

UCLA Undergraduate
RESEARCH WEEK



Differences In Drug and Alcohol Consumption Among College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Research of Contemporary Health (SEARCH)

Introduction: Alcohol and Drug Use in College Students

INCREASED SOCIAL PRESSURE IN COLLEGE

Increased peer pressure and perceived social norms ¹

INCREASE IN BINGE DRINKING

Students regularly drink past the binge threshold, set at 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men in one sitting ^{2,3}

INCREASE IN ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE DURING COLLEGE

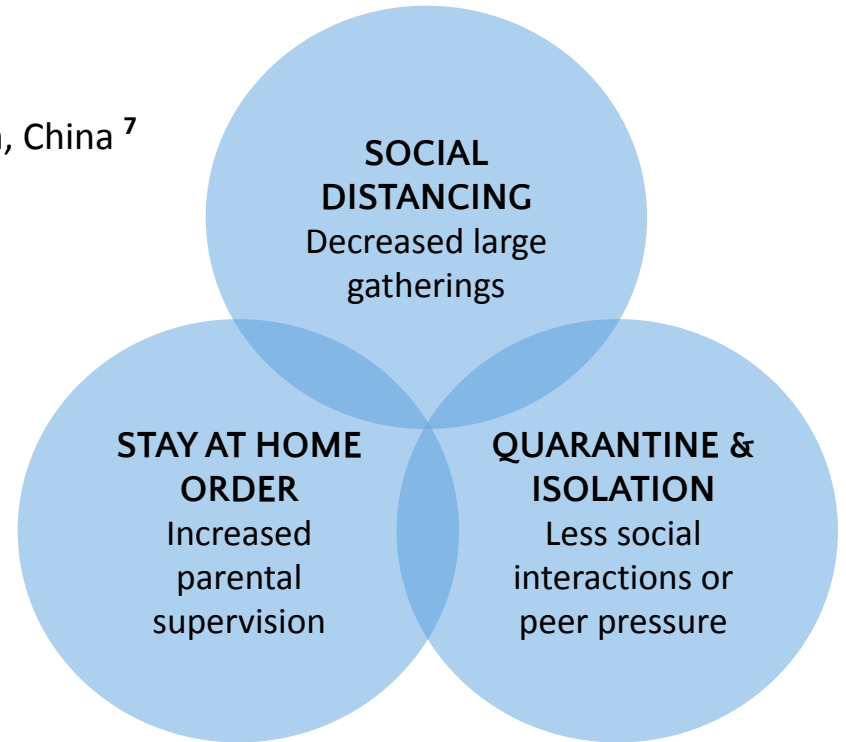
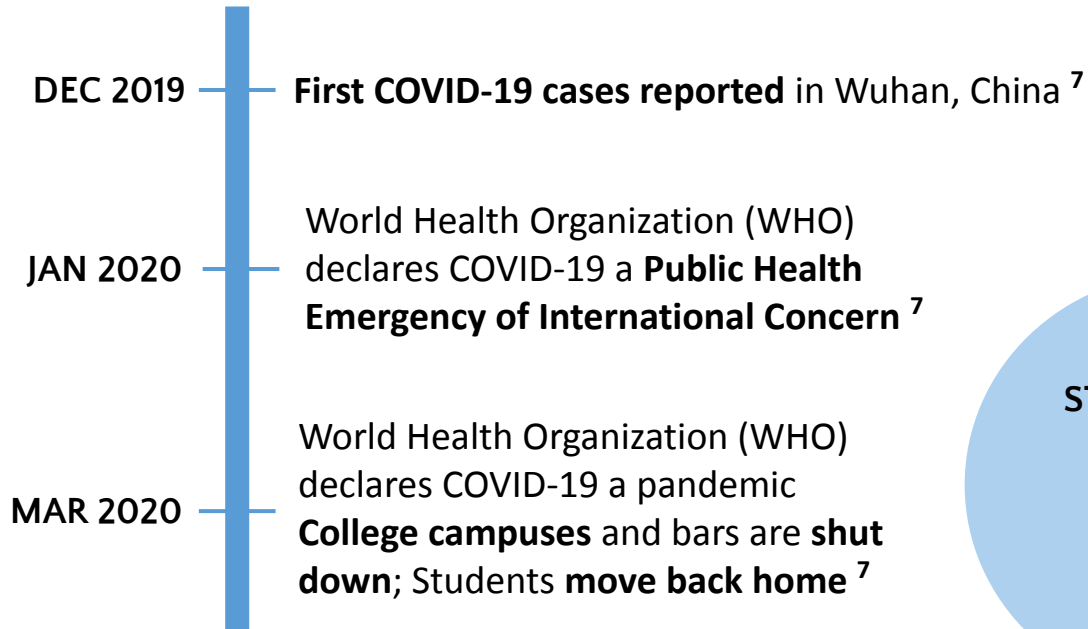
Drug use initiated or students become regular users because of exposure ^{4,5}

ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL DRUGS

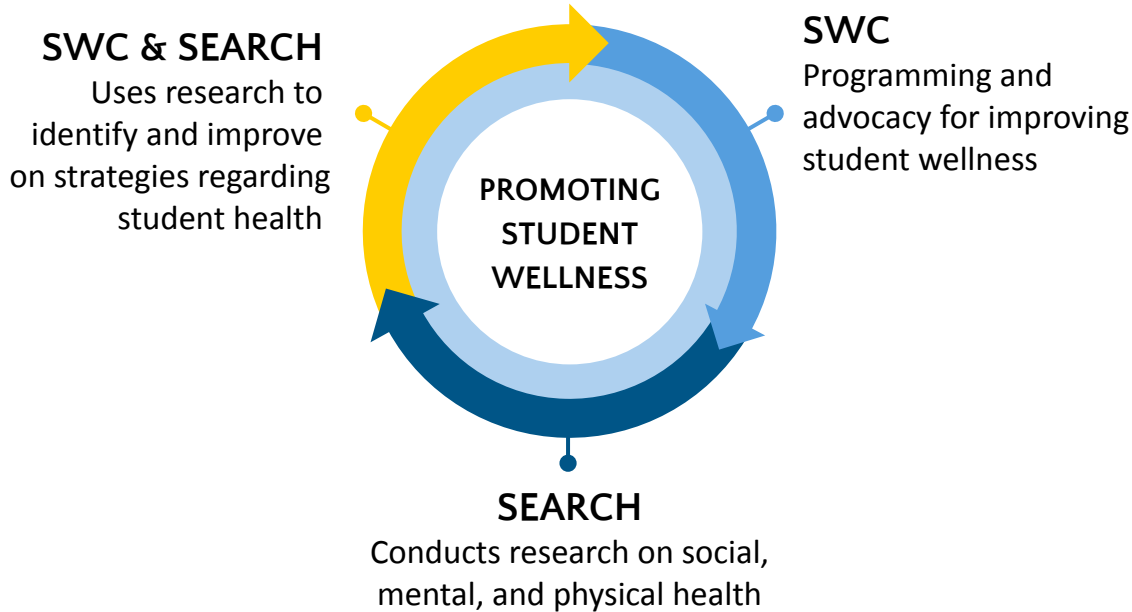
Recreational use of marijuana has adverse effects on GPA ⁶

USE OF MARIJUANA

Introduction: COVID-19 Factors that Impacted Alcohol and Drug Use in College Students



Purpose



OUR GOAL

- Examine changes in **college students' alcohol and drug use** during the **COVID-19 pandemic**
- Identify behaviors regarding substance use in order to implement more **effective programming regarding student wellness**

Methods



FALL 2019 DATA COLLECTION (N = 33,372)

Healthy Minds Network (HMN) Survey was delivered through Qualtrics to college students across the country during the Fall 2019 period.

FALL 2020 DATA COLLECTION (N = 34,168)

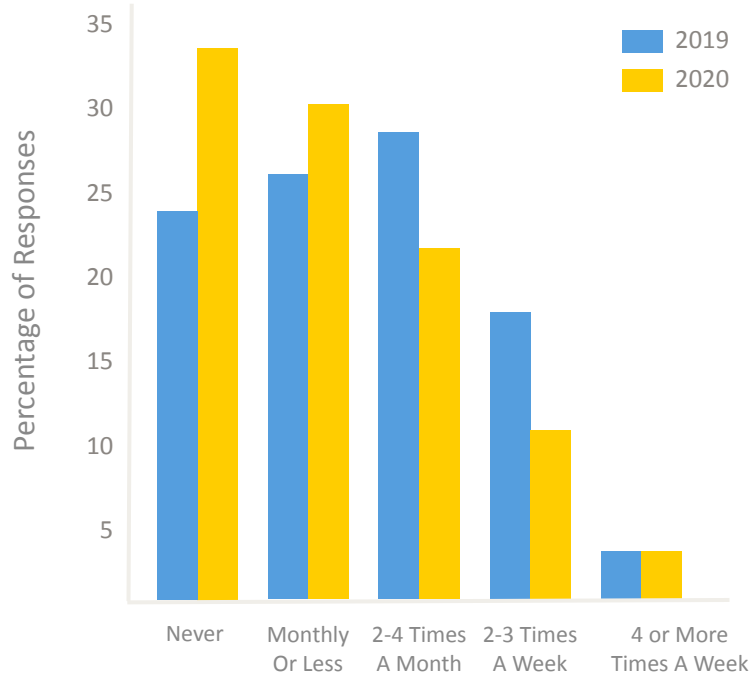
HMN Survey was delivered during the Fall 2020 period.

DATA ANALYSIS

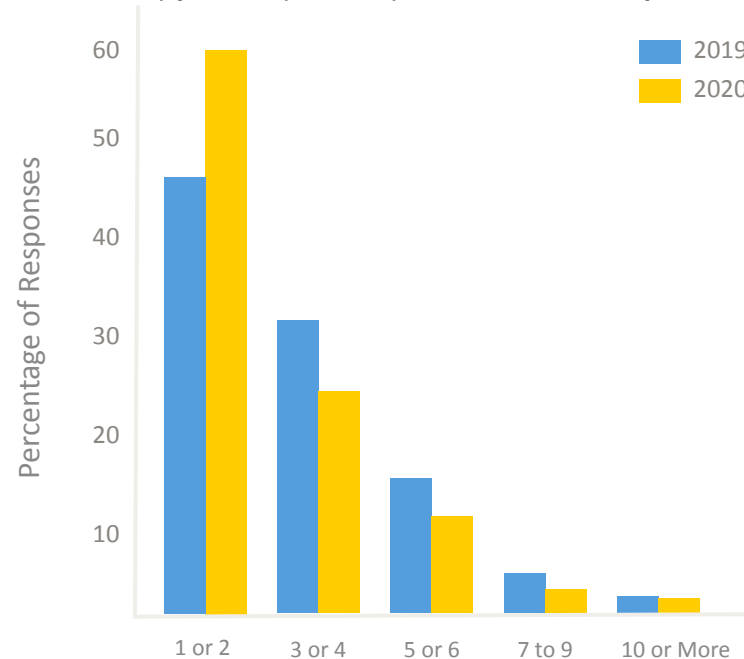
Analyzed data specific to alcohol and drug consumption & substance use behavior
Alcohol consumption data analyzed through a two-tailed and one-tailed T-test.
Two-proportion Z-test used to analyze drug use.

Results: Alcohol Consumption

AUDIT 1: How often do you have a drink containing alcohol? ($p < 1.93E-12$)

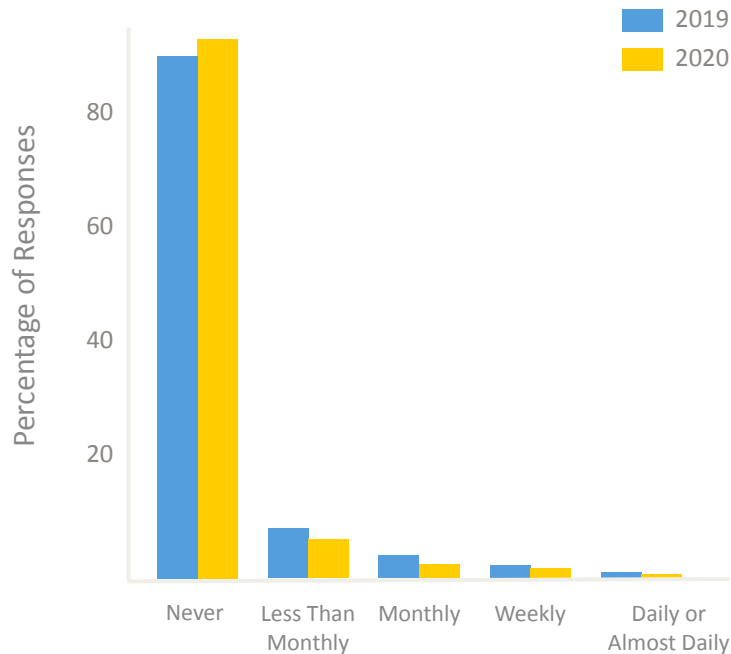


AUDIT 2: How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking? ($p < 3.67E-06$)

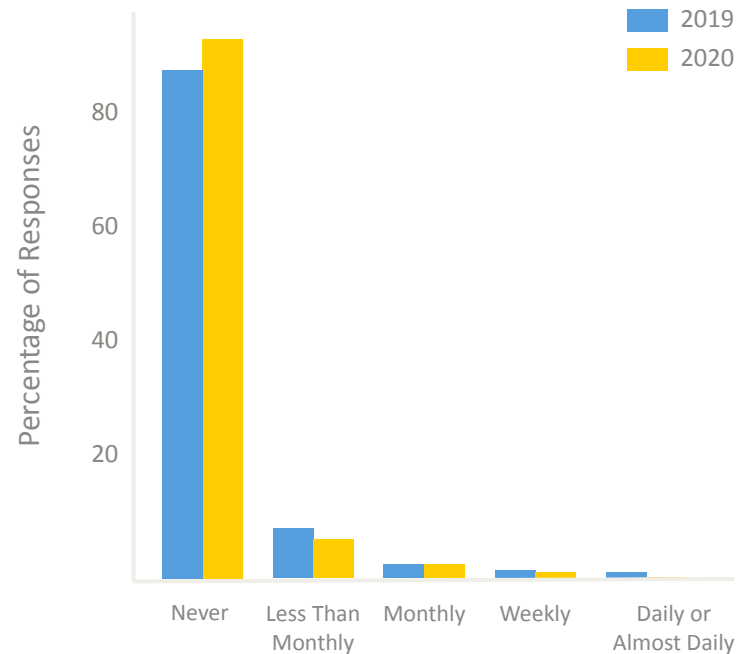


Results: Binge Drinking & Alcohol Interference

AUDIT 4: How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started? ($p < 1.63E-2$)

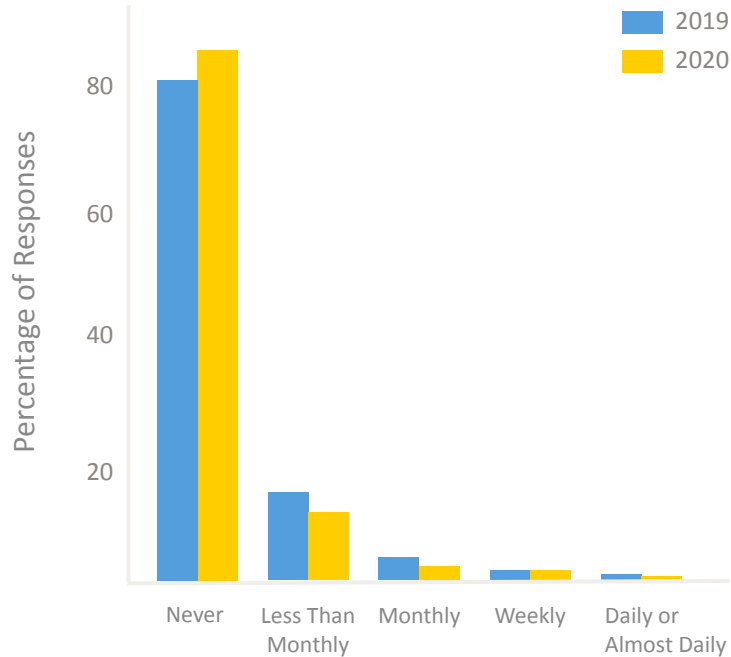


AUDIT 5: How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking? ($p < 6.09E-3$)

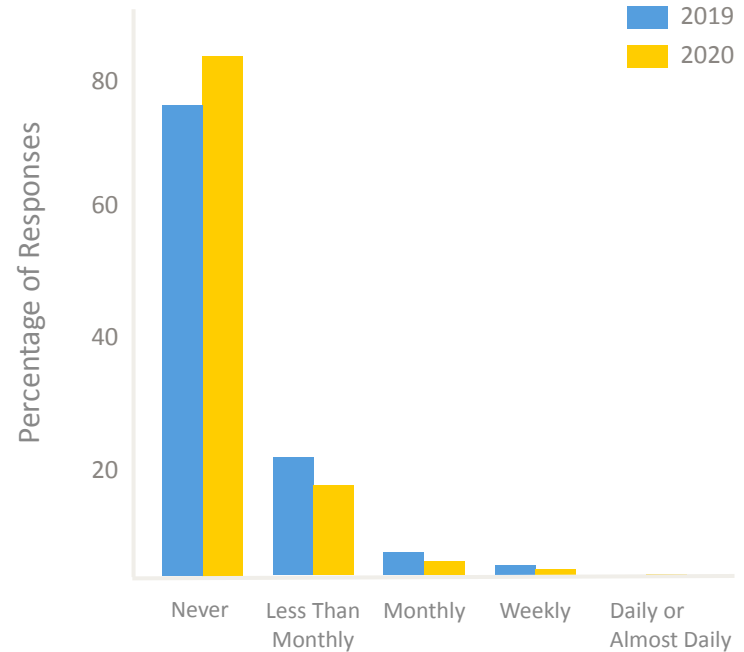


Results: Behaviors & Guilt Regarding Alcohol Use

AUDIT 7: How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking? ($p < 4.25E-03$)

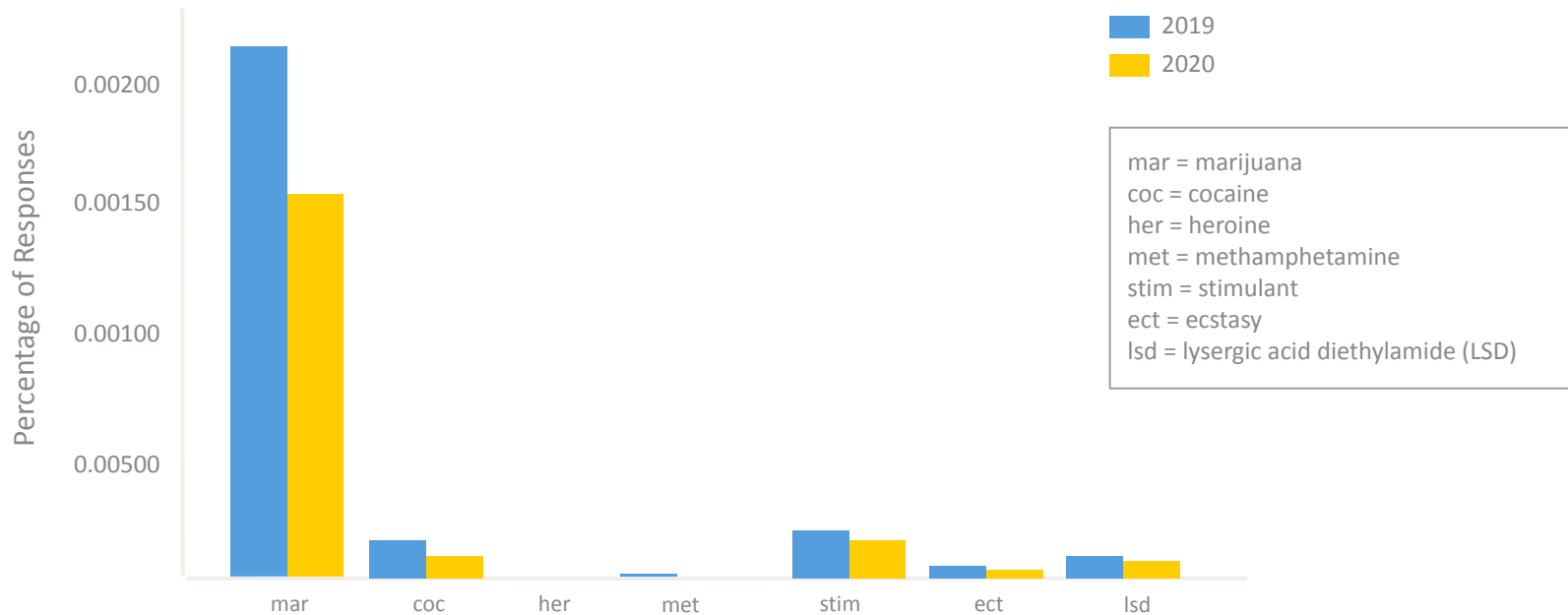


AUDIT 8: How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before of your drinking? ($p < 4.32E-07$)



Results: Differences in Specific Drug Use

Over the past 30 days, which drugs have you used?



Discussion

DECREASED ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- **College campuses closing** and stay at home orders → students moving back home
- **Less social interactions** and **less access to alcohol** for underage students
- **Social distancing protocols** discouraged large gatherings

MORE RESPONSIBLE DRINKING HABITS

- Students have less motivation to drink because of **less peer pressure**
- **More parental supervision** may deter students from participating in **irresponsible drinking behaviors**

DECREASED DRUG USE

- **Limited accessibility** to drugs
- **Less social pressure** and social gatherings
- Potential **decrease in need for cognition-enhancing drugs** with classes being held virtually

Discussion & Limitations

DECLINE IN MENTAL HEALTH ⁸

Despite correlations between mental health and substance use ⁹, there was a significant decrease in reliance on substances during Fall 2020.

IMPROVEMENT IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE

Furthermore, the decrease in binge drinking and guilt post-alcohol may indicate that removal from social pressures alleviate irresponsible behavior.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

Survey has a different set of campuses in the sample each year

Deindividuation of data leads to not being able to specify results based on college campuses and specific locations.

Conclusion & Future Directions

CONCLUSION

- Significant decrease in alcohol consumption and drug use, related behaviors
- Social distancing and quarantine impact social pressures

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Analyze specific colleges such as UCLA to better understand campus population's behaviors and use towards alcohol and drugs

APPLICATIONS

- Use our research to implement more effective programming regarding student health, specifically with alcohol and drug consumption

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COVID-19 Research Committee

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