

Academic stress causes some students to abuse prescriptions

Brennen Hubbard

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As students navigate through the first few weeks of school, stress related to academia drives students toward abusing prescription drugs, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

In previous years, with little time to finish assignments, **Eric Frid, a senior at UNC Asheville**, said he turned to prescription drugs like Adderall.

"In the past, I've turned to drugs that help me focus. It's always been fairly easy to acquire. Most everyone has a friend who has a prescription that's willing to share, and if that's not the case, then there are multiple safe hubs around campus to ask around for both legal and illegal substances," Frid said.

Students may have a workload too extensive to complete on their own and turn to prescriptions medications to help them focus, Frid said.

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are the most likely candidates for pharmaceutical abuse, both prescribed and over-the-counter, according to NIDA. The ingredients in common items like cough syrup, ADHD medications and allergy medications are what young people tend to abuse, according to a 2011 report by the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Eric Boyce, chief of police at UNCA, said it can be difficult to identify when these substances are being taken recreationally.

"Cough syrup is not an illegal substance," Boyce said. "I think we're at a grey area if they are using these substances to get intoxicated, but they are not illegal substances that we can enforce."

According to Boyce, campus police are most often notified when students



Photo illustration by Brennen Hubbard - Staff Writer

Students turn to prescription drugs such as Adderall to help increase focus during exams.

take too much of a substance.

"A lot of times, we find out because they are either in danger of something medically. They've had too much," he said. "That would be an area that we would have to navigate through carefully."

Some UNCA students find themselves struggling to stay on top of school work by seeking other students who have a prescription for Adderall, said **Keagan Bates, a recent UNCA alumnus**.

"I've had people approach me

predominantly for Adderall, especially during exam week. That seems to be when people want it the most," he said. "Since I've had the prescription, I'd probably say I've had maybe five to 10 people ask me if I had Adderall, and if I did, if I would be willing to sell it."

According to **Kayla Barham, a senior at UNCA**, the health risk outweighs any academic success students may achieve by taking the pill.

"I think some students rationalize it by saying, 'If I take this drug, then I'll

get better grades.' They don't really understand the risk or what it's doing to your body as far as losing sleep and appetite," she said. "The only thing you're doing right then is what you're focused on."

According to the DEA report, in serious cases, abusing drugs like Adderall can lead to psychosis similar to schizophrenia. Young adults receiving prescriptions for Adderall are given specific instructions on how to handle them responsibly, the former theater student said.

"When I first got my Adderall prescription, they told me not to tell anyone and not to sell it, because it is something that is highly wanted," Bates said. "I did make the mistake of telling a few people, and some of it went missing."

Prescriptions are useful when providing treatment to people with recognized illness, and if students are in need of one, they should approach their physician, according to Bates.

"I'm the type of person who really does not like taking pills, so when I get prescribed something, it's something I know I need to take," Bates said. "I've kind of urged them, if that's how they felt, to go talk to someone on campus."

All three students said they agree the appeal of the drug ties into the struggle to achieve academic success. Frid said he believes the desire to take the drug can be alleviated with some work on the part of the student.

"I think the problem stems from poor study habits, planning and confidence to be able to do good and efficient work," he said. "The moment where you convince yourself that you cannot complete all your work is the moment when you feel it necessary to supplement your work with prescription medication."

Rental: North Asheville

2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom

Townhouse style apartment

\$645/month

(828) 252-4334

Campus police log

Jan. 20-27

Larceny: University police reported another car break-in on Jan. 23 from a car in lot P26. All larcenies are under further investigation.

Drug and alcohol violations: University police a report of a drug violation on Jan. 21 on Field Drive, resulting in a student conduct citation.