



# Narrative Condition on College Student Attitudes of Non-Prescribed use of Prescription Stimulants

Adam Arand, Victoria Shaffer & Nicole Campione-Barr



## Study Aims

Hypothesis 1 □ We believe that providing a narrative-based intervention will have a greater influence or change than information-based intervention in responses to attitudes of off-label prescription stimulant use.

## Introduction

- 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 (Brandt, 2014)
- Some of the recurring predictors of abusing prescription stimulants on college campuses are being involved in Greek life, lack of health literacy on the subject, and downplaying of harm. (Caron, 2004)
- Prescription stimulant abuse does happen recreationally, however researchers believe that there is much concern in their reputation as being used as “study drugs.”
- Prescription stimulants also tend to be over prescribed and generally described to be “easy to get,” while many colleges and universities maintain a very stressful and foreign environment to many. (Brandt, 2014)
- Narratives have been found to be useful tools for creating empathy and enhanced understanding, as opposed to presenting the information as is.
- We created a fictional narrative for the purposes of our survey. This narrative was based on several prototypicalities of “Adderall” misuse.
- Our primary outcomes were finding that there was no significant difference between intervention type nor any differences after the intervention was applied.

## Method

### Procedure

- 245 Students were from an introductory psychology class participant pool (While 37 did not complete the survey)
- Participants were randomly assigned to either condition.
- The Narrative condition was our experimental condition, where participants answered our survey items then read the fictional narrative about the experience of a college student who uses Adderall
- Informative Condition was our control condition, where participants answered the same questions but were instead given plainly read information about Adderall, with no characters or emotions present.

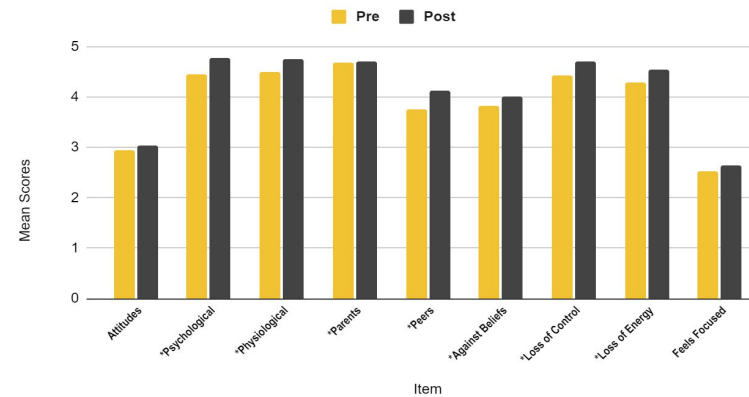
| Participants            | 208 Psych 1000 students  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Gender:                 | 109 women; 97 men; 1 non-binary; 1 other/preferred not to say  |
| Ethnicity/Race          | White: 83%<br>African A/Black: 5.2% -Native A/Alaskan Na: .4%<br>Asian A: 3.8%<br>Native Hawaiian/Pa: .4%<br>Hispanic: 1.4%<br>Other/Prefer not to say: 3.3% |
| Greek Involved          | 35% reported being involved with Greek life on campus  |
| Class/Year in Undergrad | 72% freshman, 16% sophomore, 7.2% Junior, 2.8% Senior or older   |

### Measures

- The primary measure is attempting to measure attitudes of prescription stimulant use for academic purposes (e.g. Concerns, fears, positive attitudes etc.)
- We measured this in both the experimental and control condition.
- Our secondary measures were Greek involvement as a predictor for more favorable attitudes towards using prescription stimulants.
- Our other measure was experience with prescription stimulants and how that might be a predictor for a higher favorability to attitudes of prescription stimulants.

## Results

Difference in Attitudes before/after the Condition



- We found no significant deviations before or after our conditions were applied in our attitudes measure
- We ran our data analysis in Spss, conducting t-tests over each of our items, measuring differences between conditions, and pre/post.

## Discussion

**Hypothesis 1 □ Not supported** - We found no support that providing a narrative-based interventions will have a greater influence or change than information-based interventions in responses to attitudes of off-label prescription stimulant use.

### Conclusion

- There is no evidence that using narrative interventions were more effective or had any ability to change attitudes of using prescription stimulants for academic purposes.
- Though it may be plausible that using narratives is still an effective method for communicating. It is also possible that our fictional story was not qualitatively sufficient to sway opinions.
- A problem of performing this test through self-report, and by asking people to report on something controversial, is it might be likely that participants did not feel comfortable answering honestly.

### Limitations

By nature of imploring a limited, somewhat homogenous population, and by applying this test through self-report, we did invite many forms of bias.

## Future Directions

- Future studies should focus on using narrative interventions on other types of information to convey,
- I.e. something less controversial to report such as the importance of driver safety
- Using more controlled study designs to avoid bias/ other forms of “self-reporting dishonesty.”
- Also one should consider the difference between using a fictional narrative and a non-fictional narrative when considering the impact it has on the participants.

## Selected References

- \*Brandt, S. A., Taverna, E. C., & Hallock, R. M. (2014). A survey of nonmedical use of tranquilizers, stimulants, and pain relievers among college students: Patterns of use among users and factors related to abstinence in non-users. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 143, 272-276. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2014.07.034
- \*Caron, Sandra L., et al. “Alcohol Use Among Fraternity and Sorority Members: Looking at Change Over Time.” *Journal of Alcohol & Drug Education*, vol. 47, no. 3, Mar. 2004, pp. 51–66.
- \*Goodstadt, M. S., Cook, G., Magid, S., & Gruson, V. (1978). The Drug Attitudes Scale (DAS): Its Development and Evaluation. *International Journal of the Addictions*, 13(8), 1307-1317. doi:10.3109/10826087809039344
- \*Heckman, Carolyn J., et al. “Substance-Related Knowledge, Attitude, and Behaviour among College Students.” *Health Education Journal*, vol. 70, no. 4, 2010, pp. 383–399., doi:10.1177/0017896910379694.
- \*Rabiner, David L., et al. “The Misuse and Diversion of Prescribed ADHD Medications by College Students.” *Journal of Attention Disorders*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2009, pp. 144–153., doi:10.1177/1087054708320414
- \*Terry-McElrath, Yvonne M., et al. “Saying No to Marijuana: Why American Youth Report Quitting or Abstaining.” *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, vol. 69, no. 6, 2008, pp. 796–805., doi:10.15288/jsad.2008.69.796.