

2000 University Health Center Survey

Methodology and Results

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Toshihiko Murata and Steve Johnson
Oregon Survey Research Laboratory

University of Oregon
Eugene OR 97403-5245
541-346-0822
fax: 541-346-5026

Internet: OSRL@OREGON.UOREGON.EDU
World Wide Web: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl>

Introduction and Background

The seventh Annual University of Oregon Health Center Survey was conducted by the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL). The annual Health Center Surveys are intended to assess Health Center services and track health-related trends in student attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. The Health Center Survey includes three types of questions: core questions asked annually, periodic questions are asked on either odd or even years, and those intended for inclusion only once. Health Center and OSRL staff work closely together each year to develop survey questions that are appropriate to the University and Health Center's needs, comparable to other major Oregon and national surveys, and as valid and reliable as possible. To accomplish this, the survey instrument incorporates questions derived from meetings and discussions between Health Center staff, OSRL, and members of the University, as well as past surveys.

2000 Health Center Survey topic included:

- present and comparative physical and mental health and wellness including suicide thoughts and attempts;
- health maintenance including pap smear checks and athletic participation;
- tobacco, alcohol and drug use;
- sexual activity including use of contraception and condoms, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections;
- use of the Health Center: student satisfaction, reasons for non-use, and cost comparisons;
- health insurance coverage;
- opinions on the expansion of Health Center services and fee increases;
- basic background and demographic characteristics.

Survey Methodology

Sampling

OSRL selected a random sample of 600 currently enrolled University of Oregon students from the Registrar's records. Continuing Education students were excluded from the sample. Because of the survey's sensitive nature, respondents were sent a pre-contact letter several days prior to interviewing. The letter introduced the goals and purpose of the study, explained how respondents were chosen, assured confidentiality, and provided contact names and telephone numbers for questions they might have. Interviewing was conducted using OSRL's Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system.

Altogether, 4069 telephone calls were made to complete 405 interviews. Among the original 600 telephone numbers, 41 were unusable because the number was wrong, disconnected, or a non-working telephone number. The overall survey response rate was 73.1%, and the refusal rate was 3.7%¹.

Data Collection, Processing, and Coding

OSRL completed 405 interviews with currently enrolled University of Oregon students from April 28 ~ May 9, 2000. The particular timing of this survey was intended to fall more than a month after the end of Spring Break (behavior during Spring Break could artificially inflate reports of certain types of reported behavior, such as alcohol consumption). Calls were made at all times of the day and all days of the week, with the exception of Sunday morning.

Several survey questions are open-ended. Open-ended responses were recorded by the interviewer exactly as spoken by the respondents, word for word. These responses were coded after the end of the data collection to aid survey analysis. OSRL's highly trained open-end coders used the codes developed in past years to code this year's responses to maximize compatibility between the results from different years. New code categories would have been created if this year's responses warrant it. However, it was not necessary.

Survey Results

The following survey results are organized as follows: demographic overview of the sample; general physical and mental health and wellness; safety issues, including carrying a weapon and automobile safety; alcohol use and perceptions of alcohol use; tobacco use; drug use; sexual behavior, reproductive health and sexual violence; use of and satisfaction with the Health Center.

Demographic Overview of the Sample

Fifty-three percent of all respondents were female. Roughly half of the respondents were 21 years of age or younger. Ninety three percent were twenty nine years of age or younger. Roughly 36% were seniors, 19% juniors, 14% sophomores, and 25% freshman. The remainder was primarily graduate students (7%). Most of the respondents (79%) were never married, 11% married, 8% cohabiting, and 1% divorced or separated. Five percent have one or more dependent children in the household. Fifty percent are currently working for pay.

Non-Hispanic whites make up 78% of the respondents. Among the racial and ethnic minority respondents, 9% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% were black, 1% were American Indian, 3% were of Hispanic origin, and 4% were of mixed or some other race or ethnicity. The proportion of international students in the sample was 7%.

Eight percent reported fraternity or sorority membership, and 4% were intercollegiate athletes.

General Health and Wellness

The survey began with a series of questions about physical and mental health in the recent past and present. Fully 57% indicated that they were "very satisfied" with their current health status. 36% were "somewhat satisfied" and only 7% were "not very satisfied". Similarly, most students reported over all personal happiness, with 93% indicating they were either in "very happy" or "somewhat happy" with their personal life last month. Only 5.4% of respondents indicated that their health was in "fair" or "poor" condition.

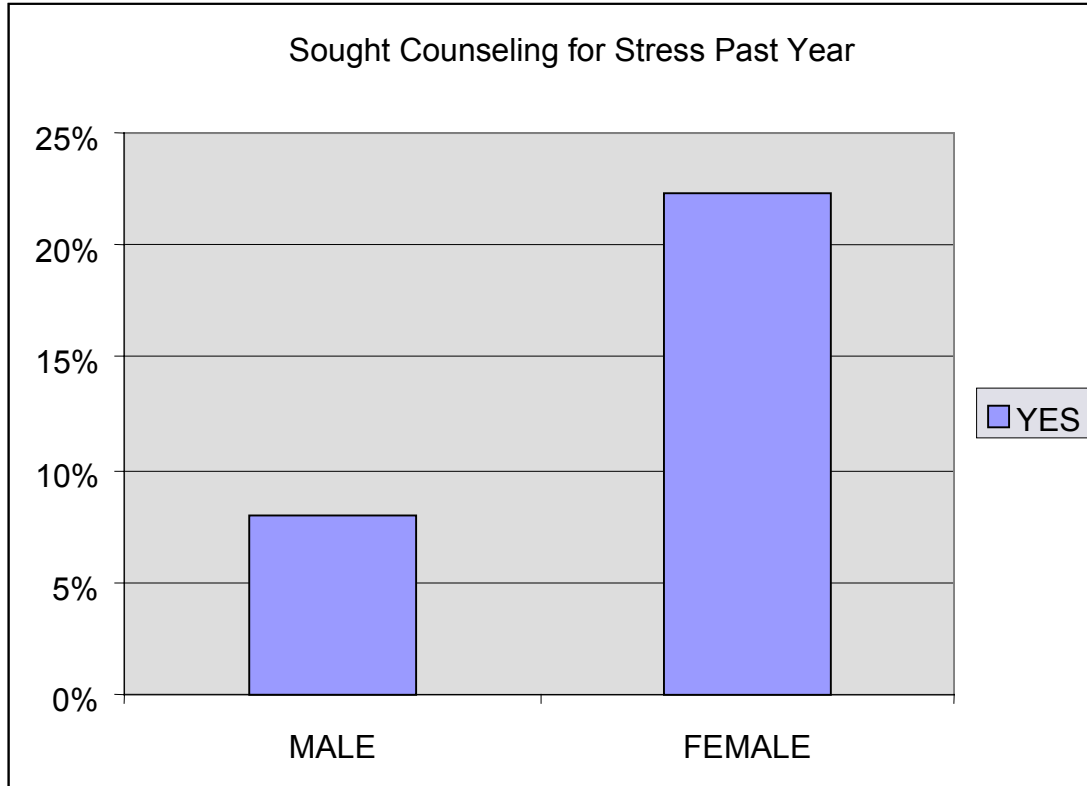
¹ Response rate was calculated in following manner. Completed interview / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) * Sample with unknown status))

Correspondingly, 70% indicated that they were "not very worried" or "not at all worried" with their health. Similarly, 71% had never missed class or work due to sickness in the past month.

Stress

Seventy-seven percent claimed to do a good or excellent job handling stress in their life, nineteen percent reported doing a fair job, and three percent a poor job. Roughly one-sixth (16%) have sought counseling for stress in the past year. While 22% of women sought counseling, only 8% of men sought counseling for stress (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Suicide

In general, more women than men tend to have ever seriously thought about suicide (men 12%, women 15%) and seriously considered suicide in the past 12 month (men 2%, women 4%). However these difference are not statistically significant.

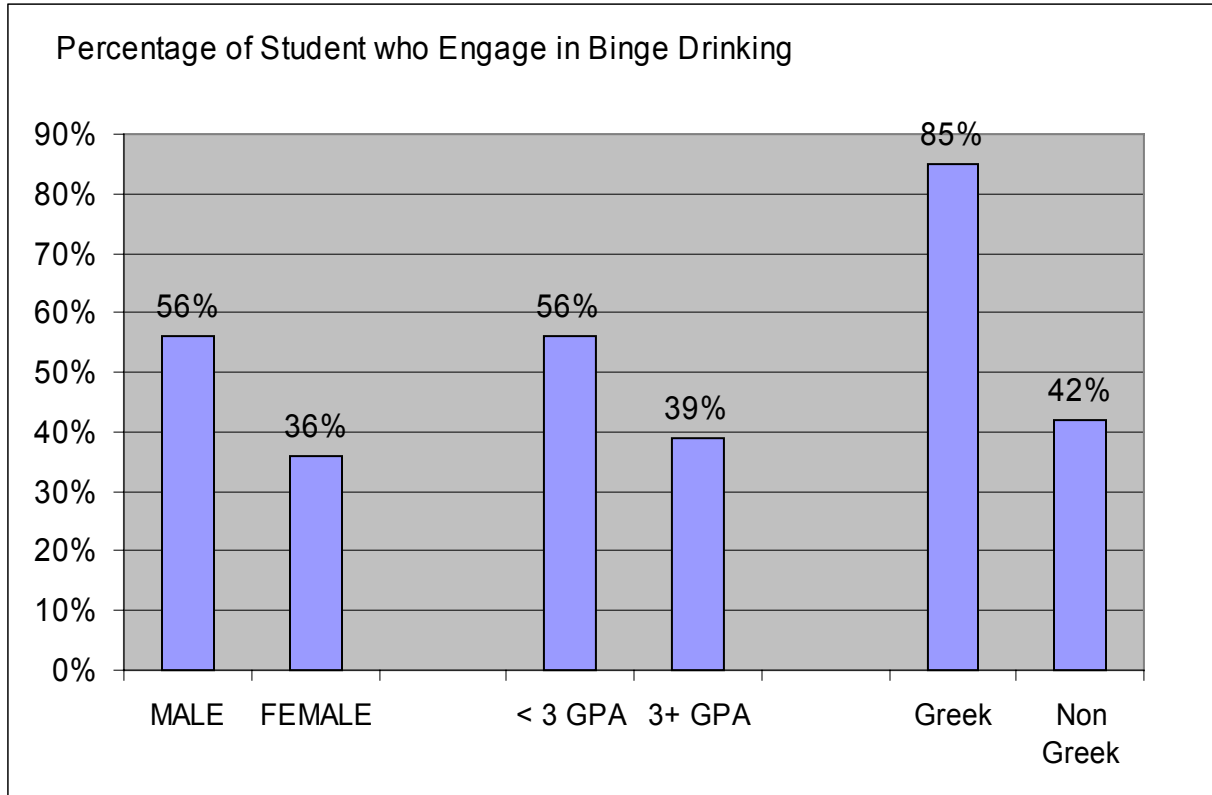
Alcohol Use and Perceptions of Alcohol Use

Binge drinking

The question, "Thinking back over the last 2 weeks, how many times have you had 5 or more drinks at a sitting?" was asked to track students' binge drinking behavior. Fifty-five percent indicated that they had not consumed five or more drinks at a setting in last two weeks. The remainder (45%) of the students indicated that they had 5 or more drinks at a sitting in the last 2 weeks at least once. Of those, 36% responded that they had 5 or more drinks at a setting once, 26% responded that they had twice and 39% responded that they had 3 or more times in a past 2 weeks.

Men, members of fraternity or sorority, and students with lower cumulative GPA were more likely to have engage in binge drinking (see Figure 2). Younger students between the age 18 and 22 tend to engage in binge drinking more frequently. While 51% of this age group engage in binge drinking, only 35% of the older students engage in binge drinking. Similarly, sophomore and the students who are currently not working for pay are more likely to engage in binge drinking. All of these differences except for the difference by class status are statistically significant.

Figure 2



Perception of drinking

In order to track perceptions of drinking, students were asked two questions. First, "When you go out drinking or to a party how many drinks do you typically have?" Then, "How many drinks do you think most students have when they go out drinking or to a party?" In response to the first question, the students who do drink at parties reported consuming an average of 3.8 drinks. In response to the second question, students thought that other students drank an average of 4.7 drinks. It is apparent that most students think other students drink more than they themselves do at parties.

Drinking induced injuries

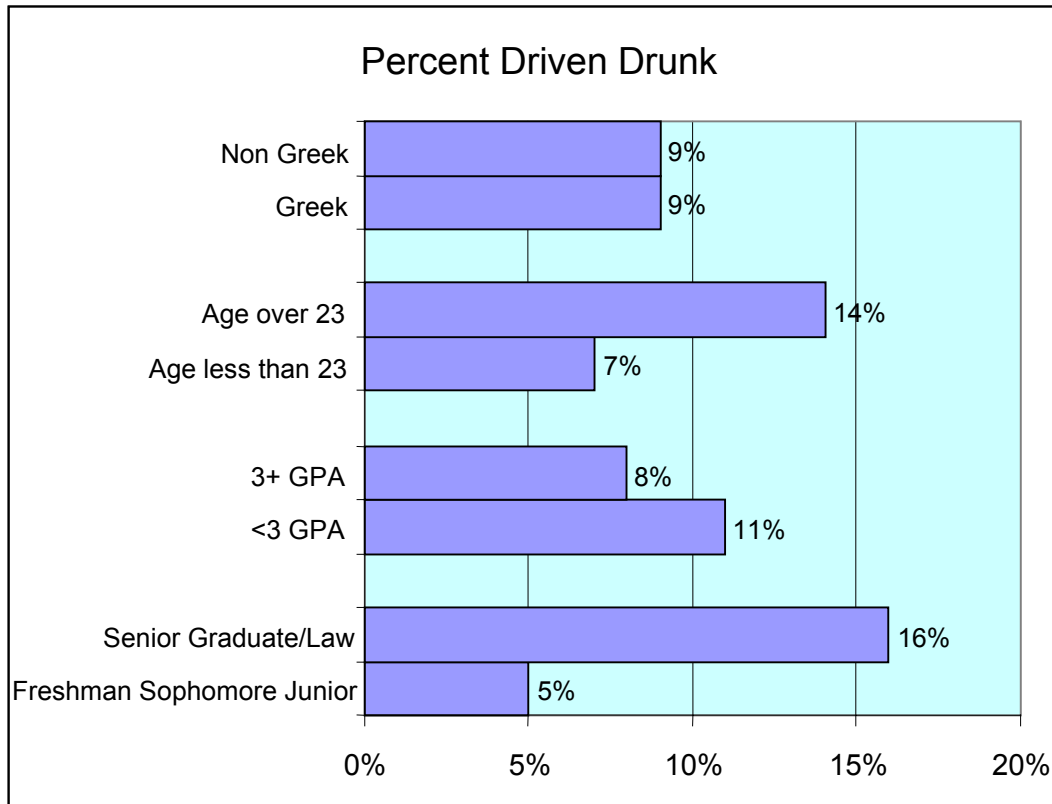
Students were asked two question having to do with potential dangers associated with drinking: (1) whether they had injured themselves and (2) whether they had injured others as a result of their drinking. A small but still sizable 5% of the students reported physically injuring themselves because of drinking alcohol, and 1% reported injuring someone else because of drinking alcohol.

Drinking and driving

Drinking and driving questions measured the extent of student exposure to drunk driving, both as a driver and as a passenger. Close to a tenth (9%) of respondents claimed to have driven at least once in the past month after having three or more drinks of alcohol. Almost third (29%) of the respondents reported riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking.

A greater proportion of men have driven drunk (16%) than women (3%). However there is no sex difference in the frequency of riding in a car driven by a person who had 3 or more drinks.

Figure 3



There is no difference between members and non-members of fraternities and sororities in the frequency of drunk driving. Older students, students with lower cumulative GPA, senior, graduate and law students are more likely to have driven drunk (see Figure 3). By major, law students are most likely to have driven drunk.

Tobacco Use

Less than a third (27%) of the students reported *ever* having used tobacco regularly. Of those who have ever used tobacco regularly, fully 56% indicated that they are current users of tobacco products. Of the tobacco users, 86% are cigarette smokers. Most (67%) of the current cigarette smokers smoked less than one-half pack of cigarettes per day, 28% smoked "between a half and one pack," and 5% reported smoking "more than a pack a day."

Respondents who have used tobacco regularly start smoking at fairly young age. Fully 83% started smoking when they are 18 years old or younger. Also, younger respondents are more likely to be current tobacco users. Comparing younger students (less than 23 years old) and older students (over 23 year old),

of those who ever used tobacco, 61% of younger students still use tobacco, while 50% of older students still use tobacco.

Drug Use

Students were asked questions regarding the use of marijuana, cocaine, crack, hallucinogens, amphetamines, heroine, opium and other narcotics. The table below summarizes the proportion of the students who responded that they had ever tried any of these drugs.

Table 1
Percentage of Students who Used Drugs - 1999 vs. 2000

	Ever tried	Used Last Month
Marijuana	64%	27%
Cocaine, Crack	10%	1%
Hallucinogens	31%	5%
Amphetamines	7%	0%
Heroin, Opium and Other Narcotics	7%	2%

Marijuana is the most common drug tried by respondents: 64% reported ever using it, and of those who have used marijuana, 43% (27% of total sample) had used the drug during the past month. Hallucinogens are the next commonly used drug.

Use of herbal remedies

Two new questions were added last year to assess the use of herbal remedies by students. Those two questions were included this year and it was found that 39% of students reported use of herbal remedies, compared to 44% last year. Of those who use herbal remedies, this year 41% indicated that they inform their health care providers about their use of herbs, compared to 50% last year.

Sexual Behavior

Sexual behavior questions in this year's survey included sexual orientation, engagement in sexual intercourse, age at first intercourse, number of sexual partners in past year, birth control usage, pregnancy, history of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, whether they had been forced into sexual activities against their will in the past year. In addition to these questions which are repeated from previous years of the surveys, this year also asked about the influence of alcohol and drugs on students' sexual behavior.

Sex orientation and engagement in sexual intercourse

Most (96%) students described themselves as heterosexual, 3% and 1% indicated that they are bisexual and homosexual respectively. A large proportion of students are sexually active; 77% reported having engaged in sexual intercourse, and of those the median age at first sexual intercourse was 17. A majority of the

students (72%) reported having just one sexual partner in the past year, 6% had none, 10% had two, and 13% had three or more partners.

Contraceptives use and pregnancies

Among the sexually active students, 82% reported using contraceptives during their last intercourse. Two of the most popular methods of birth control reported were condoms and birth control pills: 53% used condoms and 42% used birth control pills.

Among the sexually active students, 16% responded that they had ever been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant. About half of these pregnancies occurred while respondents were attending the U of O, and 55% of all reported pregnancies were accidental.

Rape

To the question "In the past year, have you been forced by someone to engage in any type of sexual activity against your will," 3% of the respondents indicated that they had been forced to engage in sexual activity against their will during the past year. This result is consistent with last year. These respondents were asked a follow-up question, "Were alcohol or drugs involved with the unwanted sexual activity?" Fully 83% of rapes involved alcohol or drugs.

Influence of drugs and alcohol on sexual behavior

Three questions which were added last year to assess the influence of alcohol and drugs on students' sexual behavior were repeated this year. Overall, the proportion of the students who have had sex under the influence is relatively high. Among sexually active students, 43% (40% in 1999) indicated that they had sex under the influence of drugs or alcohol. When students were asked how often they had sex under the influence, 40% (35% in 1999) indicated either "always," "often" or "sometimes." In addition, among those who have had sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs, 32% (38% in 1999) of the students indicate that alcohol or drugs during sex influenced them to make poor choices regarding contraception or safe sex practices.

Unfair Treatment

Roughly one-fourth (23%) of the students have experienced negative treatment in the past year. Of those student who have been treated negatively, 24% listed age as the cause of the negative treatment, 13% listed sex, 4% listed race/ethnicity, 2% listed nationality and 1% listed sexual preference.

Health Care and Insurance

Health Care

Ninety-one percent of the students had their blood pressure checked in the last 5 years and 40% had their cholesterol level checked in the last 5 years.

Women respondents were asked if they had a pap smear test in the last 3 years. 72% responded "yes." Of the women who didn't have the test in the last 3 years, 37% responded either "don't need one yet" (30%) or "planning to" (7%).

Insurance

Most of the respondents are covered by health insurance (87%). Among the students with health insurance, 70% have the insurance through parents, either by the parents directly (29%) or their employer (41%).

Seven percent of the student "often" feel unable to afford the kind of health care they need. Most students either "never" or "rarely" feels unable to afford the kind of health care they need.

A majority (56%)of students are in favor of requiring UO students to have insurance.

Health Center Use, Satisfaction with Services

Health Center use

A group of questions were asked to assess student use and satisfaction with Health Center services. Fully 70% of the students reported using the Health Center sometime within the past year. Of those who have not used the Health Center last year, the most (53%) indicated that they had not been ill, and 28% indicated that they have a private physician. Less than 1% listed "poor reputation" as a reason for not using Health Center. 17% responded "other". More common "other" reasons includes unfamiliarity with Health Center, and its location.

To the question if the respondents knew that the Health Center is open on weekends, 41% responded they know Health Center is open on weekends.

Satisfaction with services

Fully 67% of the students who have used the Health Center indicated that their health improved because of the visit, and 98% of the students indicated that they would use Health Center services again if necessary.

Both respondents who had used the Health Center and those who had not used the Health Center were asked if services could be improved: 40% responded "yes." The respondents who responded "yes" to this question were asked how services could be improved. The most often mentioned area of service that the Health Center can improve is "quality of care" at 20%, followed by "improve existing service" (15%) and "provide more information" (15%).

Health Center cost and fee

Respondents were asked to compare the cost of health care services provided by the Health Center to other local providers. Most (56%) responded that the Health Center generally costs less, while 16% indicated that it costs "about the same."

In the response to a question "As the cost of health services increases, would you prefer that the Health Center increase its prepaid fee for all students, or would you prefer to a pay increased charges when you are sick or injured (if you use the Health Center)?" A majority (52%) showed a preference for an increase in fees for specific services. At the same time, a sizable proportion (44%) preferred an increase in the prepaid fee.

This year, respondents were asked "Would you be willing to pay an additional \$25 per term to cover up to \$5,000 of the cost of care not available at the health center?" Fully 68% responded that they are willing to pay an additional \$25 fee per term. The proportion of the respondents who are willing to pay an additional fee is somewhat lower among the people who have not used health center in the past year, however this difference is statistically insignificant.

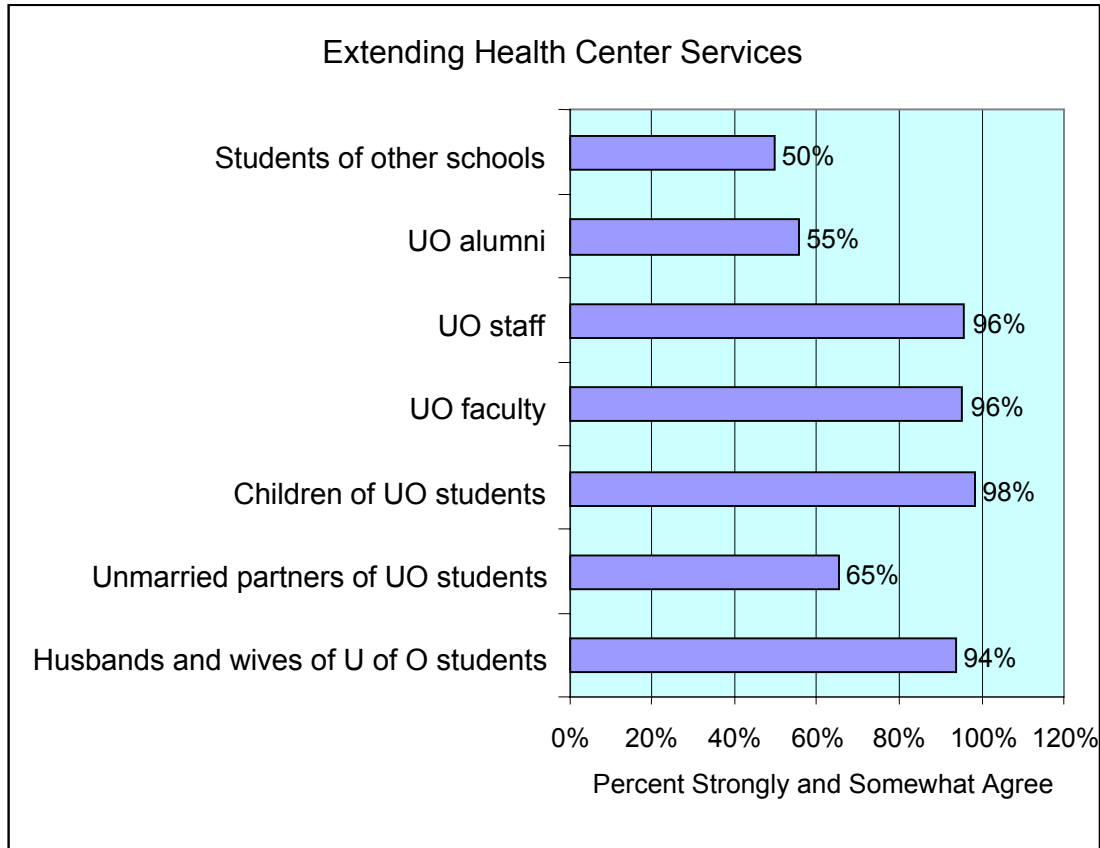
Health Center web page

Questions were asked regarding the Health Center World Wide Web Page again this year. The proportion of the students had seen the Health Center Web page was 12%, which is a slight increase from last year (9%). When they were asked about making appointments by using the Health Center Web page, fully 78% responded that they were either "very interested" or "somewhat interested."

Extending Health Center Services

The Health Center is considering extending its services to other groups in the community and therefore the survey instrument once again included a group of opinion questions to assess student support for inclusion of each of the following groups: spouses of U of O students, unmarried partners of U of O students, children of U of O students, faculty, staff, alumni, and students of other schools nearby. The results from these question are summarized in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4



Conclusion

The Annual University of Oregon Health Center survey is a very useful tool for providing data on student health-related attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. Since many of the questions were asked several times over the past years, each year's finding can be analyzed within the context of the findings from other years, which greatly enhances the understanding of individual results. Although this report was mostly limited to the analysis of the current survey, two accompanying reports, "selected trends 1993-2000" and "tabulation of the result 1993-2000" will be useful in comparing the results from different years and the trends over time. In addition to the repeated questions, the new questions, such as influence of alcohol and drugs on sexual behavior, and herbal remedies use greatly expand the understanding of students' health and risk taking behaviors, which could suggest the possibility of new Health Center policies and programs to provide the best possible care for all University of Oregon students.