

# An Exploration of the Association between Drug Use and Mental Health Status in Black College Students

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## Introduction

Current research on the subject shows that Black college students experience higher levels of psychological distress compared to other students. There is a gap in current research because they fail to study the overall state of their mental health, instead they just study mental illnesses. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to explore mental health in Black college students and the ways that they cope with their anxiety and depression with drugs and alcohol.

## Methods

To explore this relationship, variables measuring alcohol and marijuana consumption, as well as self-perception of mental health were used from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study. Frequencies are used to provide contexts for all variables. The chi-square statistic was then used to determine whether or not a statistically significant relationship existed between the following variables and stage of diagnosis: age, income level, and job type.



## Results

Results of the chi-square test did not demonstrate a significant relationship between mental health in Black college students and coping mechanisms. The percentage of respondents reporting these findings is presented in Table 1. In the output, the asymptotic significance (2-sided) was analyzed at a 0.05 level of significance. The results from the table were above 0.05, concluding that there is no relationship between the variables.

## Discussion & Conclusions

Although previous research has documented the general prevalence rates of drug use among college students my study specifically focuses on the self-perception of mental health in Black college students and how that may increase the amount of drugs or alcohol, they intake. The information from this study is consistent with the findings that mental health does have a dramatic effect on how Black college students may cope with drugs or alcohol. Interpretations of our findings are also constrained by several limitations. First, the findings of the present study may not generalize to other college and non-college populations. Although the demographic characteristics from the sample closely resembled the demographic characteristics of 4-year U.S. colleges and universities nationally, previous research has found rates of illicit drug use vary across U.S. colleges and universities.

Table 1. Bivariate Results

	Self-perception of mental health	
	Positive (n, %)	Negative (n, %)
<b>Alcohol use past 12 months, N=871</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup>=491, p=0.134</b>	
Yes	871, XX%	93.3%
No	63, XX%	6.7%
<b>Marijuana/THC past 12 months, N= 577</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup>=730, p=0.134</b>	
Yes	577	61.8%
No	357	38.2%