

2009 Health and Wellness Survey of Graduate Students

University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School

Dear Health and Wellness Survey Participant:

Thank you for your participation in the Health and Wellness Survey conducted in the Winter 2009 term. It is important to us to learn more about the health and wellness of students to provide better services based on student interests and needs. We would like to share with you some highlights of the survey results.

Sampling

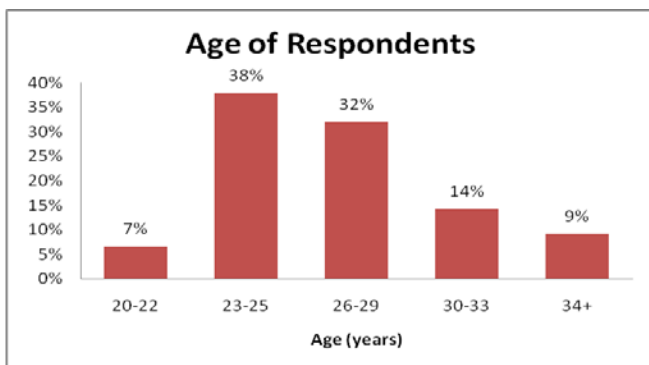
There were 1,426 graduate and professional students who were randomly sampled on the basis of several demographic considerations. Only those students who had been enrolled for at least one semester prior to Winter 2009 were included in the sample. Of those sampled, 693 participated in the online survey, representing a 49% response rate. The data presented below has been weighted to represent the graduate and professional student population.

Demographics and School/College Representation

Respondents represented all schools and colleges on campus. The greatest number of participants came from Literature, Science & Arts, Engineering, Business, Law, and Medicine.

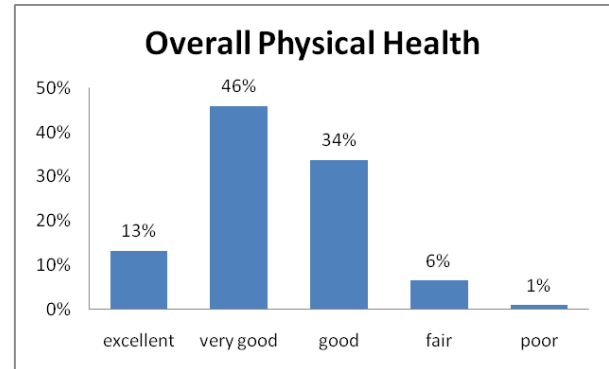
Of the 676 respondents who indicated the type of program in which they were enrolled, 35% were enrolled in a master's degree program, 37% were in a doctoral program (single or joint program), 17% were in a professional degree program, and 11% were enrolled in more than one type of program.

The median age of respondents was 25 years, and 23% of respondents were aged 30 years or older.

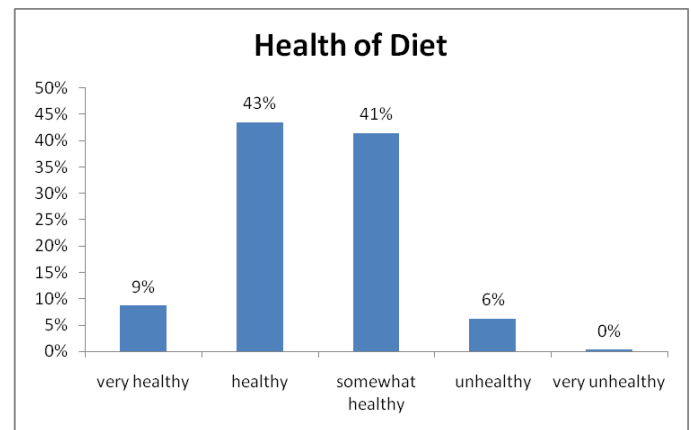


Physical Wellness

When asked how they would rate their overall physical health, 59% of respondents rated their health "very good" or "excellent." An additional 34% rated their overall physical health "good."



When asked how they would describe their diet, 52% of respondents described their diet as "healthy" or "very healthy" and only 6% of respondents described their diet as "unhealthy."

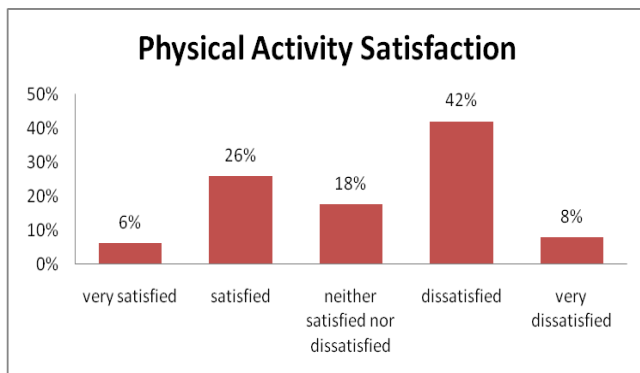


When asked to describe their current weight, 69% of respondents reported that they felt to be "about the right weight," 24% reported "overweight," and 7% reported "underweight."

Another question asked how often students felt that they did not get enough sleep in the past month. Sixty percent reported they did not get enough sleep "often" or "almost always" in the past month. "Often" was defined as 5-15 times a month, and "almost always" was defined as 16-30 times a month.

Physical Activity and Exercise

Thirty-two percent of respondents reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their physical activity level since September 2008 and 50% reported they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”



Respondents were asked since September 2008, “if there has been any time you have been dissatisfied with your physical activity level, what are the reasons that caused you to be dissatisfied?” Seventy-five percent reported not having “enough time to do physical activity.”

The survey asked about the number of days a week and length of time spent engaged in both moderate and vigorous exercise each week. Fifty-four percent of respondents reported doing a sufficient combination of moderate and vigorous physical activity to meet weekly exercise recommendations for adults set by the U.S. Department of Health¹. Only 14% of respondents said they did no moderate physical activity, and 40% reported not doing any vigorous physical activity.

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

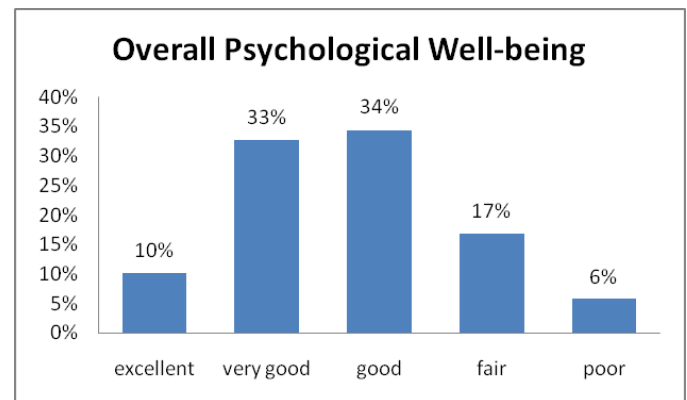
Fifty percent of the respondents reported that they drink alcoholic beverages 1-2 days during a typical week, 11% reported drinking 3-4 days per week, and 4% reported drinking 5 or more days per week. A significant group of students (35%) reported drinking no alcohol during a typical week.

Of those who reported drinking alcohol (n=444), 62% reported consuming 1-2 drinks each day they drink, 18% consuming 3 drinks, and 20% consuming 4 or more drinks each day they drink. Additionally, 38% reported engaging in binge drinking behavior² at least once in the past 2 weeks.

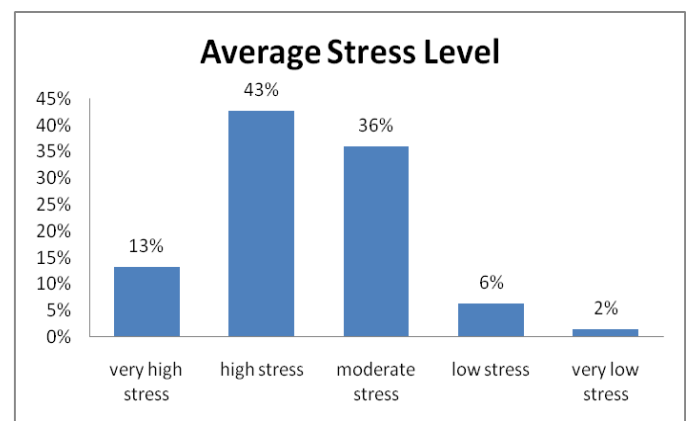
Eleven percent of respondents (n=72) reported they had used tobacco products (cigarettes, spit tobacco/chew/dip, pipes, cigars, etc.) in the 2 weeks prior to taking the survey. Of those respondents, 32% (n=23) reported using tobacco products every day.

Psychological Wellness & Stress

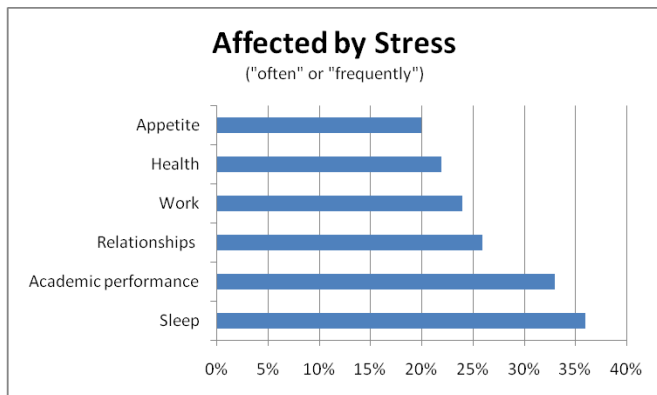
Respondents were asked to rate their overall psychological well-being since September 2008. Forty-three percent of respondents rate their overall psychological well-being “very good” or “excellent,” 34% rated it “good,” and the remaining 23% rated their psychological well-being as “fair” or “poor.”



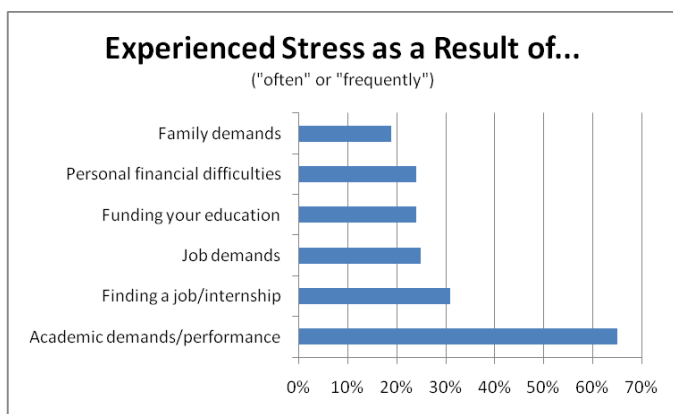
Respondents were also asked to rate their average stress level since September 2008. Fifty-six percent reported having “high stress” or “very high stress,” with an additional 36% reporting having “moderate stress.”



When respondents were asked what areas of their lives have been **affected by** stress, sleep (36%) and academic performance (33%) topped the list.



When asked about how often various factors caused stress, 65% reported that they experience stress “often” or “frequently” **as a result** of academic demands/performance.



Students were asked to identify what activities they used to help relieve stress during the current academic year. Talking to a friend, family member or partner topped the list at 92% of respondents, followed by media use (e.g., TV, music, video games) at 90%, physical activity at 81%, and hobbies at 75%. Forty-three percent reported drinking alcohol to relieve stress and 39% reported participating in spiritual activities. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported that they can count on someone to provide emotional support, such as talking over problems or helping to make a difficult decision.

Knowledge of Resources

When asked if they would know where to go if they needed to seek professional help for their mental or emotional health, 46% of respondents reported “no” or “not sure.”

Students were asked about their familiarity with a list of U-M campus resources. Most respondents reported that they are familiar with University Health Service (85%), but only 35% reported that they are familiar with Counseling and Psychological Services, and only 38% reported that they are familiar with the Department of Recreational Sports.

Conclusion

Again, we thank you for your participation in this important research. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Natalie Bartolacci at nplosky@umich.edu.

¹ According to the [2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health](#), the recommended target is 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, wherein each minute of vigorous physical activity is calculated as equaling two minutes of moderate physical activity.

² The [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) defines binge drinking as consuming 4 or more drinks by a female and 5 or more drinks by a male in about 2 hours. A drink is defined as half an ounce of alcohol, which is the equivalent to a 12 ounce beer, a 5 ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.