

An Investigation Into Vape Use On College Campuses

For the UGA Health Center

SKCCC Research
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Terry College of Business
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Research Outline

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Introduction

How do we reduce vape use on campus?

To find a solution to this problem, research was organized into 3 key objectives.

- Measure how prevalent vaping is on campus
- Determine public perception of vaping
- Determine what kind of messaging encourages sobriety



Methods

Exploratory Research

Literature Search

(ACHA, 2021)

- Over **5 million** middle & high school students in 2019 use e-cigarettes up from **2 million in 2017**.
- **14.3%** of undergraduate students report using e-cigarettes within the last 30 days.
- As of January 2020, there has been 60 deaths and 2,558 hospitalizations associated with e-cig related lung injury.
- **93%** of e-cig users report using other substances (alcohol, cannabis, prescription or illicit drugs).
- **70%** of youth have reported exposure to vape advertising.
- **80%** of youth initiate tobacco use with a flavored product.

(Russel, 2022)

- **49%** of vapers engage in “Stealth Vaping” on college campuses where e-cigarettes are prohibited.



Methods

Exploratory Research

Vaper Depth Interview

Performed to gain a better understanding of vaping behaviors and influences. Also used to gauge appropriate questions for survey use.

Insights:

- Vaping is a **social behavior**. Introduced as an activity by friends to do with friends
- Obtaining vape products underage is incredibly easy. Small vape shops do not card often.
- E-cigarettes act as a gateway to other substance use (weed, cigarettes, & alcohol).
- Vaping is a habit that provides a feeling of security. Actual buzz feeling disappears shortly as **desensitization is rapid**.
- Users are aware of potential dangers but still view it as less dangerous than traditional nicotine products.



Methods

Descriptive Research

Qualtrics Survey

Data was collected through a convenience sample of students across the university but mainly in the marketing major.

- A total of 42 responses were recorded
 - 24 vapers
 - 18 non-vapers
- Vapers & Non-vapers were included in the study to better understand vaping perceptions outside of the community.

Results

Section One: Prevalence

57%
vape

72%

See people vape at
least a few times per
week.

59%

Live with someone
who vapes

- Vapers are **12x** more likely to see someone vape everyday
- **38%** of vapers live with someone who vapes (**21%** for non-vapers)

Results

Section One: Prevalence

Vaper Profile

- More likely to be a 3rd (33.3%) or 4th year (33.3%)
 - 100% of 3rd years reported vaping compared to 38% of 4th years
- Spend an average of \$18.24 a month on vape products. Min (\$0). Max (\$60)
- 60% of vapers have been using e-cigarettes for 4 years or more
 - median age to start vaping is 16. Min (14). Max (20)
- 38% of vapers can not go more than a few hours without vaping.
- 100% of male respondents vape. 43% of women vape.

Results

Section Two: Perception

All on 1 (disagree) - 5 (agree) scale.

Been exposed to vape advertising: 3.73

Felt peer pressure to vape: 2.61

Concerned with the health risks of vaping: 4.30

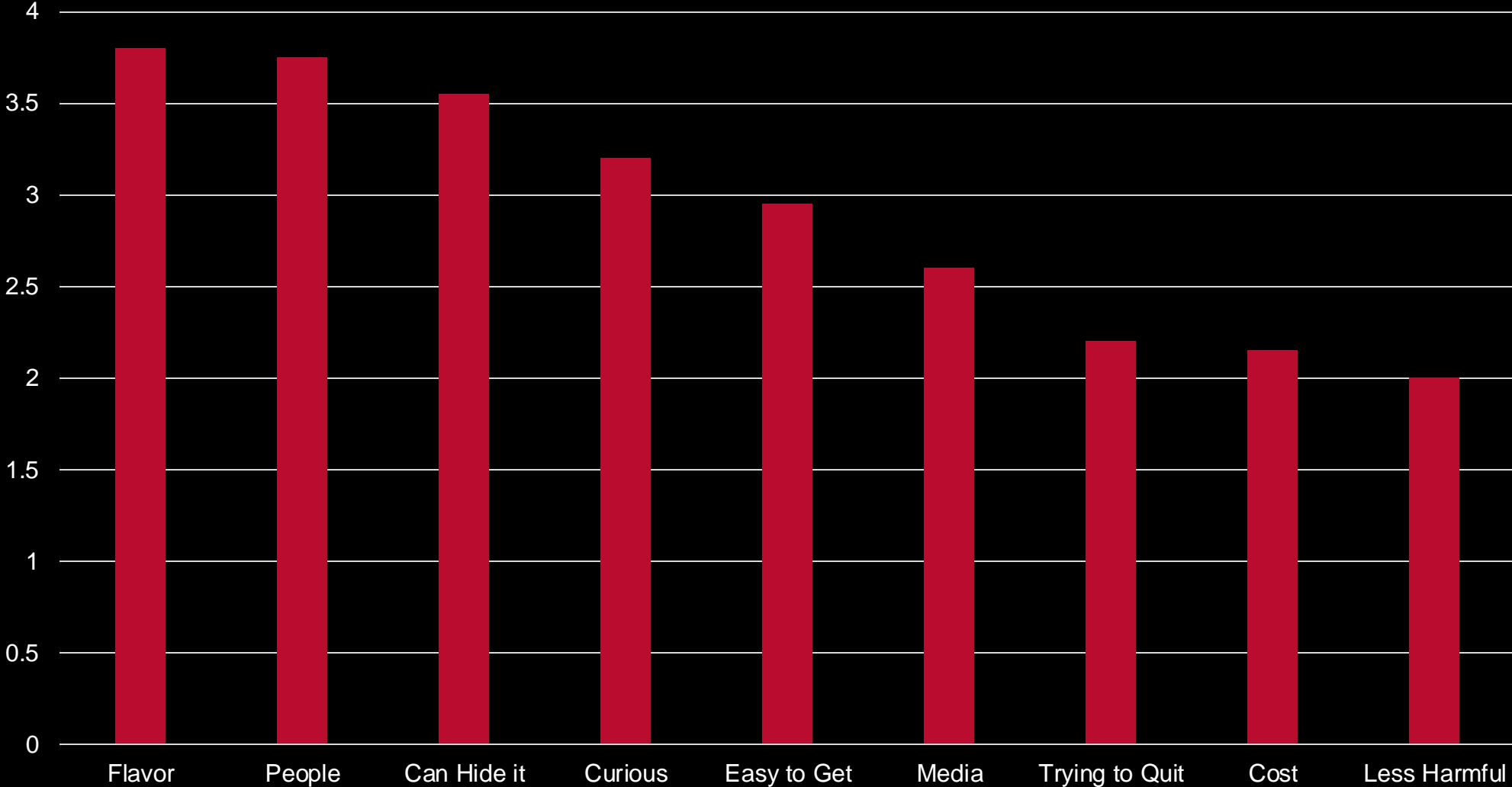
Think vaping is less addictive than traditional tobacco products: 2.06

Think vaping is less dangerous than traditional tobacco products: 2.16

No significant difference between perceptions based on vapers/non-vapers or gender

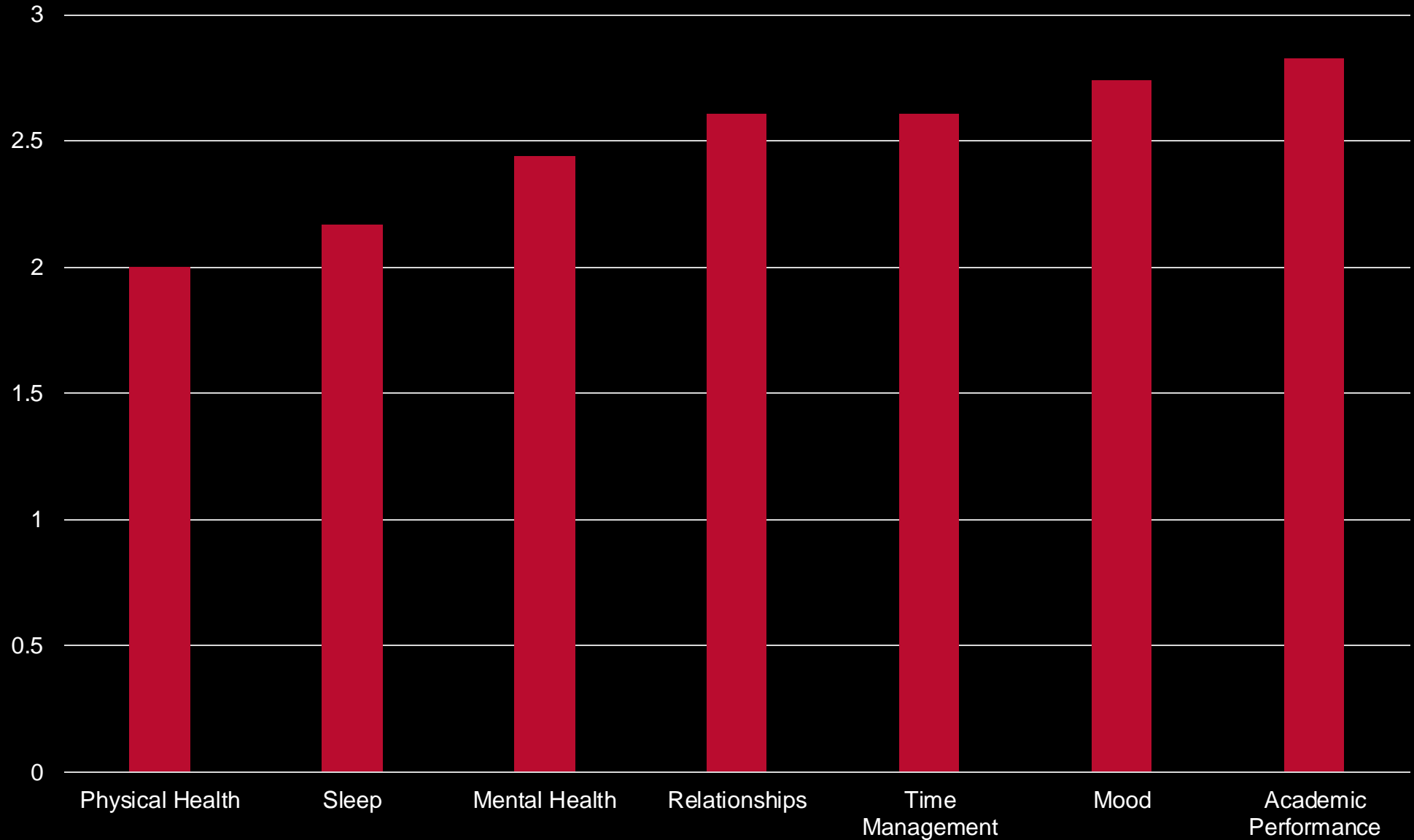
Influences to Vape

1-5 scale
The higher the number the greater the influence it has



Impacts of Vaping

1-5 scale
The lower the number the more
of a negative impact is has on the
vaper's life.



Results

Section Three: Solutions

44%

Tried other
drugs

80%

Tried to quit
vaping

29%

Would be open to
trying vape
alternatives

- **40%** of vapers who tried to quit experienced some symptoms of withdrawal
- Main reasons to quit: To avoid addiction & dependence (**38%**), Health concerns (**35%**)
- Least popular reason to quit: Anti-vape advertising (**0%**)

Results

Section Three: Solutions

73%

Don't know
campus
policy

73%

Believe it's
easy to vape
on campus

78%

Think policy
enforcement should
be at least
somewhat stronger

Current Campus Policy: Smoking of any material is prohibited on any property owned or leased by the University of Georgia. (This includes e-cigarettes)

Results

Section Three: Solutions

Ranking of PSAs based on effectiveness Three Separate Types

- **SOC** = Social, Relating to how others feel
- **EMO** = Emotional, Meant to invoke an emotional reaction
- **COG** = Cognitive, Using factual info to convince someone



Note: Ratings from vapers were lower than non-vapers for all PSAs except for SOC2

Limitations

14 respondents did not answer the demographic questions.

- These questions did not have a request answer reminder before submitting meaning respondents could just skip past it as they were not forced to answer the questions.

- The survey was also long and may have deterred people from answering those questions as those were at the end.

Unfortunately, that makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about gender and race as they relate to vape usage since the data was so homogenous.



Conclusions

- **Measure how prevalent vaping is on campus**
 - Vaping is widespread on campus as over half the respondents report vaping at some point
 - Both vapers and non-vapers are exposed to and live with vapers
 - Vaping is a long-term addiction as most vapers have been using for 4 or more years
- **Determine public perception of vaping**
 - Both vapers and non-vapers are aware of the health risks of vaping. However, they do not view e-cigarettes as a healthier alternative to traditional tobacco products.
 - However, that does not deter vapers from using e-cigs. The largest influencers to vape are flavors, people, and the ability to hide it.
 - Vapers do not note any positive impacts associated with vaping.
- **Determine what kind of messaging encourages sobriety**
 - Vapers want to quit but are not inspired by traditional advertising. Vapers do want to avoid nicotine dependence and serious health concerns.
 - Respondents support some increase in enforcement of campus policy.
 - Value messaging that involves their vaping impact on an innocent 3rd party. Also find factually based PSAs to be the most effective as a whole.



Recommendations

How do we reduce vape use on campus?

The UGA Health Center should consider:

- Promoting the enforcement of campus policy as well as advocating for new technology to detect vapor and catch “Stealth Vapers”
- Implement evidence-based education showing students the factual consequences of vaping
- Promote awareness with student affairs personnel. Get involved with students interests and social media.
- Make nicotine treatment accessible and relevant. Guide students through the process of quitting tobacco/e-cigarettes.



Works Cited

Addressing E-Cigarette Use and Vaping on College and University Campuses. (2021, January). American College Health Association.

https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Addressing_E-cigarette_Use_and_Vaping_on_Campuses_January2021.pdf

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