

Digital Health Communications Project

Understanding College Student Health Through Instagram

Lessley Columna Healthcare Studies

Introduction

- As a Counseling and Health Service's digital health promotion intern I was able to develop and provide a variety of health resources for students online.
- I was able to create healthcare assessment tools for the Salem State Wellness Instagram page.
- My work and overall study was developed based on Salem State University's participation in the 2020 American College Health Association - National College Health Assessment III.
- By reviewing existing SSU health information I am able to better understand the health needs of students. I am also able to recognized health promotion initiatives that could be emplaced.



Related literature

- eHealth literacy was directly correlated with eight areas of health including; exercise, substance free lives, sleep, vaccinations, safe sex, diet, relationships, and overall personal health. Many college students face issues amongst these areas of health and researchers believe that the lack of eHealth literacy may be to blame (Britt et al., 2017).
- Students mentioned five things that would encourage them to follow these university health pages which include; incentives (24.8%), relevance (20%), reach (13%), aesthetics (7.8%), and popularity (4.9%). (Perrault et al., 2019).
- There is strong evidence that supports the use of social media as a health promotion tool as it helps provide individuals with social support when seeking health behavior changes. Social media allows for increased engagement and could be an efficient cost-effective tool. (Jane et al., 2018).

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Objectives

- Student participants will be able to focus on different health topics and resources.
- Student health promotion will be enhanced through online engagement.
- Educational materials will be developed to help students access health and counseling services, in attempts to minimize barriers to care.

Materials and Methods

- Focused on five health topics highlighted in spring 2020 ACHA-NCHA Wellness survey.
- These topics include; sexual health, sleep, substance use, mental health, and nutrition/food security.
- Created 4-5 result-based multiple choice questions about each topic that were then posted on the Salem State Wellness Instagram story page.
- A different topic was presented each week that students could quiz themselves on.
- Prior to topic questions students were also asked to answer a relevant question regarding health-seeking behavior.
- Following the interactive questions, multiple health resources were listed.

First Instagram Posting: Sexual Health

A. "My Introduction video"
Captions of what I am saying: Hello, my name is Lessley and I'm a senior majoring in healthcare studies here at Salem State University. I'm currently a (digital health promotion) undergraduate intern for Counseling and Health Services and as part of my internship project I'm looking to better understand the health needs of Salem State students!

B. General health question of the week
1. Where are you more likely to go for sexual health information?
a. The internet vs. CHS/healthcare professional
b. Family/friends vs. social media

C. Description of what story will be about

D. Questions:
1. What percentage of SSU students have never engaged in vaginal intercourse?
a. 12%
b. 20%
c. 60%
d. 31%

2. What percentage of SSU students have never engaged in anal intercourse?
a. 40%
b. 77%
c. 39%
d. 50%

3. 61% of SSU students who have engaged in oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse within the last 12 months reported having _____ sexual partner(s).
a. 1
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4+

4. What percentage of SSU students who have engaged in vaginal intercourse within the last 12 months reported using some form of contraceptive?
a. 22%
b. 60%
c. 97%
d. 45%

5. Of the SSU students who have reported using a contraceptive the last time they have vaginal intercourse what percentage used a male condom?
a. 29%
b. 53%
c. 70%
d. 61%

E. Closing Statement

F. Resources

SEXUAL HEALTH RESOURCES

SSU Counseling and Health services:
<https://www.salemstate.edu/sexualhealth>
Call - 978.542.6413

The Prevention, Education, Advocacy, and Response (PEAR) Program:
Email - pear@salemstate.edu.
Call - 978.594.7089

PPH:
<https://www.plannedparenthood.org>
Call - 1-800-230-PLAN.
Text - "PPNOW" to 774636

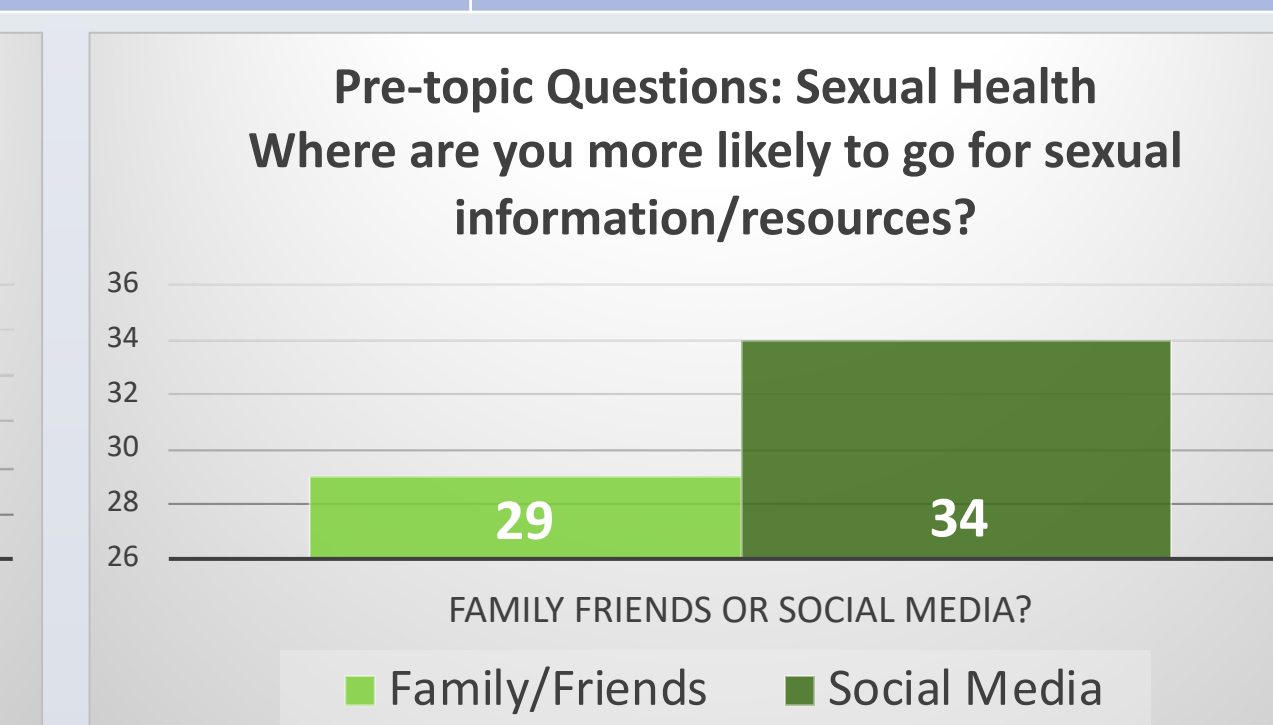
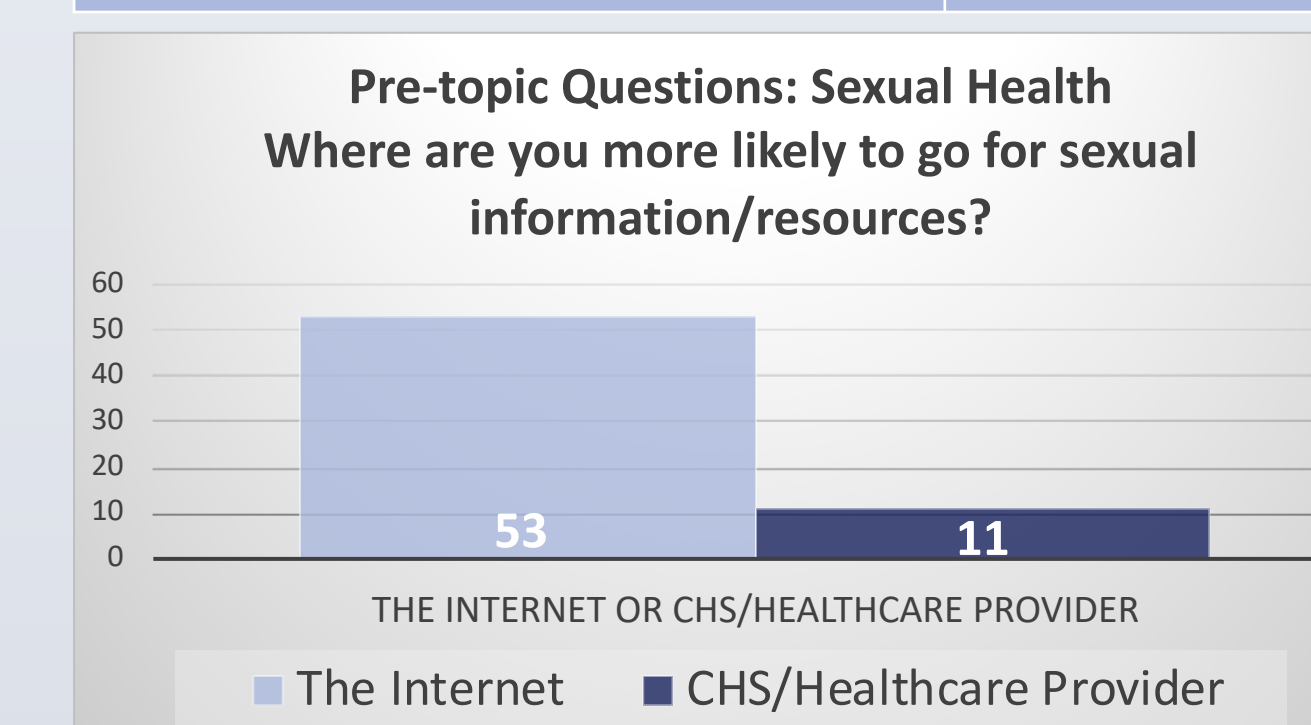
Birth control options:
[bedsider.org/methods](https://www.bedsider.org/methods)

If you are facing an emergency that requires immediate attention, please call University Police at 978.542.6111.

The picture on the **left** is an outline of my Instagram story regarding sexual health, all of my story outlines looked similar to this one. The picture on the **right** is what my last resource image slide typically looked liked.

Results

Pre-topic Questions		
Topic: Sleep	Yes	No
Do you use any phone apps to help regulate your sleep schedule?	7	30
Topic: Nutrition/Food Security	Yes	No
Has COVID-19 negatively impacted your sense of food security?	14	27
Topic: Substance Use	Yes	No
Has the use of a substance ever negatively impacted your academic performance?	11	34
Topic: Mental Health	Yes	No
Are you aware of the mental health resources available through SSU's CHS?	31	8



Charts 1, 2 and 3 show the health seeking behaviors of SSU students. This information can help distinguish level of accessibility and additional health resources students may need.

Main Topic Health Promotion Questions			
Topic	Range of Views (lowest to highest)	Number of Questions Asked	Percentage of total questions answered correctly by majority of students
Sleep	105-147	5	40%
Nutrition/food security	103-149	4	50%
Sexual Health	130-181	5	40%
Substance use	89-150	5	20%
Mental Health	105-130	4	50%

Chart 4 shows interaction amongst main topic questions this includes range of view counts, number of questions asked per topic, and the percentage of questions correctly answered by students.

Conclusions

Online platforms can be important outlets in reaching and understanding college student health and wellness. These platforms can also be useful in the promotion of relevant care.

The pre-topic questions allowed me to understand where SSU students were retrieving health information and what resources they need to improve their wellbeing. Interestingly, when asked about seeking sexual health information, students stated they felt more comfortable going to the internet (vs. CHS/healthcare provider) or to social media (vs. family/friends).

The results from the main topic questions show that relevant and interactive online health content is vital. I specifically evaluated view counts as non-interactive stories on this Instagram page usually receive around 60-90 views, these interactive posts received up to 181 views. This data also helped me distinguish the health topics that students mis/understood more frequently. Information like this can help college healthcare professionals create content that is geared towards student needs. Overall, this internship has allowed me to develop the tools I need to create and analyze vital health information and data.