



Influences of Belief on Nonmedical Prescription Opioid Use Patterns: An LGBTQ+ Study

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Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influences of sexual orientation (LGBTQ+ vs Non-LGBTQ+) on individual beliefs and attitudes regarding prescription opioid use, specifically for nonmedical reasons. Additionally, the likelihood of poly-drug use was assessed by examining participants’ use patterns of alcohol, marijuana, prescription opioids, and illicit drugs. Participants completed a self-report alcohol and drug consumption questionnaire to record their personal use of alcohol, marijuana, illicit drugs, and prescription opioids not prescribed to them by a doctor. Following the completion of the self-report survey, participants responded to the *Prescription Drug Attitudes Questionnaire* (PDAQ). Results from this experiment suggested the factor of sexual orientation was robust. LGBTQ+ participants consistently gave significantly higher ratings to the use of prescription medication as being appropriate in most achievement-oriented and recreational-oriented circumstances in comparison to their non-LGBTQ+ counterparts. Furthermore, data from these experiments also suggested a robust correlation of LGBTQ+ PDAQ subscale responses with monthly marijuana, alcohol, illicit drug use, and prescription drug use.

References

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Methods & Materials

- The present experiment examined the influence of sexual orientation on perceptions of prescription drug use by obtaining responses from those who identify as LGBTQ+ or non-LGBTQ+ to determine how the perceptions contrasted.
- Participants were recruited from a university setting. Participants differed in gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, and drug use tendencies.
- Participants were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire in which monthly alcohol, marijuana, illicit, and prescription drug use were assessed.
- The Prescription Drug Attitudes Questionnaire (PDAQ) is a questionnaire that consists of short scenarios regarding the approval or disapproval of illegal prescription opioid use for achievement purposes and recreational purposes. Respondents recorded their level of agreement or disagreement using a 6-point Likert Scale.
- The College Problems Alcohol Scale (CAPS-R) asked participants to self-assess any problematic drinking behaviors they had experienced while under the influence of alcohol. The questionnaire consisted of a personal problems subscale and a social problems subscale. Respondents recorded their experiences using a 6-point Likert Scale.
- Data collected from the PDAQ were used to create two independent *t*-tests to determine how sexual orientation effected responses to questions regarding 1) recreational purposes and 2) academic purposes.
- Data collected from the CAPS-R were used to create two independent *t*-tests to determine how sexual orientation effected responses to questions regarding 1) personal problems and 2) social problems.
- *p*-values were established *a priori* at *p*<0.05.

Participants Demographics

Total (N)		186 Participants
Biological Sex (At Birth)	Men %	25.8
	Women %	74.2
Gender Identification	Male %	22.0
	Female %	65.6
	Bigender %	1.6
	Gender nonconforming %	3.8
	Genderfluid %	1.6
	Transgender female-to-male %	1.6
	Transgender male-to-female %	0.5
Ethnicity / Race	Black / African American %	38.7
	Caucasian %	38.7
	Hispanic / Latino %	12.4
	Asian %	2.7
	American Indian / Native American %	1.6
	Biracial %	5.9
Age	18-20 years of age %	24.5
	20-22 years of age %	71.4
	22+ years of age %	4.1
Religion	Christian %	67.7
	Muslim %	2.7
	Catholic %	8.6
	Buddhist %	7.5
	Atheist & Agnostic %	13.4
LGBTQ v NON LGBTQ	LGBTQ, % Total	34.9
	Non-LGBTQ, % Total	65.1
Sexual Orientation Identification	Heterosexual %	65.1
	Lesbian %	10.8
	Gay %	4.3
	Bisexual %	11.3
	Pansexual %	5.4
	Asexual %	3.2

PDAQ & CAPS-R

PDAQ 6-pt Likert Scales anchored by 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree

1. It's fine if a person takes a friend's prescription drug if it helps him/her to become more sociable and enjoy their surroundings.
2. An individual should only take medication that is prescribed to them by a medical professional.
3. If an individual is trying to improve their grades, it's okay for them to take medication that is not prescribed to them just to help with studying.
4. Prescription pills are safer to take because they are unlikely to lead to addiction like illicit drugs (e.g., cocaine, ecstasy, heroin).
5. As long as a medication has been prescribed by a medical professional it's safe to take.
6. If an individual feels awkward in social situations, it's okay for them sometimes to take a medication that is not prescribed to them if it makes them feel better.
7. Prescription pills can be highly addictive.
8. It's okay for an individual to take medication that is not prescribed to them in order to stay up longer and get more accomplished.
9. It can be dangerous for an individual to mix prescription pills with alcohol.
10. If a prescription drug makes a person have more fun at parties, it's worth taking it.
11. I would try a medication that is not prescribed to me if it was given to me for free.
12. It's okay for someone to take a friend's medication if it helps them concentrate and think more clearly during an exam.
13. It's dangerous for an individual to take medication that is not prescribed to them without knowing its proper dosage.
14. I would not know what to do if I wanted to buy prescription medications without a prescription.
15. Using prescribed medications just to stay awake at a party is okay.
16. An individual should only take medication that is prescribed to them by a medical professional.
17. There isn't anything wrong with someone taking a medication not prescribed to them in order to enhance their sexual activity.
18. People shouldn't take medication that hasn't been prescribed to them just to finish their school work on time.
19. Using another person's prescription medication in order to feel less stressed is fine.
20. As long as it makes you feel better and not worse, it's okay to take prescription drugs while drinking alcohol.
21. If a person is in physical pain from an injury, taking someone else's medication is okay in that situation.
22. If I were looking to take a prescription medication, it would be easy for me to find without going to a doctor.
23. There are certain situations where it's okay to take someone else's prescribed medication.
24. It's okay for an athlete to borrow someone else's prescription medication in order to enhance their athletic performance.
25. It's okay for an individual to take medication that is not prescribed to them in order to decrease appetite and lose weight.
26. Taking medication that is not prescribed to you should be illegal.

CAPS-R 6-pt Likert Scales anchored by 1 = never done before and 6 = 10 or more times

Scale 1: Personal Problems

1. Feeling sad, blue, or depressed
2. Nervousness, irritability
3. Caused you to feel bad about yourself
4. Problems with appetite or sleeping

Scale 2: Social Problems

1. Engaged in unplanned sexual activity
2. Drove under the influence
3. Did not use protection when engaging in sex
4. Illegal activities associated with drug use

- Responses:**
1. Never
 2. Yes, but not in the past year
 3. 1-2 times
 4. 3-5 times
 5. 6-9 times
 6. 10 or more times

Figures & Results

Table 1. Correlation of PDAQ & CAPS-R scores among NON-LGBTQ+ participants

	PDAQ Recreation	PDAQ Achievement	Marijuana Use	Alcohol Use	Illicit Drug Use	Prescription Medication Use	CAPS-R Personal Problems	CAPS-R Social Problems
PDAQ Recreation	1	.507**	.233	.317**	.034	.216*	.215*	.345**
		.000	.010	.000	.709	.017	.018	.000
PDAQ Achievement	.507**	1	.094	.279**	-.164	-.037	.160	.226*
	.000		.306	.002	.073	.684	.080	.013
Marijuana Use	.233*	.094	1	.235**	.069	.099	.147	.087
	.010	.306		.009	.450	.278	.107	.344
Alcohol Use	.317**	.279	.235**	1	-.029	.101	.362**	.447**
	.000	.002	.009		.753	.270	.000	.000
Illicit Drug Use	.034	-.164	.069	-.029	1	.159	.056	.051
	.709	.073	.450	.753		.082	.545	.577
Prescription Medication	.216*	-.037	.099	.101	.159	1	.194*	.260**
	.018	.684	.278	.270	.082		.033	.004
CAPS-R Personal Problems	.215*	.160	.147	.362**	.056	.194*	1	.451**
	.018	.080	.107	.000	.545	.033		.000
CAPS-R Social Problems	.345**	.226*	.087	.447**	.051	.260**	.451**	1
	.000	.013	.344	.000	.577	.004	.000	

Table 2. Correlation of PDAQ & CAPS-R scores among LGBTQ+ participants

	PDAQ Recreation	PDAQ Achievement	Marijuana Use	Alcohol Use	Illicit Drug Use	Prescription Medication Use	CAPS-R Personal Problems	CAPS-R Social Problems
PDAQ Recreation	1	.244*	.117	.405**	-.043	.226	.262*	.015
		.050	.353	.001	.736	.070	.035	.904
PDAQ Achievement	.244*	1	.032	.046	.063	.073	-.001	-.016
	.050		.800	.715	.616	.562	.996	.897
Marijuana Use	.117	.032	1	.336**	.058	.083	.290*	.005
	.353	.800		.006	.648	.510	.019	.970
Alcohol Use	.405**	.046	.336**	1	-.152	.006	.224	-.078
	.001	.715	.006		.227	.960	.073	.536
Illicit Drug Use	-.043	.063	.058	-.152	1	.142	-.122	-.070
	.736	.616	.648	.227		.259	.335	.578
Prescription Medication	.226	.073	.083	.006	.142	1	.160	-.403
	.070	.562	.510	.960	.259		.204	.745
CAPS-R Personal Problems	.262*	-.001	.290*	.224	-.122	.160	1	.389**
	.035	.996	.019	.073	.335	.204		.001
CAPS-R Social Problems	.015	-.016	.005	-.078	-.070	-.040	.389**	1
	.904	.897	.970	.536	.578	.754	.001	

Discussion & Implications

- LGBTQ+ individuals portray more optimistic perceptions of illicit prescription drug use
- Those who self-identified as heteronormative consistently rated the illicit use of prescription medication to be less commending across all questions of the PDAQ.
- Data from these experiments also suggested a robust correlation of LGBTQ+ PDAQ subscale responses with monthly marijuana, alcohol, illicit drug use, and prescription drug use.
- This research lays foundation for further investigation into how college-aged LGBTQ+ members view prescription drugs and the impact this may have on subsequent use. Attitudes have vast effects on behavior. Therefore, we should not dismiss the impact that beliefs about prescription about prescription drugs have on actual use.

Acknowledgements

- Faculty Research Seed Grant Program
- Center for Faculty Scholarship
- Department of Psychological Science
- Graduate School/Undergraduate Research Fund
- Jurby Square Research Foundation



Email: rodefer_js@mercer.edu – presented at SEPA, April 2020, New Orleans LA