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Applied Narrative Intervention on College Student Attitudes of Abusing Prescription Stimulants

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A recurring problem on college campuses is the frequency of off label stimulant drug usage. Said stimulants are generally misused for some perceived academic benefit, with little perception or acknowledgement to potential ramifications or social taboo (Kilmer et al., 2014 ; Varga et al., 2012). One such recurring predictor of adderall misuse is lack of health literacy and aforementioned downplaying of harm (DeSantis et al., 2009; Stewart et al.,); We hypothesize that if an applied narrative intervention that indicates many potential dangers of abusing said stimulants on college campuses has any effect on incoming Psych 1000 student's attitudes surrounding use of prescription stimulants. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, a narrative condition and a control condition. Participants in the narrative condition read a fictitious story about a male freshman who used Adderall to cope with the stresses of college and the psychological and physiological consequences that followed. Participants were informed that it is a fictitious story based on typical symptoms experienced, typical exposures to the drug(s), and local news reports. The control condition read a non-narrative fact-based article about the consequences of using prescription stimulants for academic benefit. This is a pre-post design where the primary outcomes are measured both prior to and after the intervention. We ran our data analyses through Spss statistics software, looking for significant variance in item responses between condition, or pre/post intervention. We did not find significant variance from our control variable, or pre/post the intervention. These findings could imply that narrative interventions are not necessarily an effective method of engaging or changing attitudes of drugs; however, there are many limitations to our study, and we maintain that future studies should emphasize a more controlled environment with a less controversial topic. (Shaffer et al., 2017; Miller-Day et al., 2013).