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Over the Counter (OTC) Analgesics: A Knowledge and Usage Assessment in College Students

Nicole Patel

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This project was designed to assess the general understanding of OTC pain relievers and their management via a survey in a college student population. From this data, an educational program was developed in conjunction with the College of Pharmacy and Health Services to educate college students on the dangers of OTC analgesic misuse.

164 college students aged 18 years and older were recruited in-person to participate in a brief survey. This 12 question survey was developed to assess the general understanding and current usage of OTC analgesics. Specifically, health majors were compared to non-health majors in relation to the answers to the survey questions.

Currently, little is known on college students' knowledge or use of OTC products. It is especially important to specifically assess this knowledge of OTC analgesics, given their frequent usage and the FDA's recent warnings on the dangers of misuse with these products. Understanding this shows the importance of patient education and validates the role of health care professionals in this aspect.

This project has been approved by the IRB. Survey results were collected and analyzed based on gender, class year, major and age. An educational portion is now being initiated. A poster presentation was been created and displayed at the America Pharmacists Association 2011 annual meeting in mid-March.