

National College Health Assessment II: Findings from the 2012 NCHA II & 2009-2012 comparisons

Center for the Study of Student Life

December 2012

INTRODUCTION

The American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment II (NCHA-II) is a voluntary, web-based survey that assesses topics of general health, health-related impediments on academic performance, relationships, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, nutrition, exercise, mental health, and sleep. The Ohio State University participates in this national survey every two to three years and most recently administered the survey to 10,000 of its students in spring of 2012, yielding a 15.3% response rate. Prior to this, the survey was conducted in the spring of 2009; 10,000 randomly-selected students were invited to participate, and the survey yielded a 21.2% response rate.

The purpose of this brief is to summarize findings from the 2012 administration as well as indicate the highlight the differences between the 2009 and 2012 data to examine the shifts in students’ wellness over the span of the last three years. The datasets were combined for analysis and together total 3,571 participants on the Columbus campus. The brief will address various aspects of student health and wellness related to preventative behaviors, alcohol and other drug use, diet and exercise, sexual wellness, mental and emotional wellness, financial wellness, and safety.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The percentage of students who indicated that they had *never* used cigarettes increased from **63.1%** in 2009 to **68.5%** in 2012.
- Nearly **16%** of students reported *never* having used alcohol, according to 2012 data.
- **3.5%** of students used un-prescribed sedatives in 2012, compared to **4.9%** in 2009.
- **71.2%** of students reportedly felt *very safe* or *somewhat safe* on campus during the nighttime in 2012, compared to **74.5%** in 2009.
- More students felt overwhelmed in the last 12 months in 2012 (**88.0%**) than in 2009 (**86.6%**).

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	2009	2012
Male	38.6%	37.0%
Female	61.2%	62.8%
Transgender	0.2%	0.2%

Ethnicity	2009	2012
White	80.2%	79.7%
Black/African American	5.6%	5.6%
Latino/a	2.5%	3.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	9.5%	10.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%	1.3%
Biracial/Multiracial	2.9%	2.4%
Other	1.7%	2.6%

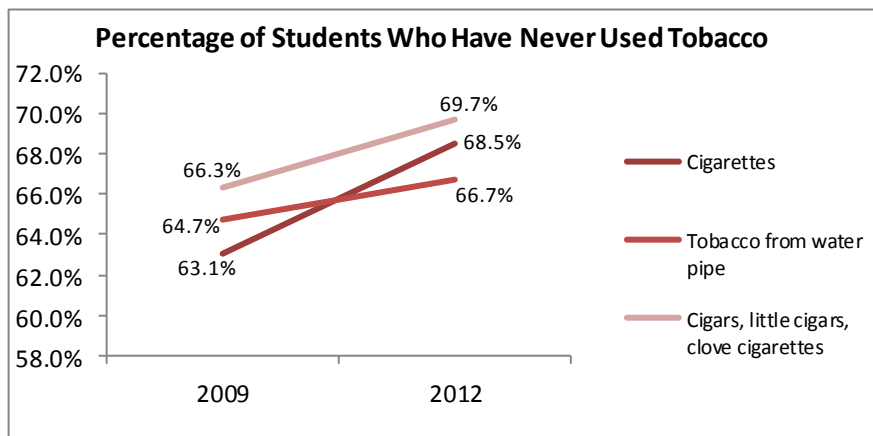
Year in School	2009	2012
1 st year undergraduate	19.9%	16.0%
2 nd year undergraduate	19.8%	15.1%
3 rd year undergraduate	19.0%	17.2%
4 th year undergraduate	14.3%	16.9%
5 th year undergraduate or more	5.0%	5.5%
Graduate/Professional	21.2%	28.2%
Not seeking a degree	0.4%	0.5%
Other	0.4%	0.6%

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG USE

According to NCHA 2012 data, 68.5% of students have never used cigarettes, 66.7% have never used tobacco from a water pipe (hookah), 96.7% have never used cigars, little cigars or cloves, and 88.7% have never used smokeless tobacco.

The percentage of students who reported never having used cigarettes, tobacco from a water pipe (hookah), and cigars increased significantly between 2009 and 2012, as can be seen in the graph below. In addition, every category pertaining to use decreased during this time frame for each of these drugs.

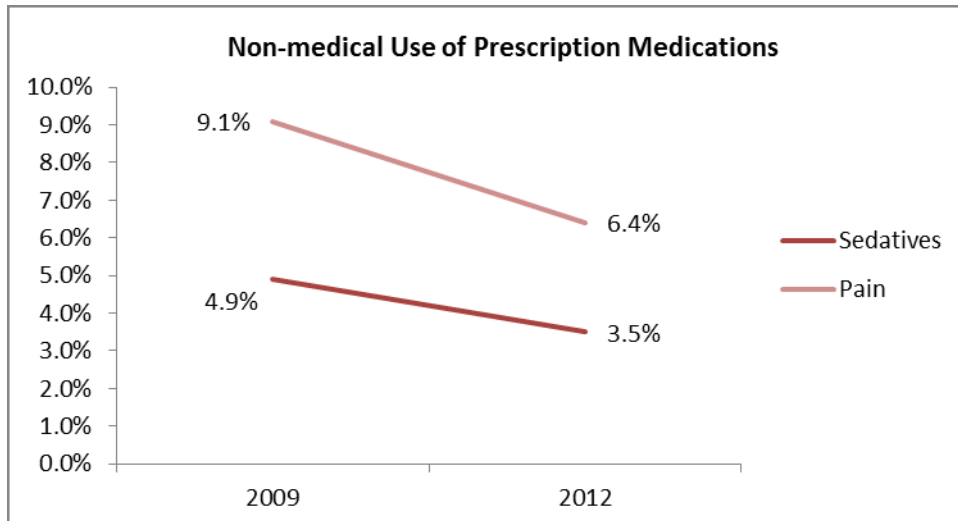


According to 2012 data, nearly 16% of students reported never having used alcohol, and of the 84% that do drink, 51.0% reported they did not have 5 or more drinks of alcohol at a sitting in the last 2 weeks (42.0% with non-drinkers included). While there were no significant differences in the degree of alcohol use between 2009 and 2012, data indicated differences in the self-reported consequences of drinking (of those who drink). Fewer students in 2012 reported injuring themselves as a result of drinking, yet more students reported having sex with someone else without their consent and/or having unprotected sex as a result of drinking, displayed in the table below.

Have you experienced the following as a consequence of your drinking:	2009 % yes	2012 % yes
Had sex with someone else w/o consent	0.4%	1.0%
Had unprotected sex	17.3%	21.0%
Physically injured self	21.2%	18.0%

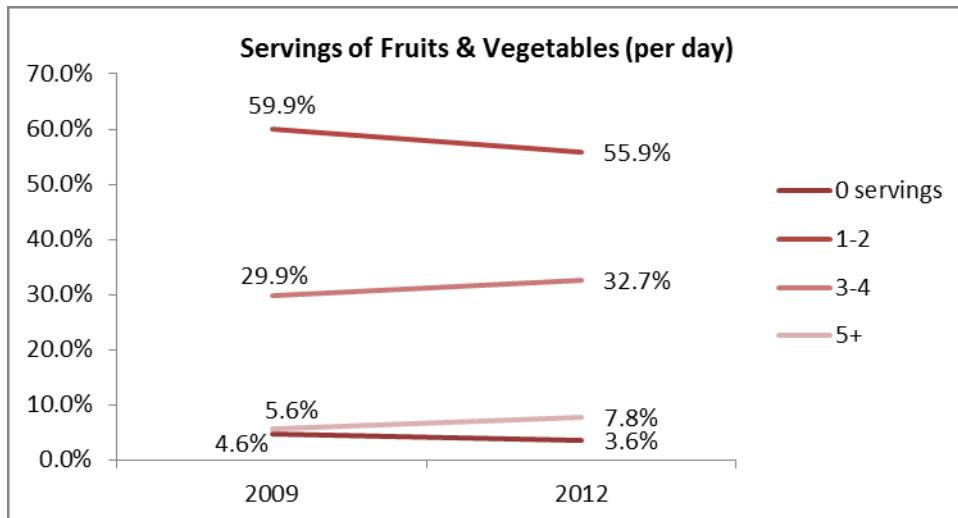
In the last 30 days, 30.6% (22.2% with non-drinkers included) of those who drink reported driving after doing so, while 2.6% (1.9% with non-drinkers included) reported driving after 5 or more drinks of alcohol, which is lower than the percentage in 2009 (3.6%).

Students were also asked whether they had taken various prescription medications that were not prescribed to them over the last 12 months. According to 2012 data, 3.5% had taken un-prescribed antidepressants, 6.4% had taken un-prescribed painkillers, 3.5% had taken un-prescribed sedatives, and 8.6% had taken un-prescribed stimulants. The misuse of prescription sedatives and painkillers decreased between 2009 and 2012, as can be seen in the chart on the following page.



NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Students were also asked about health behaviors such as diet and exercise. When asked to report the number of servings of fruits and vegetables they consumed per day, 7.8% reported in 2012 that they consumed five or more servings per day, which is an increase from 5.6% in 2009. The number of students who reported consuming 3-4 servings per day also increased between 2009 and 2012, as can be seen in the table below, suggesting that more students are consuming more fruits and vegetables than they have in the past.



The amount of exercise that students engaged in also increased over the last three years, with fewer students reporting 0 days of engagement in the three types of exercise documented by the NCHA (moderate intensity aerobic, vigorous intensity aerobic, strength training) in 2012 than in 2009. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week which can be met through 30-60 minutes of moderate exercise 5 days per week, or 20-60 minutes of vigorous exercise 3 days per week. Students' self-reported exercise frequency can be seen in the table on the following page.

On how many of the past 7 days did you engage:	Moderate		Vigorous	
	2009	2012	2009	2012
0 days	21.7%	20.9%	37.8%	33.7%
1 day	14.2%	13.4%	16.7%	15.1%
2 days	19.8%	15.7%	14.7%	15.7%
3 days	16.1%	17.4%	12.3%	15.5%
4 days	9.6%	10.7%	8.2%	7.8%
5 days	9.4%	10.6%	6.0%	6.8%
6 days	3.5%	5.4%	2.7%	3.9%
7 days	5.8%	6.0%	1.5%	1.5%

The number of students who engaged in strength training on 0 days of the last 7 decreased from 53.7% in 2009 to 48.9% in 2012, while the number of students who reported strength training on at least 2 of the last 7 days as recommended by the ACSM increased from 35.0% in 2009 to 38.3% in 2012. Slightly more than 50% of students were trying to lose weight, according to NCHA 2012 data.

SAFETY

Approximately 56% of students reported riding a bicycle in the last 12 months at the time of the 2012 survey, and of those, 51.9% *never* wore a helmet when riding. This number is lower than the 56.9% of students who reported this in 2009.

Involving interactions with others on the 2012 survey, 16.7% of students reported being verbally threatened in the last 12 months, and nearly 5% of students reported being sexually touched without consent. Approximately 5% reported being a victim of stalking.

I feel safe:	% very safe		% somewhat safe		% somewhat unsafe		% not at all safe	
	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012	2009	2012
On-campus daytime	85.9%	85.1%	12.9%	13.9%	1.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.4%
On-campus nighttime	20.8%	19.2%	53.7%	52.0%	21.5%	25.1%	4.0%	3.7%
Off-campus daytime	34.0%	34.7%	54.7%	54.9%	10.0%	9.2%	1.2%	1.3%
Off-campus nighttime	4.1%	3.6%	25.2%	25.2%	47.8%	49.0%	22.8%	22.2%

The extent to which students felt safe on- and off-campus can be seen in the table above. Most students felt safe on-campus during the daytime. Fewer students felt safe on campus during the nighttime, with 71.2% reportedly feeling *very safe* or *somewhat safe* (a decrease from 74.5% in 2009) and 28.8% feeling *somewhat unsafe* or *not at all safe*. Far fewer felt safe in the community surrounding campus.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

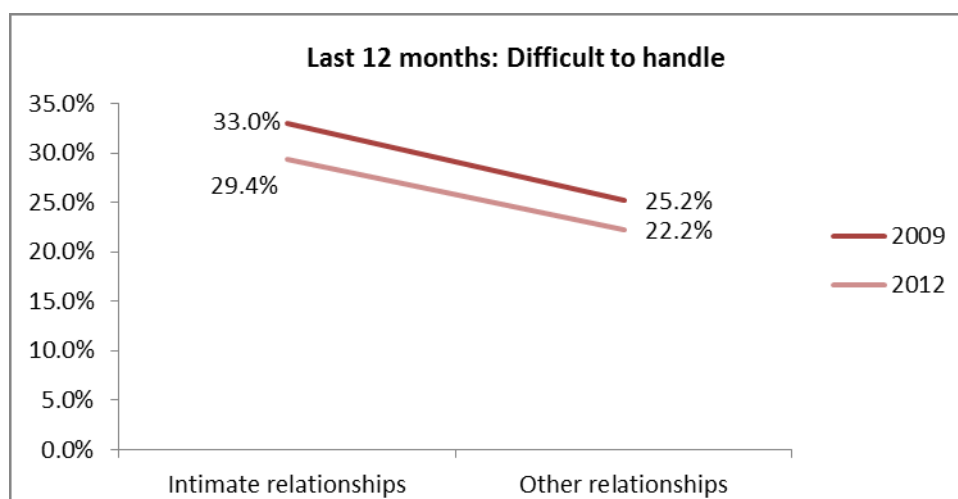
Students also reported on various aspects of their emotional well-being. A number of students reported feeling depressed or overwhelmed. Nearly 30% of students reportedly felt so depressed it was difficult to function within the last 12 months; 9.4% had felt this way in the last 2 weeks at the time of the 2012 survey.

Approximately 11% had been diagnosed/treated for depression in the last 12 months. When asked whether they had ever felt overwhelmed, more students reported feeling overwhelmed in the last 12 months in 2012 (88.0%) than in 2009 (86.6%).

Have any of the following been difficult to handle in the last 12 months:	2009 % yes	2012 % yes
Academics	47.7%	47.2%
Finances	35.4%	29.5%
Intimate relationships	33.0%	29.4%
Career-related issue	25.7%	26.0%
Family problems	24.5%	23.2%
Other relationships	25.2%	22.2%
Sleep difficulties	23.2%	22.2%
Personal appearance	23.1%	20.9%

Students reported a number of aspects that were difficult to handle over the last 12 months, and they are displayed in the table to the left. The same eight areas rated highest in both 2009 and 2012, with slight variations in rankings.

While a number of students reported that their intimate relationships and other relationships were difficult to handle in the last 12 months, data indicated that there was a decrease between 2009 and 2012 in both areas, as seen in the chart below.



INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

ACADEMIC IMPEDIMENTS

A number of aspects reportedly affected students' academic performance, according to 2012 data. The top ten for both years can be seen in the table below.

Have any of the following negatively affected your academic performance:	2009 % yes	2012 % yes
Stress	27.5%	27.2%
Anxiety	20.0%	20.0%
Sleep difficulties	20.6%	18.5%
Work	13.9%	16.1%
Cold/flu/sore throat	15.7%	13.5%
Depression	12.8%	13.5%
Internet use/computer games	12.5%	12.4%
Participation in extracurricular activities	9.2%	10.2%
Concern for family member/friend	10.5%	9.9%
Relationship difficulties	11.3%	9.4%

A higher percentage of students reported a negative impact on their grades due to pregnancy, with 0.4% reporting a negative impact in 2009 and 1.3% reporting this in 2012.

Fewer students reported negative impacts on their grades due to alcohol between 2009 (6.6%) and 2012 (5.2%).

CONCLUSION

This brief highlighted numerous points of interest regarding students' health and wellness at Ohio State. Fewer students reported ever using cigarettes and other tobacco products between 2009 and 2012. More than 15% of students reported that they do not drink, and the percentage of students who took un-prescribed prescription sedatives also decreased across the three-year span.

Data suggested that students are consuming more fruits and vegetables than in the past, and engaging in more exercise, in the form of both cardiovascular endurance and strength training.

Numerous students who reported riding a bicycle reportedly do not wear a helmet regularly, though more students are wearing helmets now than in 2009. Nearly one-fifth of students reported being verbally threatened in the last year. Overall, students felt safe on campus, but this number drops dramatically regarding the surrounding campus community.

Students are reportedly more overwhelmed than they were in 2009, and many reported that they had been diagnosed with depression within the last 12 months. Students reported less difficulty with both intimate and other relationships than in 2009.

The greatest academic impediments were stress, anxiety, sleep difficulties, and work. These issues are important to keep in mind as student affairs professionals strive to bridge the curricular and the co-curricular. The attitudes and behaviors in this brief may all contribute to students' success, to varying degrees and the information presented may be instrumental in guiding the programming efforts of many university departments.