

**BACKGROUND**

- Depression and anxiety impact the lives of many college students in the United States. Studies have been conducted on the mental health of students in professional programs, including those of the medical and pharmacy profession. In one study, it was shown that pharmacy students had increased rates of depression and anxiety compared to medical students<sup>1</sup>. Another study reviewed the prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms among students at two schools of pharmacy. The study determined that as many as one in four pharmacy students experienced anxiety and depression that was considered clinically significant, with symptoms ranging from moderate to severe<sup>2</sup>.
- This study will examine the incidence of depression and anxiety among pharmacy students at the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy. The study will focus on the number of PharmD students that are currently being treated for anxiety/depression and when they first sought treatment in relation to their progression in the program. The study will also inquire about what/if resources are being utilized.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Recognize the pharmacy curriculum’s potential impact on prevalence of mental health disorders among students
- Pinpoint the stage in the curriculum that correlates with the highest rate of mental health medication initiation
- Assess whether students associate the pharmacy curriculum with their mental state

**METHODS**

Study Design

- Qualitative survey study
- Survey Design: 27-question survey that requested demographic information, mental health status, perception of school’s support system, and reports of their resource utilization

Study Population

- Second through fourth-year professional year pharmacy (P2-P4) students from the SIUE School of Pharmacy

Study Measures: Dependent Variables

- Primary outcome
  - Rate at which students have taken medication intended to treat anxiety and/or depression following enrollment and participation in the didactic pharmacy curriculum
- Secondary outcomes
  - Rate of students who believe that the didactic pharmacy curriculum has negatively impacted their mental health
  - Rate of medication initiation during each didactic semester

Study Measures: Independent Variables

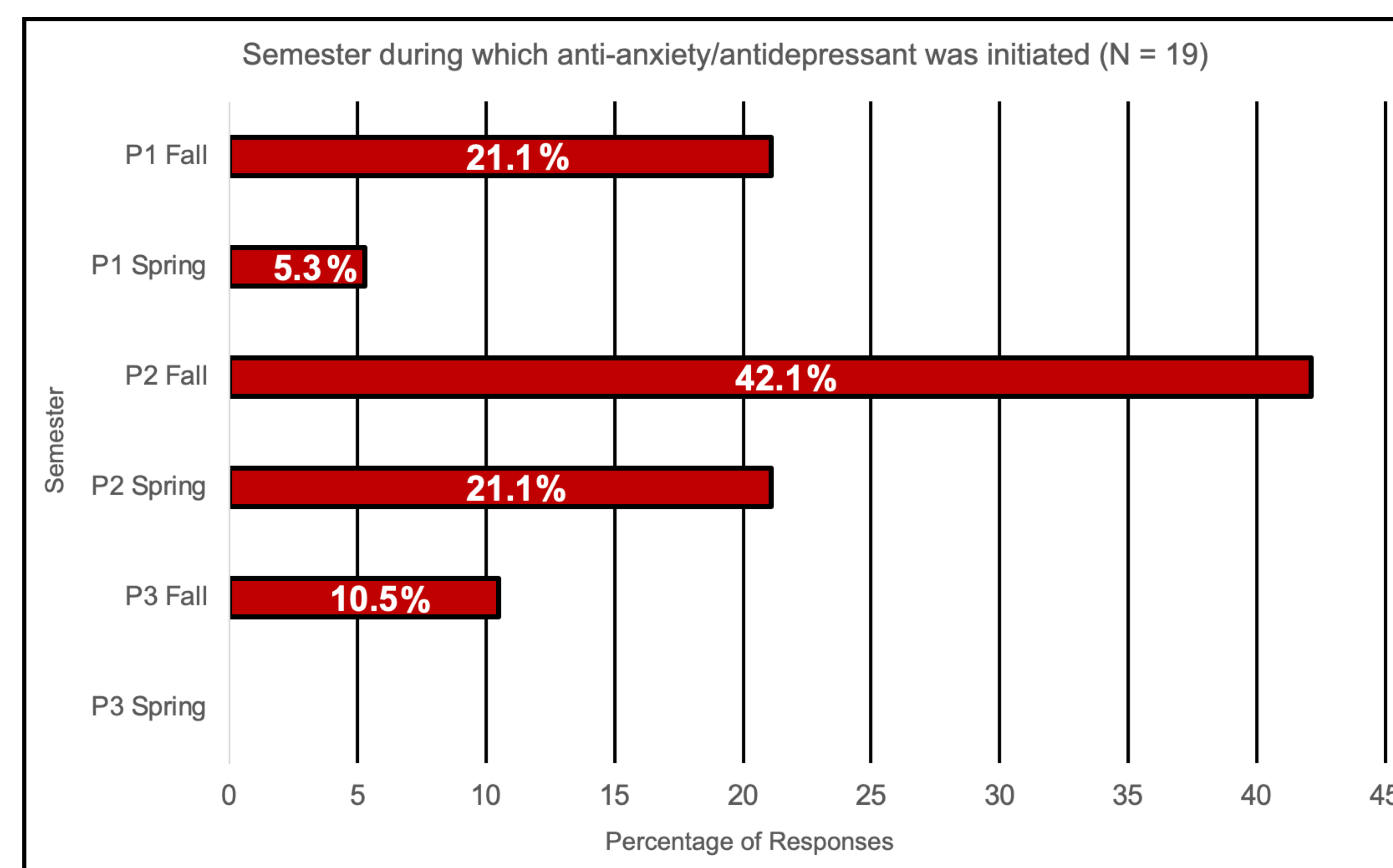
- Age, gender, pharmacy class

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Student Responses Regarding Mental Health and Resources**

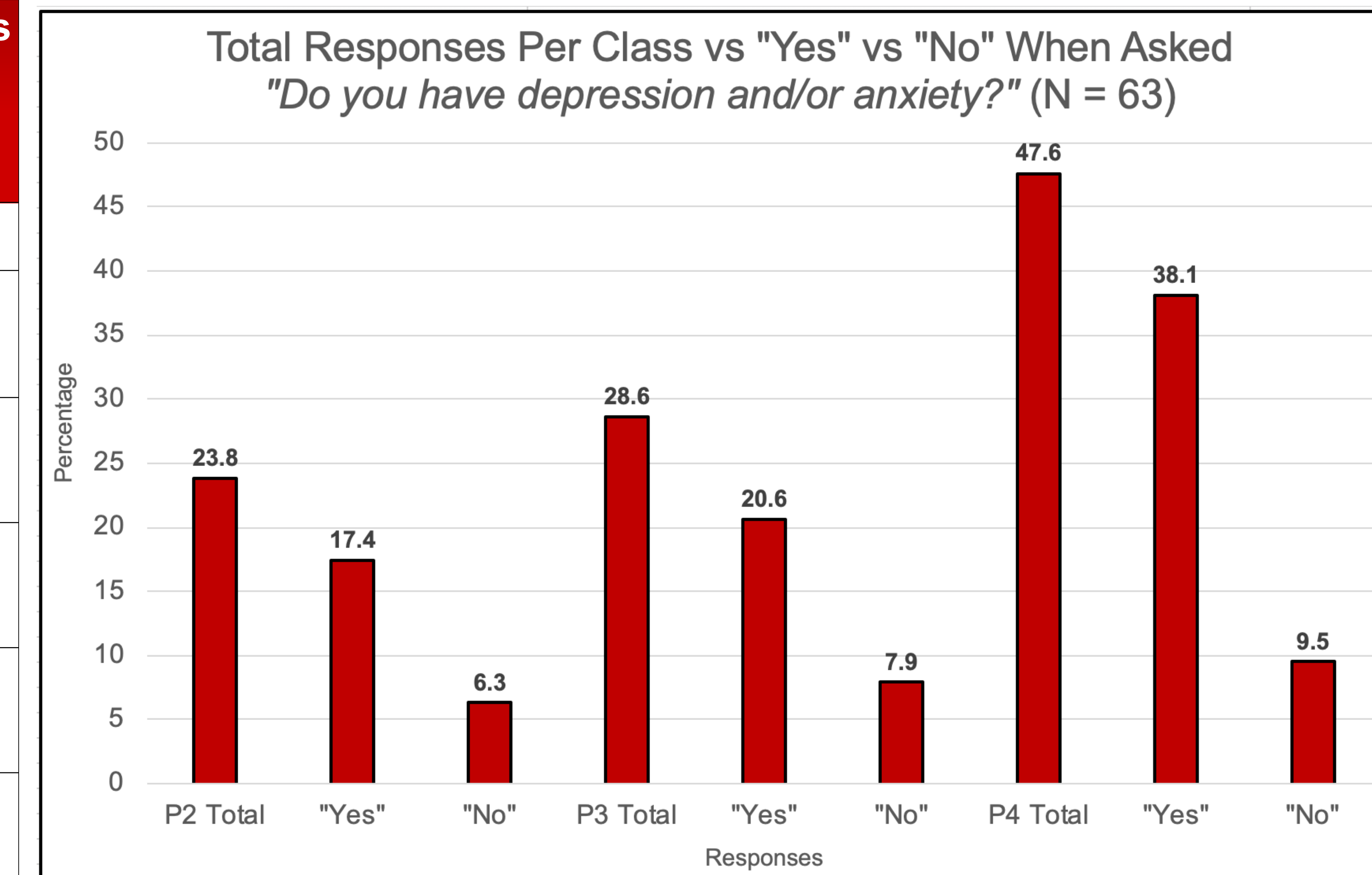
Survey Question	Yes Responses N = 63 % (N)
Do you have depression and/or anxiety?	74.6% (47)
Do you feel like pharmacy school has negatively impacted your mental health?	79.4% (50)
Are you currently taking an antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication?	46% (29)
Do you currently participate in therapy with a mental health professional?	19% (12)
Do you feel like SOP faculty and staff generally display empathy towards students?	50.8% (32)
Do you feel like SOP faculty and staff display empathy towards students in regard to academic stressors?	27% (17)
Do you regularly attend Wellness Wednesdays?	30.2% (19)
Do you find Wellness Wednesdays helpful for your wellbeing?	11.1% (7)
Do you find Counseling Services helpful for your mental health and wellbeing?	12.7% (8)
Are you familiar with Counseling Services' Outreach and Prevention Resource Library?	27% (17)

**Figure 1: Semester of Anti-anxiolytic/Antidepressant Initiation**



**RESULTS**

**Figure 2: Percentage of “Yes” and “No” Responses to “Do you have depression and/or anxiety?” by Pharmacy Class**



**CONCLUSIONS**

- Based on the data collected, a majority of respondents self-reported anxiety and/or depression and also attribute some difficulty with mental health to being enrolled in the school of pharmacy curriculum.
- It also appears that the fall of the second professional year of pharmacy school is associated with a higher rate of anxiolytic/antidepressant initiation.

**THE NEXT STEPS**

- Present this information to the SIUE School of Pharmacy Wellbeing and Resilience Committee with the intent to collaborate with the committee for future programming
- Present this information to school of pharmacy students, faculty, and staff to spread awareness regarding the mental health and wellbeing of students
- Compile a new, accessible resource for students to utilize that is specifically catered to them

**REFERENCES**

1. Fischbein R, Bonfine N. Pharmacy and Medical Students' Mental Health Symptoms, Experiences, Attitudes and Help-Seeking Behaviors. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2019;83(10):7558. doi:10.5688/ajpe7558  
 2. Shangraw AM, Silvers J, Warholak T, Vadieli N. Prevalence of Anxiety and Depressive Symptoms Among Pharmacy Students. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2021;85(2):8166. doi:10.5688/ajpe8166