

Recognition and Stigma in Prescription Drug Abuse (PDA) and Alcohol Abuse (AA)

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This study explores the factors that influence the recognition of and stigma towards Prescription Drug Abuse (PDA) and Alcohol Abuse (AA). Using the results of national surveys on each topic combined with county level data, we find that 64% of respondents correctly identify the condition as AA from a vignette style question, while 61% correctly identified the PDA condition. The likelihood of correctly identifying the condition is significantly lower for both PDA and AA if the respondent is younger and greater if older. Males were less likely to correctly identify PDA, while for both PDA and AA, self-identifying as having experienced PDA/AA themselves leads to a lower likelihood of correct identification. With regard to stigma, we focus on the level of agreement or disagreement with the statement that the condition in the vignette is “not a real medical illness”. For both AA and PDA, we find that the biggest factor in determining the likelihood of disagreeing with the statement is correctly identifying the problem in the vignette. This suggests that stigma surrounding these issues can be reduced by increasing literacy with regard to these mental health issues.

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