



# **Executive Summary**

## **National College Health Assessment (NCHA) Spring 2005**

**Columbia University Medical Center**

Prepared on August 2, 2005  
Revised on June 22, 2006  
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☐ The 2005 CUMC National College Health Assessment was conducted during the five week period between February 10, 2005 and March 18, 2005.

☐ Permission to sample the CUMC student body was granted by the Columbia University Medical Center Institutional Review Board, IRB-AAAA9231.

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☐ To obtain additional copies of reports, to request additional information about the survey, to report any errors or discrepancies in data, or to collaborate on health promotion initiatives for CUMC students, contact William Kernan, Director, CUMC Center for Student Wellness, 212-304-5564, wdk2002@columbia.edu.

☐ 2005 NCHA Executive Summary Report prepared on August 2, 2005 and revised on June 22, 2006.

## Introduction



This Executive Summary highlights the results of the 2005 National College Health Assessment survey. These results will be used by the CUMC Student Health Service and Center for Student Wellness in partnership with individual schools and academic programs to determine priority health issues among our student population, as well as identify appropriate points of intervention.

## Background & Selection

During the Spring term of the 2004-2005 academic year, the Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) Student Health Service (SHS) and Center for Student Wellness (CSW) distributed that National College Health Assessment (NCHA) to 3044 graduate students enrolled in a school or program at the CUMC campus. Completed surveys were received from 1355 respondents (44.5% of the sample population).

School or Program	Sample Population		Sample Response	School Response Rate*	Sample Response Rate**
College of Physicians & Surgeons	651	21.4%	315	48.4%	23.2%
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences	515	16.9%	241	46.8%	17.8%
Institute of Human Nutrition	39	1.3%	17	43.6%	1.3%
Mailman School of Public Health	681	22.4%	379	55.7%	28.0%
Programs in Occupational Therapy	96	3.2%	40	41.7%	3.0%
Programs in Physical Therapy	88	2.9%	29	33.0%	2.1%
Psychoanalytic Training Center	36	1.2%	6	16.7%	0.4%
School of Dentistry & Oral Surgery	426	14.0%	130	30.5%	9.6%
School of Nursing	512	16.8%	198	38.7%	14.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3044</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1355</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*School Response Rate = the percentage of students within a given school who completed the survey vs. the total number of students surveyed within that school

\*\*Sample Response Rate = the percentage of students within a given school who completed the survey vs. the total number of students who completed the survey

## Major Findings

Students reported the following six physical and psychosocial health concerns as having a significant and negative impact on their academic performance during the last year:

Health Concern	Rate
Stress	20.7%
Cold, flu, and sore throat	15.5%
Relationship difficulties	12.8%
Depression, anxiety disorder, seasonal affective disorder	12.7%
Concern about a troubled friend or family member	12.6%
Sleep difficulties	12.0%

Other important health concerns among CUMC students include nutrition, physical fitness, back pain, excessive internet use, and negative consequences related to drinking, most notably regret, forgetting places/actions (blackouts), and engaging in unprotected sex.



## Findings

### A. General Health of CUMC Students

- 72.6%** of CUMC students surveyed (**75.8%** male & **71.7%** female) described their health as very good or excellent.

Within the last school year, CUMC students reported experiencing:

Allergy problems:	<b>40.2%</b>	Repetitive stress injury:	<b>7.0%</b>
Anorexia:	<b>1.2%</b>	Seasonal affective disorder:	<b>10.9%</b>
Anxiety disorder:	<b>10.3%</b>	Substance abuse problem:	<b>2.7%</b>
Asthma:	<b>9.4%</b>	Back pain:	<b>40.9%</b>
Bulimia:	<b>2.9%</b>	Broken bone/fracture:	<b>2.4%</b>
Chronic fatigue syndrome:	<b>3.2%</b>	Bronchitis:	<b>7.1%</b>
Depression:	<b>16.0%</b>	Chlamydia:	<b>0.4%</b>
Diabetes:	<b>1.2%</b>	Ear infection:	<b>4.6%</b>
Endometriosis:	<b>1.0%</b>	Gonorrhea:	<b>0.2%</b>
Genital herpes:	<b>1.6%</b>	Mononucleosis:	<b>1.0%</b>
Genital warts/HPV:	<b>3.3%</b>	Pelvic inflammatory disease:	<b>0.1%</b>
Hepatitis B or C:	<b>1.0%</b>	Sinus infection:	<b>21.5%</b>
High blood pressure:	<b>3.7%</b>	Strep throat:	<b>5.5%</b>
High cholesterol:	<b>5.0%</b>	Tuberculosis:	<b>0.4%</b>
HIV infection:	<b>0.3%</b>		

### B. Preventive Health

Preventive health practices among CUMC students:

- 82.9%** reported being vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- 33.9%** reported being vaccinated against meningococcal disease.
- 37.7%** reported being vaccinated against varicella (chicken pox).
- 95.9%** reported being vaccinated against measles, mumps, rubella (2 shots).
- 30.7%** reported being vaccinated against the flu in the last year.
- 68.1%** reported having a dental exam and cleaning in the last year.
- 34.4%** of males reported that they performed a testicular self-exam in that last month.
- 43.0%** of females reported that they performed a breast self-exam in the last month.
- 76.7%** of females reported having a routine gynecological exam in the last year.
- 93.6%** reported having their blood pressure checked in the last 2 years.
- 64.5%** reported having their cholesterol checked in the last 5 years.
- 28.9%** reported using sunscreen daily.

CUMC students reported the following behaviors within the last school year:

	N/A (didn't drive, ride or skate in last school year)	Never	Rarely or Sometimes	Mostly or Always	Mostly or Always (N/A responses not included)*
Wore a seatbelt	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>94.0%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
Wore a helmet when riding a bicycle	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>54.9%</b>
Wore a helmet when riding a motorcycle	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>90.5%</b>
Wore a helmet when inline skating	<b>82.7%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>

\* students responding "N/A, didn't drive, ride or skate within the last school year" were excluded from this analysis.



## Findings

### C. Academic Impacts

Within the last school year, CUMC students reported the following factors affecting their individual academic performance (i.e., received an incomplete, dropped a course, received a lower grade in a class, on an exam, or on an important project):

Alcohol use:	2.2%	Eating disorder/problem:	0.9%
Allergies:	1.7%	HIV infection:	0.0%
Assault (physical):	0.2%	Injury:	1.2%
Assault (sexual):	0.5%	Internet use/computer games:	6.4%
Attention deficit disorder:	5.2%	Learning disability:	1.8%
<b>Cold/flu/sore throat:</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	Mononucleosis:	0.6%
<b>Concern for a troubled friend or family member:</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	Pregnancy (yours or partner's):	1.7%
Chronic illness:	2.5%	<b>Relationship difficulty:</b>	<b>12.8%</b>
Chronic pain:	2.2%	Sexually transmitted disease:	0.4%
Death of a family member/friend:	5.2%	Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat:	3.9%
<b>Depression/anxiety disorder/seasonal affective disorder:</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>Sleep difficulties:</b>	<b>12.0%</b>
Drug use:	0.8%	<b>Stress:</b>	<b>20.7%</b>

### D. Violence

Within the last school year, CUMC students reported experiencing:

	Male	Female	Total
A physical fight	3.9%	0.8%	1.7%
Being physically assaulted (non-sexually)	2.7%	1.0%	1.6%
Verbal threats for sex against their will	1.5%	2.8%	2.4%
Sexual touching against their will	2.4%	5.4%	4.4%
Attempted sexual penetration against their will	0.5%	1.1%	1.0%
Sexual penetration against their will	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
An emotionally abusive relationship	6.1%	8.0%	7.5%
A physically abusive relationship	1.0%	0.4%	0.7%
A sexually abusive relationship	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%

### E. Nutrition

Within the last 30 days, CUMC students reported:

	Male	Female	Total
Exercising to lose weight	40.4%	57.2%	51.7%
Dieting to lose weight	20.6%	38.6%	32.8%
Vomiting/laxatives to lose weight	0.5%	2.9%	2.1%
Taking diet pills to lose weight	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Doing none of the above	55.9%	37.3%	42.7%

CUMC students reported usually eating the following number of servings of fruits and vegetables:

	Male	Female	Total
Don't eat fruits and vegetables	2.0%	0.4%	1.0%
1 or 2 per day	62.6%	43.7%	49.5%
3-4 per day	27.9%	41.6%	37.3%
5 or more per day	7.6%	14.2%	12.2%

Estimated Body Mass Index (BMI): (this figure incorporates reported height & weight to form a general indicator of physical health)

BMI	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
< 18.5 (Underweight)	1.5%	7.2%	5.4%	<b>Mean</b>	24.08	22.20	22.80
18.5-24.9 (Healthy Weight)	64.5%	76.8%	73.0%	<b>Median</b>	23.76	21.50	22.20
25-29.9 (Overweight)	28.4%	12.5%	17.4%	<b>Std Dev</b>	3.11	3.70	3.60
30-34.9 (Class I Obesity)	4.9%	2.4%	3.3%				
35-39.9 (Class II Obesity)	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%				
>= 40 (Class III Obesity)	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%				



## Findings

### F. Exercise

CUMC students reported the following behaviors within the past 7 days:

Participated in vigorous exercise for 20 minutes (or 30 minutes moderate exercise)

	Male	Female	Total
0 days	26.2%	24.4%	25.1%
1-2 days	30.6%	31.3%	30.9%
3-5 days	38.9%	38.6%	38.7%
6+ days	4.4%	5.6%	5.3%

Exercising to strengthen muscles

	Male	Female	Total
0 days	35.6%	39.1%	38.1%
1-2 days	30.0%	35.3%	33.5%
3-5 days	31.2%	22.8%	25.4%
6+ days	3.2%	2.7%	2.8%

### G. Sleep

CUMC students reported getting enough sleep to feel rested in the mornings within the past 7 days:

	Male	Female	Total
0 days	8.3%	8.8%	8.9%
1-2 days	31.1%	28.9%	29.1%
3-5 days	43.3%	46.8%	45.6%
6+ days	18.3%	15.5%	16.3%

### H. Depression

CUMC students reported experiencing the following within the last school year:

Feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do				Feeling so depressed it was difficult to function			
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Never	18.6%	5.4%	9.3%	Never	67.5%	61.3%	62.9%
1-10 times	58.0%	66.1%	63.8%	1-10 times	26.5%	32.4%	30.7%
11+ times	23.5%	28.5%	26.9%	11+ times	6.1%	6.3%	6.3%
Feeling exhausted (not by physical activity)				Seriously considering attempting suicide			
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Never	14.5%	7.7%	9.7%	Never	95.8%	93.4%	93.9%
1-10 times	56.2%	59.6%	58.7%	1-10 times	3.9%	5.9%	5.4%
11+ times	29.4%	32.7%	31.7%	11+ times	0.2%	0.7%	0.6%
Feeling very sad				Attempting suicide			
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Never	34.9%	20.4%	24.7%	Never	99.3%	99.7%	99.5%
1-10 times	55.3%	65.3%	62.4%	1-10 times	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%
11+ times	9.8%	14.3%	12.9%	11+ times	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Feeling things were hopeless							
	Male	Female	Total				
Never	55.0%	46.6%	48.8%				
1-10 times	35.7%	45.4%	42.4%				
11+ times	9.3%	8.3%	8.8%				



## Findings

### I. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

CUMC students reported the following 30 day prevalence:

Alcohol				Cigarettes			
	Male	Female	Total		Male	Female	Total
Never used	9.6%	10.9%	10.7%	Never used	62.9%	61.2%	61.7%
Used, not is last 30 days	10.4%	10.2%	10.3%	Used, not is last 30 days	21.1%	25.9%	24.2%
Used 1-9 days	60.7%	63.1%	62.0%	Used 1-9 days	8.2%	8.8%	8.9%
Used 10-29 days	18.4%	15.4%	16.3%	Used 10-29 days	5.1%	2.5%	3.3%
Used all 30 days	1.0%	0.3%	0.6%	Used all 30 days	2.7%	1.7%	2.0%
Marijuana							
	Male	Female	Total				
Never used	61.7%	59.9%	60.4%				
Used, not is last 30 days	24.9%	31.4%	29.4%				
Used 1-9 days	11.0%	7.2%	8.3%				
Used 10-29 days	1.9%	1.4%	1.4%				
Used all 30 days	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%				

Reported use versus perceived use - reported use for all CUMC students within the past 30 days compared with how often students perceived the typical student on campus used substances within the same time period:

	Never used		Used one or more days, but not daily		Used daily	
	Reported Use (total)	Perception of Typical Use	Reported Use (total)	Perception of Typical Use	Reported Use (total)	Perception of Typical Use
Alcohol	21.0%	2.8%	78.3%	77.8%	0.6%	19.5%
Cigarettes	85.9%	25.1%	12.2%	62.3%	2.0%	12.6%
Marijuana	89.9%	30.2%	9.7%	64.8%	0.3%	5.0%

Estimated BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) of CUMC students: (this is an estimated figure based on the reported number of drinks consumed during the last time all students, including non-drinkers, "partied" or socialized, their approximate time of consumption, sex, and the average rate of ethanol metabolism)

Estimated BAC	Male	Female	Total
> .08	13.8%	22.9%	19.6%
>.10	9.2%	14.1%	12.3%

Reported number of times CUMC students consumed five or more drinks in a sitting within the last two weeks:

	Male	Female	Total
None	61.6%	76.8%	71.9%
1-2 times	28.7%	18.8%	22.0%
3-5 times	8.3%	3.8%	5.2%
6 or more times	1.4%	0.5%	0.7%



## Findings

### I. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use, continued

CUMC students reported doing the following when they "partied" or socialized during the last school year:\*

When at a party or when going out...	usually or always
alternate non-alcoholic beverages with alcoholic beverage:	38.1%
determine in advance not to exceed a set number of drinks:	29.6%
choose not to drink alcohol:	17.4%
use a designated driver:	65.6%
eat before and/or during drinking:	81.1%
have a friend let you know when you have had enough:	16.3%
keep track of how many drinks you have consumed:	65.2%
pace drinks to one or fewer an hour:	41.6%
avoid drinking games:	65.3%
drink an alcoholic look-alike:	6.0%

CUMC students who drank alcohol reported the following consequences occurring in the last school year as a result of their own drinking:\*

	Male	Female	Total
Being physically injured	9.2%	6.8%	7.2%
Physically injured another person	2.0%	1.1%	1.3%
Being involved in a fight	2.9%	1.7%	2.0%
Doing something they later regretted	28.1%	25.8%	26.4%
Forgetting where they were or what they did	20.9%	14.9%	16.8%
Having someone use force or threat of force to have sex with them	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%
Having unprotected sex	13.8%	9.0%	10.4%

\* students responding "N/A, don't drink" were excluded from these analyses.

1.0% of CUMC students reported driving after having 5 or more drinks in the last 30 days.\*\*

\*\* students responding "N/A, don't drive or N/A, don't drink" were excluded from this analysis.

### J. Birth Control Use

Reported means of birth control used among sexually active CUMC students or their partners to prevent pregnancy the last time they had vaginal intercourse:

	Male	Female	Total
Birth control pills	38.7%	45.3%	43.1%
Depo Provera (shots)	1.9%	1.2%	1.5%
Norplant (implant)	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Condoms	40.4%	37.8%	38.4%
Diaphragm, cervical cap, sponge	1.9%	2.1%	2.0%
Spermicide	4.4%	1.8%	2.5%
Fertility awareness	3.6%	5.2%	4.6%
Withdrawal	12.3%	11.6%	11.7%
Other method	2.4%	4.8%	4.1%
Nothing	6.5%	5.4%	5.7%

7.5% of sexually active CUMC students reported using (or reported their partner used) emergency contraception ("morning after pill") within the last school year (male: 5.1%; female: 8.7%).\*\*\*

\*\*\* students responding "Not sexually active" were excluded from this analysis.

1.8% of CUMC students who had vaginal intercourse in the last year reported experiencing an unintentional pregnancy or got someone pregnant within the last school year (male: 2.1%; female: 1.6%).\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\* students responding "Have not had vaginal intercourse within the last school year" were excluded from this analysis.



## Findings

### K. Sexual Behavior

CUMC students reported the following within the last school year:

	Male	Female	Total
Having had no sexual partner	12.0%	17.1%	15.7%
Having had 1 sexual partner	59.1%	64.2%	62.5%
Having had 2 sexual partners	12.3%	10.3%	10.9%
Having had 3 sexual partners	7.1%	4.8%	5.5%
Having had 4 or more sexual partners	9.4%	3.5%	5.4%
	Male	Female	Total
Mean	1.79	1.18	1.37
Median	1.00	1.00	1.00
Std Dev	3.26	1.10	2.04

CUMC students who reported that they had engaged in the following activities within the past 30 days:

Oral sex	Male	Female	Total
never did this sexual activity	13.3%	14.7%	14.2%
Have not done In last 30 days	28.1%	29.9%	29.5%
Did this 1 or more times	58.4%	55.5%	56.3%

Vaginal sex	Male	Female	Total
never did this sexual activity	15.6%	13.9%	14.3%
Have not done In last 30 days	22.8%	21.0%	21.6%
Did this 1 or more times	61.7%	65.1%	64.1%

Anal sex	Male	Female	Total
never did this sexual activity	59.2%	67.3%	64.8%
Have not done In last 30 days	32.1%	29.1%	30.0%
Did this 1 or more times	8.6%	3.6%	5.3%



## Demographic & Student Characteristics

### Age:

Average age:	28.39
Median age:	27.00
Std. Dev:	6.54

18-20 years:	1.1%
21-24 years:	38.1%
25-29 years:	39.7%
30+ years:	21.1%

### Sex:

Female:	67.1%
Male:	30.5%
Not reported:	2.4%

### Student status:

Full-time student:	81.0%
Part-time student:	19.0%

### Relationship status:

Single:	38.2%
Married/domestic partner:	25.3%
Engaged or committed dating:	35.3%
Separated:	0.3%
Divorced:	0.8%
Widowed:	0.1%

### Student describe themselves as:

White:	61.3%
Black, not Hispanic:	6.9%
Hispanic or Latino:	5.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander:	22.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native:	0.4%
Other:	4.0%

### Have any kind of health insurance

(including prepaid plans, such as HMO's):

Yes:	97.7%
Unsure:	1.1%

### Students describe themselves as:

Heterosexual:	93.8%
Gay/Lesbian:	3.2%
Bisexual:	2.5%
Transgendered:	0.2%
Unsure:	0.4%

### Housing:

Campus residence:	15.8%
Fraternity or sorority:	0.0%
Other university/college housing:	23.1%
Off-campus:	47.3%
Parent/guardian's:	4.1%
Other:	9.8%

### Hours of paid work per week:

0 hours:	49.3%
1-9 hours:	9.0%
10-19 hours:	6.5%
20-29 hours:	8.7%
30-39 hours:	4.5%
40 hours:	10.4%
More than 40 hours:	11.7%

### Hours of volunteer work per week:

0 hours:	68.3%
1-9 hours:	28.9%
10-19 hours:	2.1%
20-29 hours:	0.4%
30-39 hours:	0.1%
40 hours:	0.0%
More than 40 hours:	0.3%