Predictors of Prescription Stimulant Diversion Among Emerging Adults with ADHD

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Non-medical prescription stimulant use (NMPSU), which involves the use of Adderall, Ritalin, and Concerta without a prescription, has become prominent on college campuses, with prevalence rates ranging from 19-35%. This behavior is of concern given that students who engage in NMPSU are at higher risk for physical and psychological problems, academic difficulties, and other illicit substance use. Most NMPS users report obtaining the drugs from a peer with a legitimate prescription. Indeed, prevalence rates of prescription stimulant diversion (i.e., selling or giving away medication) among college students with ADHD range from 26-62%. Since few studies have explored intra- and interpersonal predictors of stimulant diversion, we are using a survey and semi-structured interview with ADHD-diagnosed students on two college campuses to examine whether susceptibility to peer influence, assertiveness, pressure from peers, and medication adherence predict diversion. We will discuss the implications of our findings, specifically, how they might inform the development of interventions for students with prescriptions and for prescribers who are counseling students on the high school-to-college transition.