

UCSD Students' Attitudes & Usage of Annual Wellness Exams

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Background

- Annual wellness exams facilitate the detection of risk factors for chronic disease early on to prevent disease onset and progression later in life [1]
- University students are a part of a vulnerable population with increased health needs due to their lifestyles [2]
- Increased health needs significantly contribute to elevated stress levels, poor sleeping patterns, and other risk factors for chronic health conditions [2]
- A study conducted on university students reported that only 15.6 % of this population made use of preventive health services [2]

Objective

This study aims to investigate the relationship between UCSD students' sociodemographic factors and their attitudes and usage of annual wellness exams.

Methods

- A cross-sectional study was conducted on May 2023 on undergraduate and graduate UCSD students (N=66) through a Google survey using convenience sampling
- Exposure:** Sociodemographic factors (gender, race/ethnicity, major, college year, health insurance status, and type of primary care provider)
- Outcome:** Perceptions and usage of annual wellness exams
- For statistical analyses, Chi-square tests were performed using JMP software. All significance levels were reported at $p < .05$

Results

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Respondents (N=66)

Demographic Categories	Number
Gender	
Male	45 (68.2%)
Female	21 (31.8%)
Race/Ethnicity	
Mixed Race	11 (16.7%)
Asian	38 (57.6%)
Black/African American	5 (7.60%)
Hispanic/Latinx	7 (10.6%)
White/Caucasian	5 (7.60%)
College Year	
First year	7 (10.6%)
Second year	10 (15.2%)
Third year	13 (19.7%)
Fourth year	27 (40.9%)
Fifth year	2 (3.00%)
Graduate	7 (10.6%)
College Status	
Non-Transfer	45 (68.2%)
Transfer	14 (21.2%)
Graduate (Master's/Doctoral)	7 (10.6%)
College Major	
Biology	18 (27.3%)
Cognitive Science	3 (4.50%)
Computer Science	3 (4.50%)
Engineering	6 (9.10%)
Political Science	3 (4.50%)
Psychology	5 (7.60%)
Public Health	19 (28.8%)
Other	9 (13.6%)
Total	66 (100%)

Figure 1: Students' Ranking of the Importance of Getting an Annual Wellness Exam

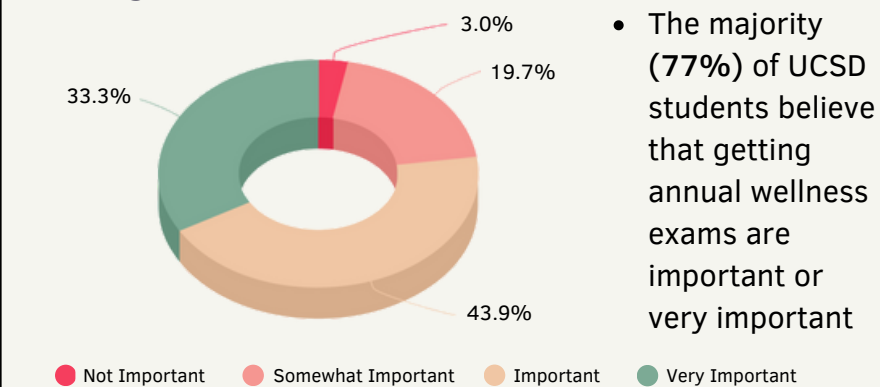


Figure 2: Students' Frequency of Getting an Annual Wellness Exam In the Past 5 Years

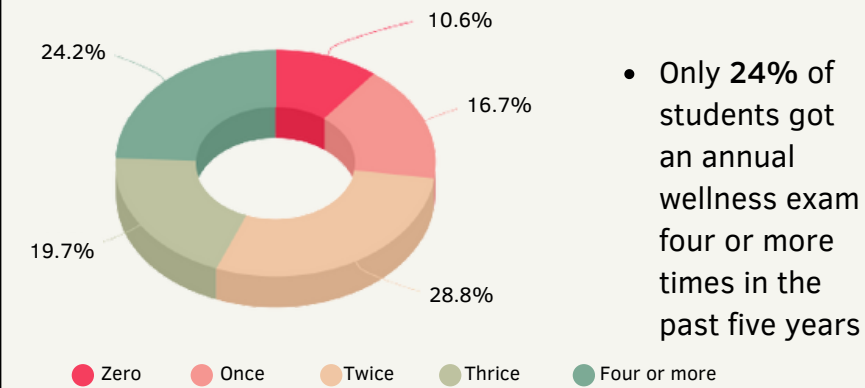
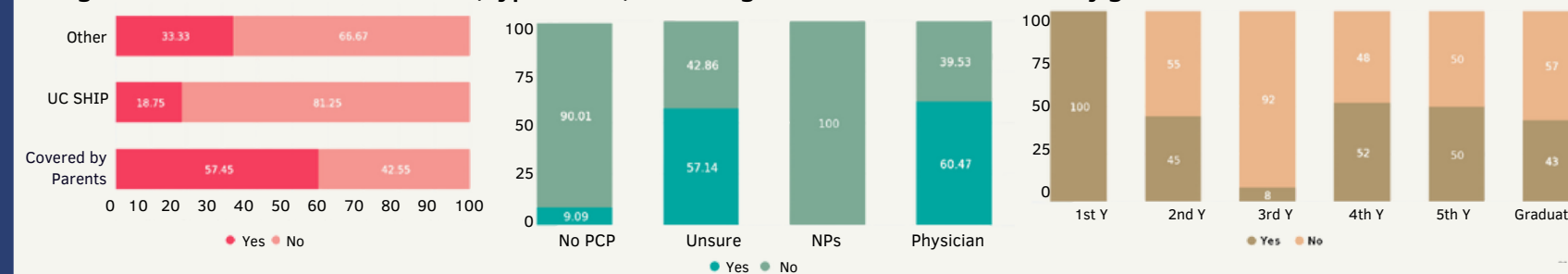


Figure 3: Students' insurance status, type of PCP, and college level influence whether they got an annual wellness exam in 2022



- UCSD students whose health insurance is covered by their parents, who have a physician as their PCP, and who are first years are significantly more likely to get an annual wellness check-up [Figure 3]
- The most common factors students believed would discourage others from getting an annual wellness exam were a lack of understanding (79.1%) about health insurance coverage and time/scheduling conflicts (80.6%)

Conclusions

- UCSD students have low usage of annual wellness exams, which is in line with previous studies that found low levels of preventive services utilization within college students [1]
- Despite prior literature finding that men have significantly lower rates of preventive care utilization [3], our study did not find a difference in usage of annual wellness exams between genders
- Low exam usage may be due to time constraints and lack of knowledge about health insurance which were cited as discouraging factors in the survey

Policy Implications

- Higher education institutions can encourage students to attend their annual wellness exam due to their importance in preventing chronic disease
- UCSD can require UC SHIP to inform students that annual wellness exams are a service covered by their plan when they enroll



Scan for References, Abstracts, & contact information



Acknowledgments

This study was supported by the Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH) program at UCSD. Special gratitude to Dr. France Nguyen-Grozavu, Francisca Rivera, Behnan Albahsahli, and the FMPH 194 section B00 for their feedback and comments in preparing this project