UC San Diego

Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science

Background

- San Diego County saw a 3,072% surge in fentanyl overdose deaths from 2016 to 2021.¹
- Increased availability in illicit drug supply contributes to the rise in fentanyl overdoses.² When drug suppliers mix fentanyl into other drugs due to its highly-affordable and highlyaddictive nature, users can unknowingly consume lethal doses.³
- Around 20% of university students know someone struggling with opioid addiction, while approximately 30% know someone who has overdosed.⁴
- Tools like naloxone and fentanyl test strips are effective for harm reduction.⁵

Objectives

 To determine how fentanyl literacy and exposure to educational programs affects UCSD students' overall understanding and perceptions of fentanyl, fentanyl overdoses, and locations of harm reduction resources.

Methods

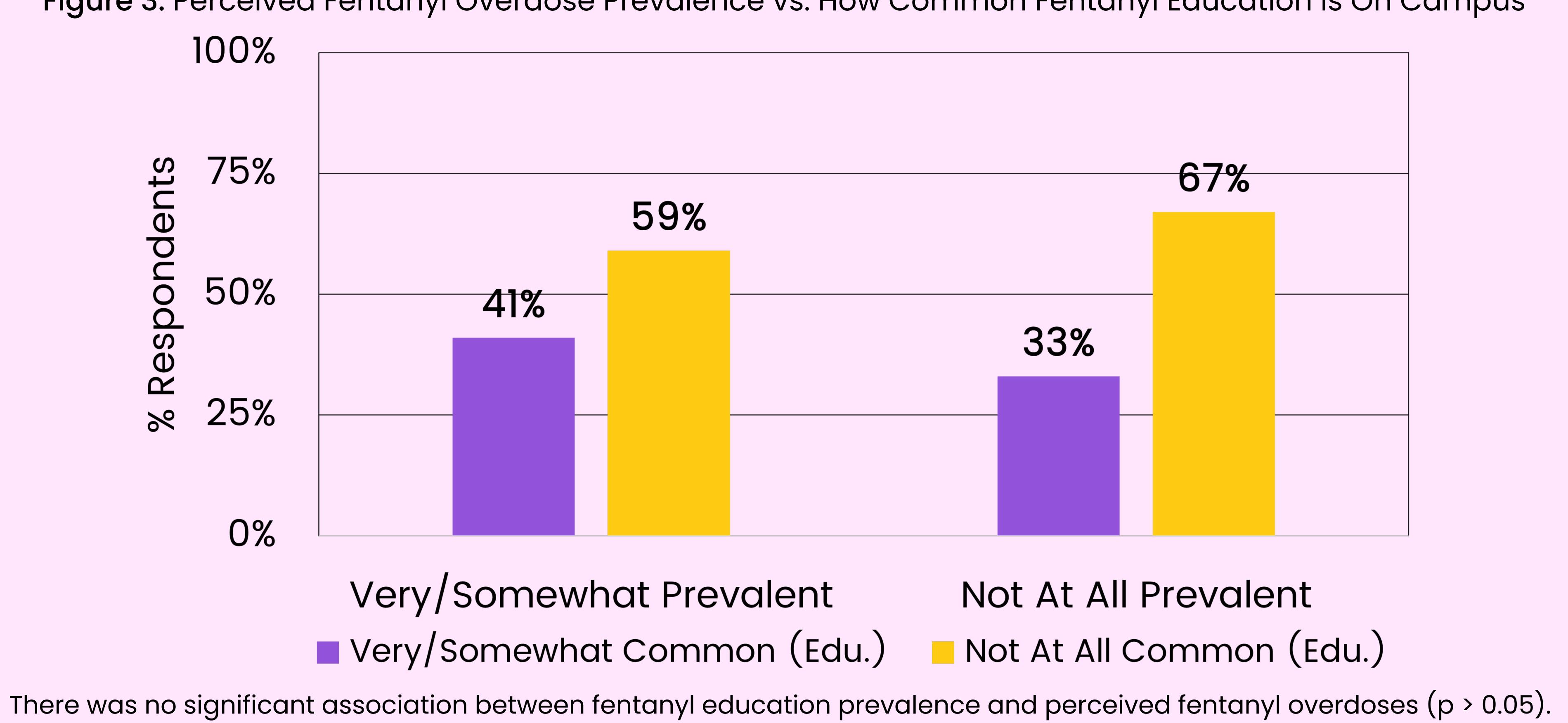
- A cross-sectional study was administered digitally through Qualtrics to current UCSD students from April 25, 2023 to May 16, 2023.
- The survey was distributed through email, social media platforms, printed QR codes, class discussions, and personal distributions.
- Questions assessed the current level of fentanyl literacy and perceptions of its impacts and UCSD harm reduction resources.
- Fisher's Exact Tests analyzed crosstabulations for statistical significance (n = 192).

Perceptions of Fentanyl, Safety Tools, and Overdoses Among UCSD Students

Results

Table 1. Student Demographics (N=192)	
Year of College	
Undergraduate 1 st year	5.2%
Undergraduate 2 nd year	10.9%
Undergraduate 3 rd year	29.2%
Undergraduate 4 th year	35.4%
Undergraduate 5 th year or more	4.2%
Graduate	6.8%
Age	
18-20 years	29.7%
21-23 years	53.1%
24-26 years	2.6%
≥ 27 years	7.3%
Gender	
Woman	67.7%
Man	22.4%
Non-binary	2.6%
Race/Ethnicity Background	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3.1%
Asian	38.0%
Black/African American	2.1%
Hispanic/Latino/a	23.4%
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	2.6%
White	41.7%
Other	3.1%
Member of Fraternity/Sorority	
Yes	21.4%
No	71.4%

Exposure vs. Outcome Association



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Important Frequencies

Figure 1. Does the participant know where to acquire naloxone and fentanyl test strips on campus?

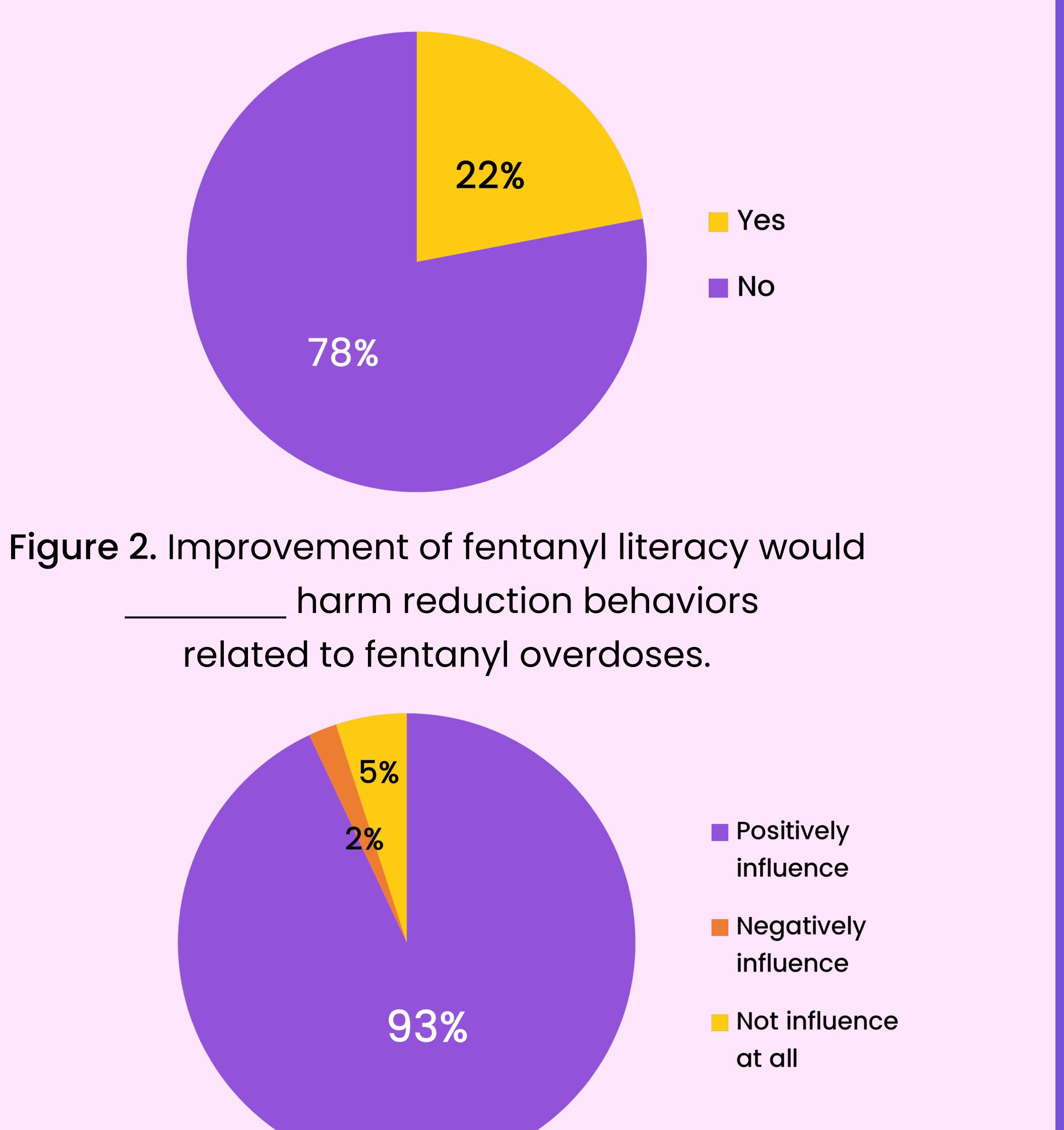


Figure 3. Perceived Fentanyl Overdose Prevalence vs. How Common Fentanyl Education Is On Campus

Conclusions

- The findings lacked a significant association between the exposure and outcome, indicating there is insufficient knowledge among UCSD students regarding fentanyl use, overdoses, and available resources.
- Current campus programs are ineffective in educating students about the risks related to fentanyl use and harm reduction strategies.

Policy Implications

- Allocating funds to enhance existing campus programs is recommended to educate and inform UCSD students about fentanyl use and harm reduction strategies.
- The additional funding should assist in the optimization of naloxone and fentanyl test strip distribution at no additional cost.
- Current program advertisement campaigns should be reformed to expand reach.

Acknowledgements

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References

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