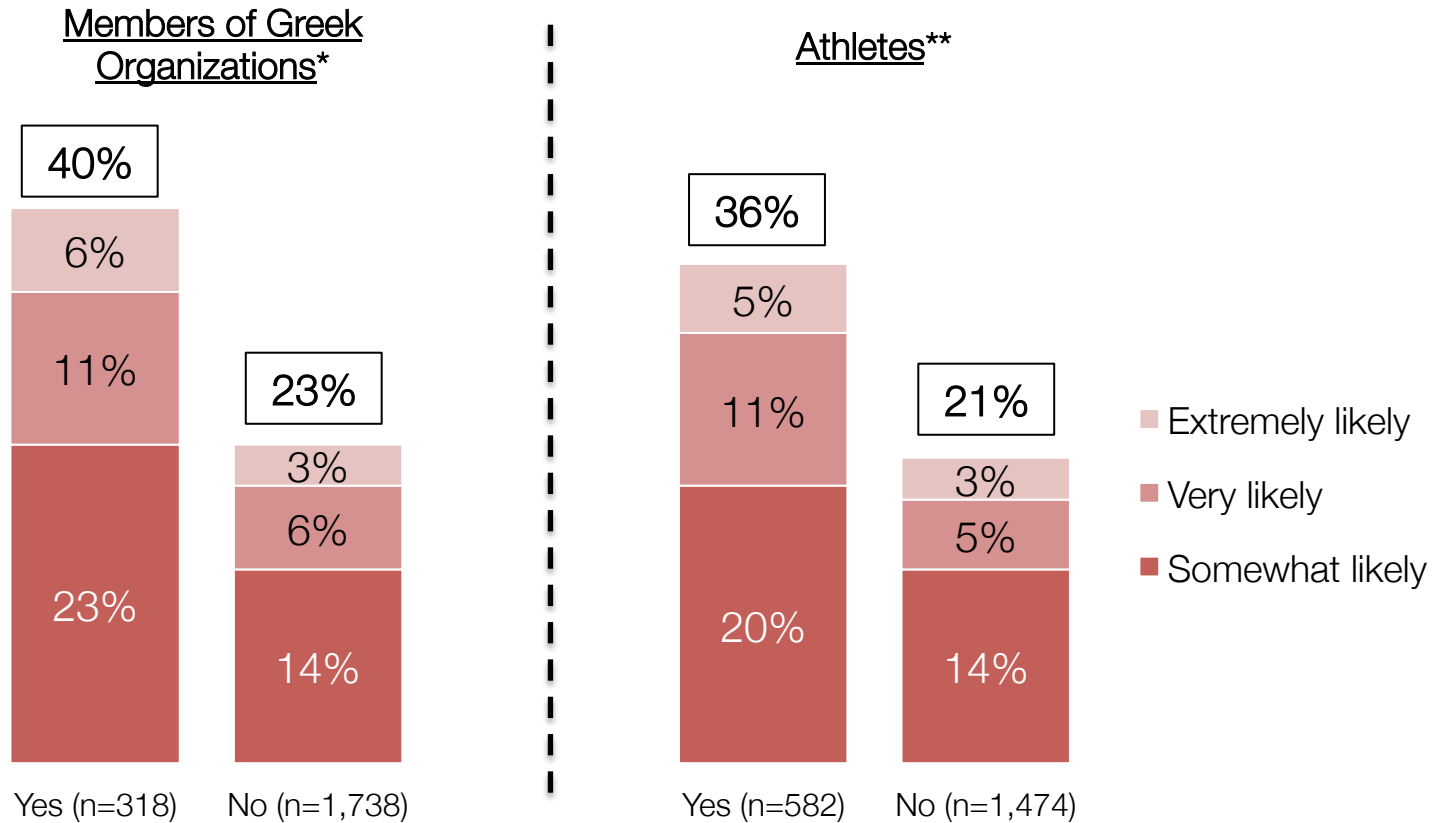
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*Greek organizations are defined as fraternities and sororities. **Athletes are defined as members of varsity, junior varsity, intramural and/or club teams.

College students that are members of Greek organizations* and athletes** are more likely than their counterparts to say they will misuse

Likelihood to Misuse ADHD Prescription Stimulants

At least somewhat likely (NET):



Percentages may not add up to 100% due to weighting, computer rounding, and/or the acceptance of multiple responses.

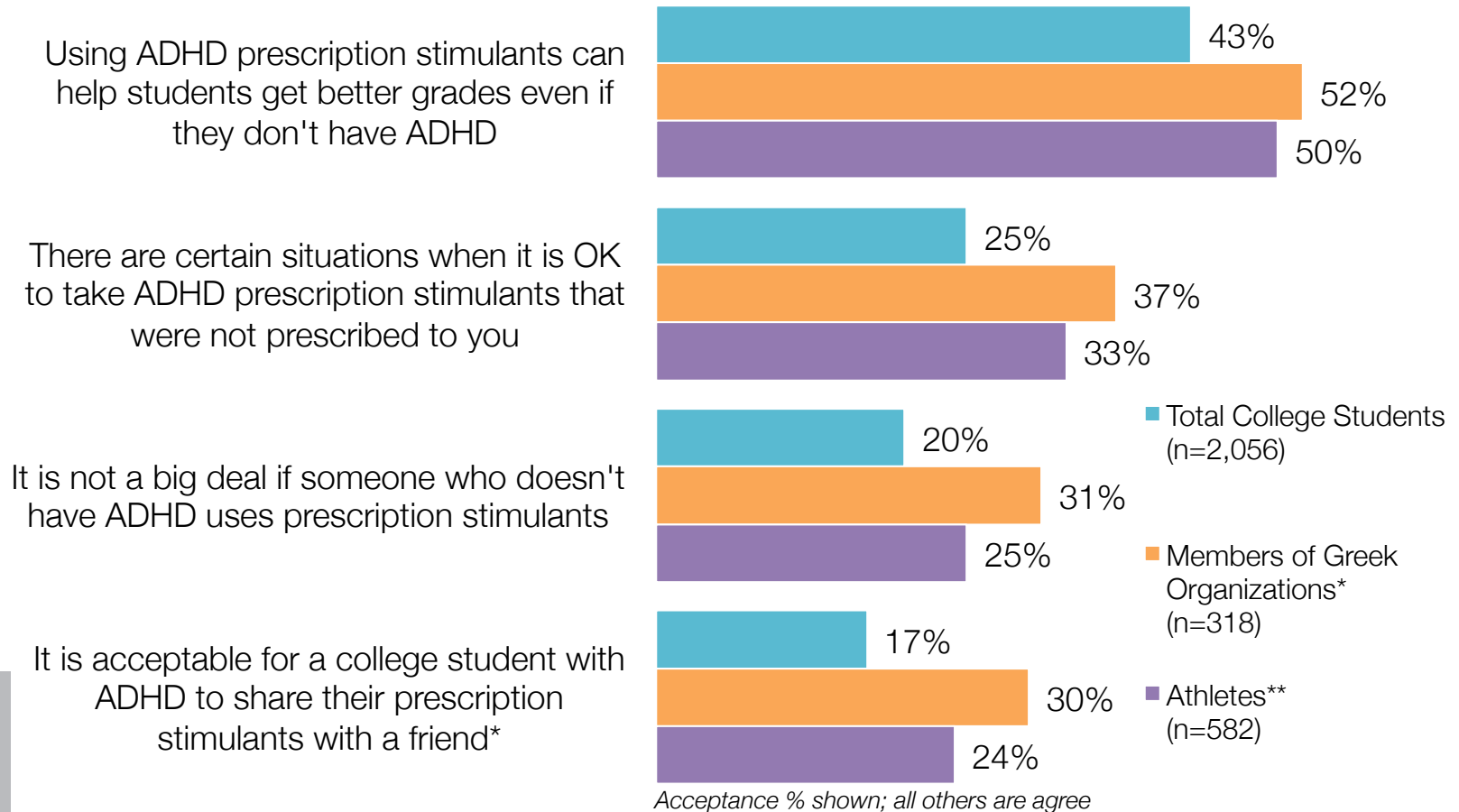
*Greek organizations are defined as fraternities and sororities. 15% of students are members of Greek organizations.

**Athletes are defined as members of varsity, junior varsity, intramural and/or club teams. 28% of students are athletes.

Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

College students that are members of Greek organizations* and athletes** also view misuse as more acceptable

Attitudes about Misuse among Members of Greek Organizations* and Athletes**



*Greek organizations are defined as fraternities and sororities.

**Athletes are defined as members of varsity, junior varsity, intramural and/or club teams.

Source: 2014 online survey of college students conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of CPAMM

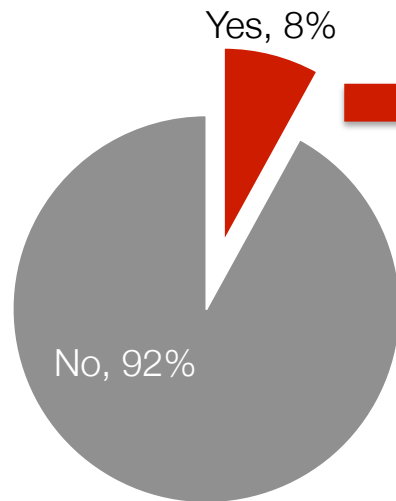
Spotlight on College Students Diagnosed with ADHD

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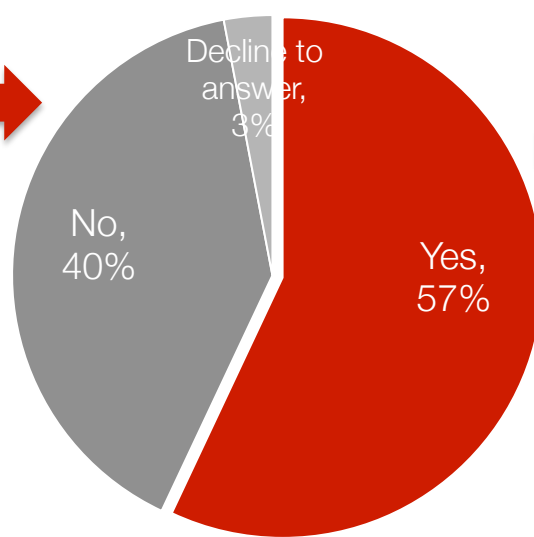
Among college students diagnosed with ADHD, nearly 6 in 10 have a prescription for an ADHD stimulant medication, and almost half feel at least a little pressure to share or sell the medication

Ever Diagnosed with ADHD?



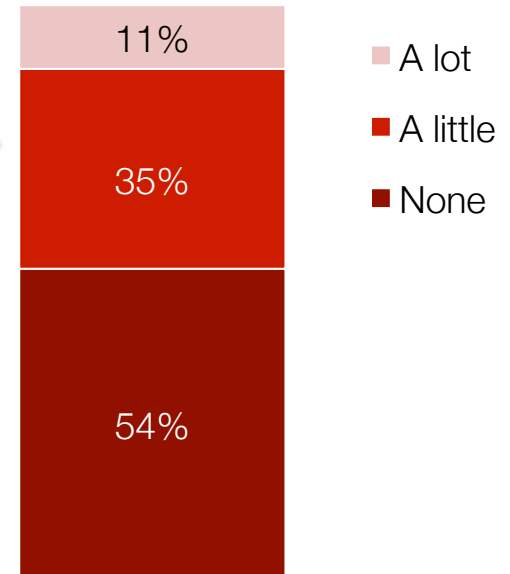
n=2,056

Currently Has a Prescription for an ADHD Stimulant?



n=164

Pressure Felt to Share/Sell Their Prescription Stimulants*



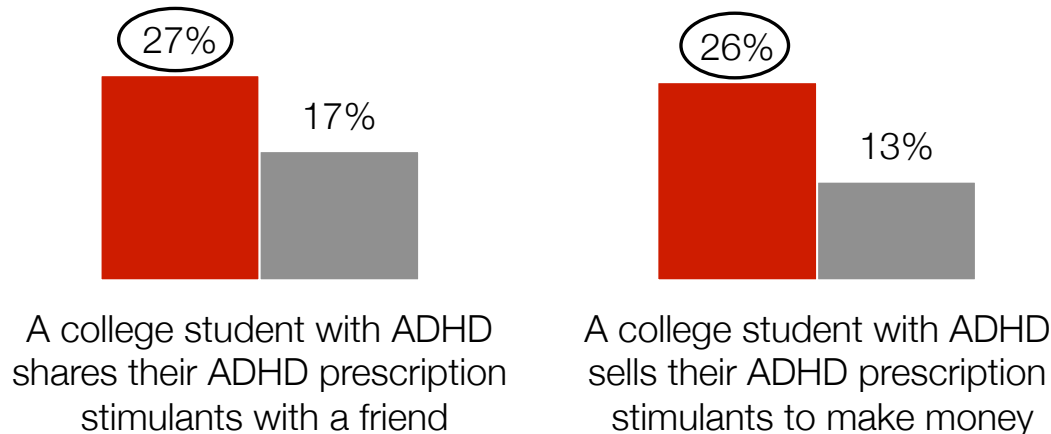
*Small base (n<100)



Over one-quarter of college students diagnosed with ADHD believe it is acceptable to share their prescription with a friend and/or sell it to make money

Acceptability of Sharing % Very/Somewhat Acceptable

- Diagnosed with ADHD
- Not Diagnosed with ADHD

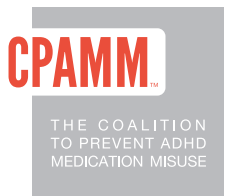
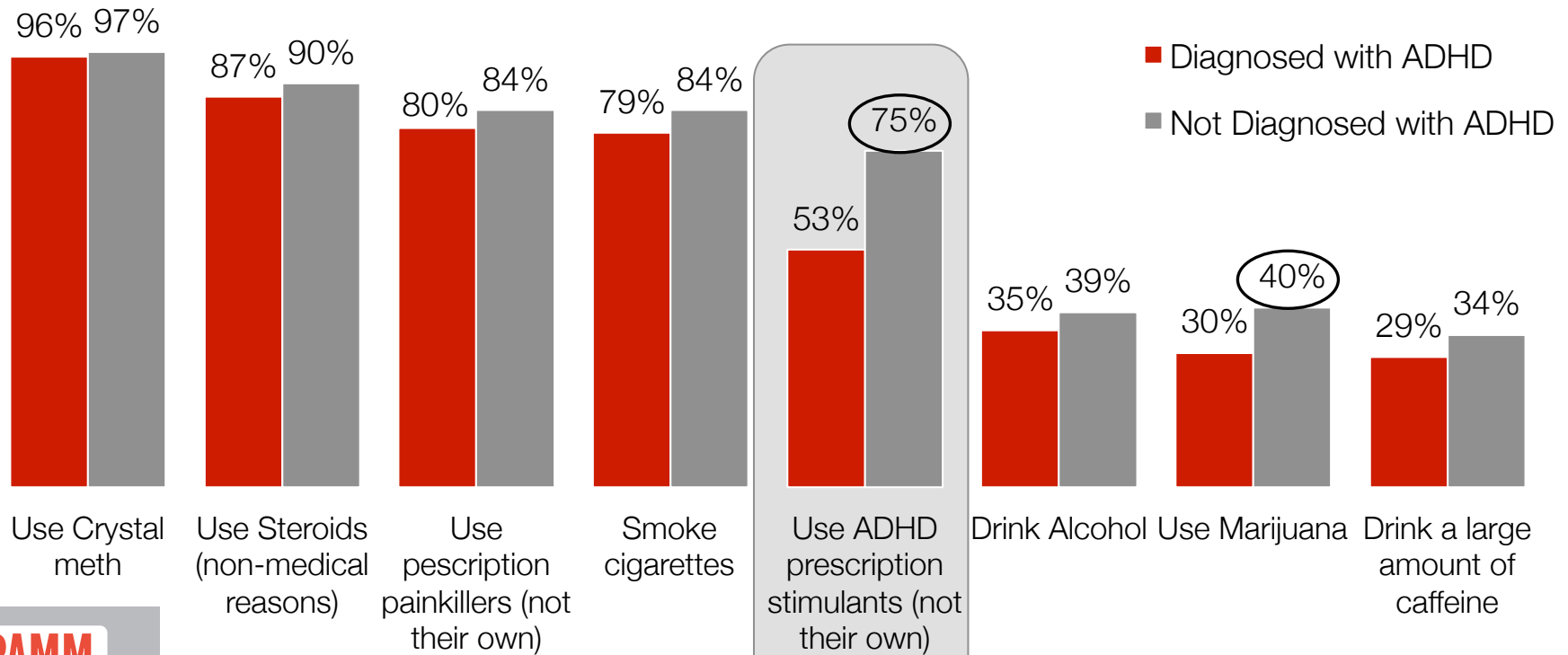


45%

of college students with ADHD agree that there are certain situations when it is OK to take ADHD prescription stimulants that were not prescribed (almost twice as often as the 23% of college students without ADHD)

Only half of survey respondents with ADHD view misuse of prescription stimulants as harmful to college students

Harmfulness of Substances
% Extremely/Very Harmful



○ Indicates significantly higher than comparative subgroup at 95% confidence.