

**KEY FINDINGS**

- 16% of students who reported they had ever used a prescription stimulant for non-medical reasons.
- About 79% of students who misuse reported that they typically obtain stimulants from a friend.
- 26% of students who misuse indicated that they generally use stimulants for non-medical reasons at least once an academic term.

**AN OVERVIEW OF STIMULANT MISUSE**

This report uses data from the 2018 administration of the College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) to examine non-medical prescription drug use among college students. The CPDS surveyed students at 26 public and private, two- and four-year U.S. colleges and universities; 19,539 students completed the survey. Of those who completed the survey, 3,055 students (15.9%) reported that they had ever used a stimulant (e.g., Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine) for non-medical reasons. This report summarizes students' reasons for and consequences of stimulant misuse, access to stimulants, perceptions of use and misuse by class rank and residence.

**FINDINGS****Reasons for and consequences of misuse**

Students reported a variety of reasons for non-medical use of stimulants, including to help them study or improve their grades, to see what it was like, to enhance social interactions or situations and to get high. The majority (79.2%) of respondents who misused stimulants did so to study or improve grades. The graphic below illustrates the top four reasons that students indicated for using stimulants for non-medical reasons.

When asked about the consequences of their non-medical use of prescription stimulants, about 60% of respondents reported a positive impact on their academics as a result of their use and about 6% of respondents indicated that their family members or friends had expressed concern about their use. Nearly 6% of respondents also reported that they had experienced not being able to stop using these types of medications when they wanted to.

**Ease of access**

It is important to recognize and assess how students gain access to prescription stimulants for non-medical use. In doing so, researchers and medical practitioners can better understand the patterns of

**Why have you used stimulants for non-medical reasons?**

stimulant misuse. Of all the students who responded to the survey, 28.5% reported that it is somewhat easy or very easy for them to obtain prescription stimulants without a prescription. Twenty-one percent of respondents who were prescribed stimulants in the past 12 months had given them to a friend or peer ( $n = 1,212$ ). Relatedly, 10.8% of respondents who were prescribed stimulants in the past 12 months sold their prescription stimulant medication to a friend or peer.

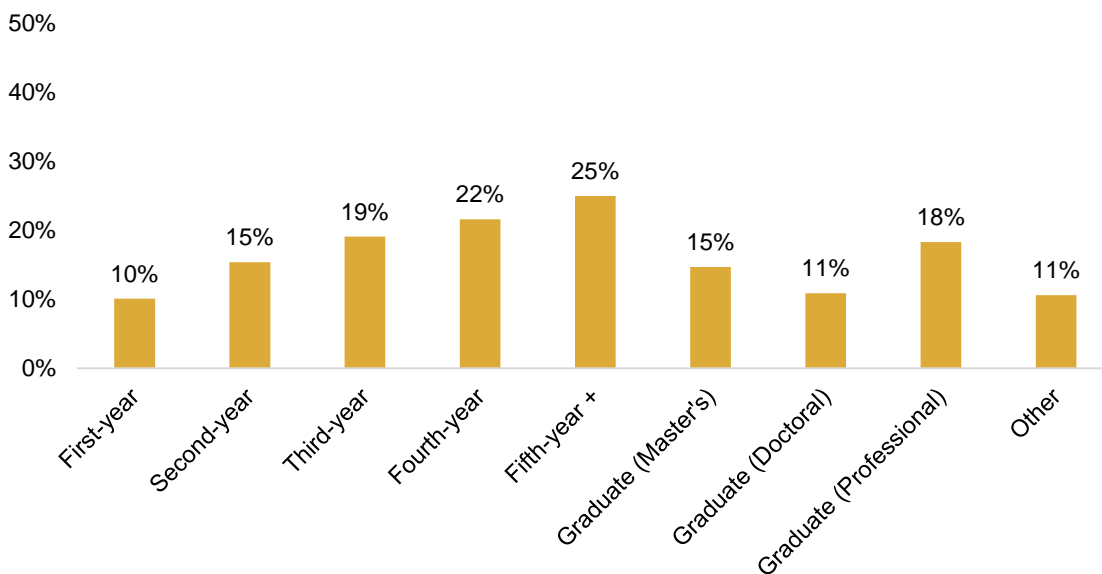
28.5%

Reported it was somewhat easy or very easy to obtain stimulants without a prescription

### Stimulant misuse by class rank

When comparing non-medical use of prescription stimulant between class ranks, 25% of respondents who had misused identified as fifth-year undergraduate students. As illustrated in the chart below, the number of students that reported stimulant misuse increased each year from first-year undergraduate (10%) to fifth-year undergraduate. Among graduate and professional students who reported ever misusing non-prescription stimulants, 15% of master's student respondents reported misuse, as well as 11% of doctoral students and 18% of professional students.

### Ever Misused Stimulants by Class Rank

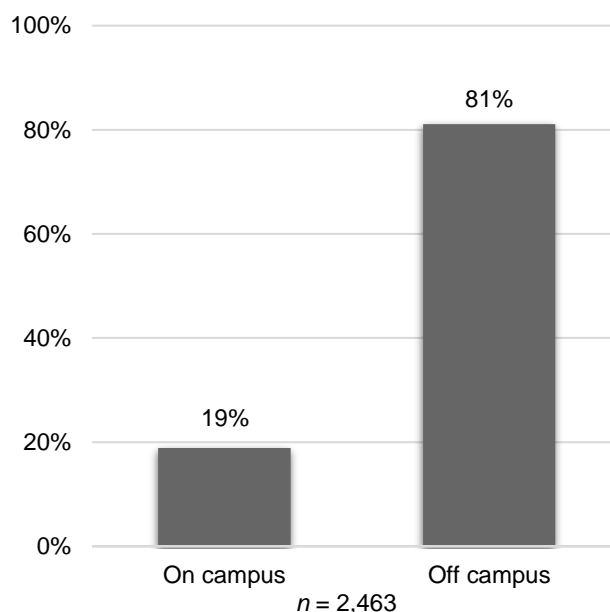
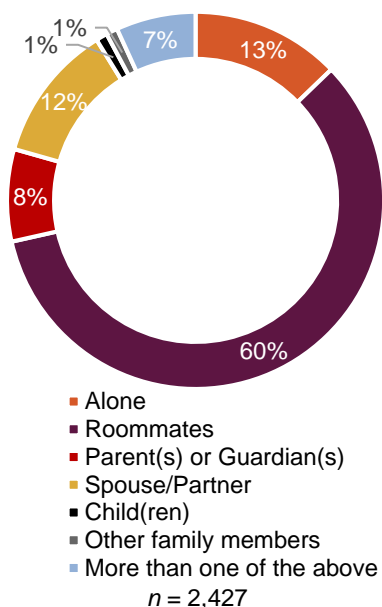


Note. The percentages reflect the percentage of students in each class rank that reported ever misusing stimulants.

## Campus living and misuse

The vast majority of respondents (81.1%) who reported ever using prescription stimulants for non-medical reasons indicated that they currently lived off-campus in apartments or housing not owned by the university. When asked with whom they lived, 59.6% of respondents indicated that they lived with roommates, while 12.5% indicated that they lived alone. Of the students who lived on-campus and reported misusing stimulants, 18.9% indicated that they currently live in residence halls, in on-campus sorority or fraternity housing or college/university-owned apartments or housing.

### Current living situation and non-prescription stimulant misuse



## MORE INFORMATION

The College Prescription Drug Study (CPDS) is a multi-institutional survey of undergraduate, graduate and professional students. The purpose of the CPDS is to gain a more thorough understanding of the non-medical use of prescription drugs among college students. Results provide a better understanding of the current state of non-medical use of prescription drugs on college campuses, including information on the types of prescription drugs misused, attainment of drugs, reasons for use and consequences of use. During spring 2018, the CPDS was administered to random samples of students attending institutions across the United States via an online anonymous survey.

### Suggested Citation

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***If your institution is interested in participating in the next administration of the CPDS, please contact us at [rxstudy@osu.edu](mailto:rxstudy@osu.edu).***