

Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article

## Determination of Health Perception and Substance Addiction Awareness Among Personnel Working in Student Dormitories

### Öğrenci Yurtlarında Çalışan Personelin Sağlık Algısı ve Madde Bağımlılığı Farkındalığının Belirlenmesi

Süheyla Yaralı <sup>1</sup>  Sultan Esra Sayar <sup>2</sup>  Kübra Tunçel <sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Atatürk University, Faculty of Nursing, Department of Public Health Nursing, Erzurum, TÜRKİYE

<sup>2</sup> Atatürk University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Midwifery, Erzurum, TÜRKİYE

<sup>3</sup> Provincial Health Directorate, Erzurum, TÜRKİYE

Geliş tarihi/ Date of receipt: 18/09/2024

Kabul tarihi/ Date of acceptance: 25/12/2024

© Ordu University Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Nursing, Turkey, Published online: 13/01/2026

#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The present study was designed to determine health perception and substance addiction awareness among personnel working in university student dormitories.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional design was used in the study. The data were completed with the participation of 208 dormitory personnel who were at the Atatürk University Culture Center for educational purposes on 14.04.2023. Data were collected using a personal descriptive form, the Health Perception Scale, and the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale.

**Results:** The study included 208 participants, with a 50.48% participation rate. The average age was 38.76±8.84; most were male (59.1%) and married (73.1%). Participants scored 42.37±8.97 on the Health Perception Scale and 93.86±13.68 on the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale. Marital status, education, and occupation significantly influenced health perception, with married individuals and higher-educated groups demonstrating stronger health control and awareness. Cleaning personnel scored lower in health perception sub-factors compared to other occupations. No significant differences were found in addiction awareness across demographics. A moderate positive correlation existed between health perception and addiction awareness, highlighting their interconnectedness.

**Conclusions:** The study highlights the interconnectedness of health perception and substance addiction awareness, emphasizing the influence of marital status, education, and occupation on health perception while demonstrating consistent addiction awareness across demographics, underscoring the effectiveness of broad public health initiatives.

**Keywords:** Health perception, substance addiction, dormitory staff

#### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrenci yurtlarında çalışan personelin sağlık algısını ve madde bağımlılığı farkındalığını belirlemek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Araştırmada kesitsel bir desen kullanılmıştır. Veriler 14.04.2023 tarihinde Atatürk Üniversitesi Kültür Merkezi'nde bir eğitim amacıyla bulunan 208 yurt personelinin katılımı ile tamamlanmıştır. Veriler kişisel tanımlayıcı form, Sağlık Algısı Ölçeği ve Madde Bağımlılığı Farkındalık Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Çalışmaya 208 katılımcı dahil edildi ve katılım oranı %50,48 idi. Ortalama yaş 38,76 ± 8,84. Katılımcıların çoğu erkek (%59,1) ve evliydi (%73,1). Katılımcıların Sağlık Algısı Ölçeği'nde puanı 42,37 ± 8,97, Madde Bağımlılığı Farkındalığı Ölçeği'nde puanı ise 93,86 ± 13,68 idi. Medeni durum, eğitim ve meslek sağlık algısını önemli ölçüde etkilemiş; evli bireyler ve yüksek eğitimli gruplar daha güçlü sağlık kontrolü ve farkındalığı göstermiştir. Temizlik personeli diğer mesleklerle karşılaştırıldığında sağlık algısı alt faktörlerinde daha düşük puan almıştır. Demografik özellikler arasında bağımlılık farkındalığında anlamlı bir fark bulunamamıştır. Sağlık algısı ile bağımlılık farkındalığı arasında orta düzeyde pozitif bir korelasyon bulunmaktadır.

**Sonuç:** Çalışma, sağlık algısı ile madde bağımlılığı farkındalığının birbiriyle bağlantılı olduğunu, medeni durum, eğitim ve mesleğin sağlık algısı üzerindeki etkisini vurgularken, demografik özellikler ile bağımlılık farkındalığının tutarlı olduğunu ve geniş çaplı kamu sağlığı girişimlerinin önemini vurgulamaktadır.

**Keywords:** Sağlık algısı, madde bağımlılığı, yurt personeli

ORCID IDs of the authors: SY: 0000-0002-7885-1724; ES: 0000-0002-3798-2066; KT: 0000-0003-0722-8764

Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author: Süheyla Yaralı

Atatürk University, Faculty of Nursing, Department of Public Health Nursing, Erzurum, TÜRKİYE

e-posta/e-mail: suheyla.yarali@atauni.edu.tr

Atıf/Citation: Yaralı S, Sayar E, Tunçel K. (2026). Determination of health perception and substance addiction awareness among personnel working in student dormitories. Ordu Üniversitesi Hemşirelik Çalışmaları Dergisi., 9(1), 72-82. DOI: 10.38108/ouhcd.1552052



Content of this journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

## Introduction

Substance addiction is an important global public health problem (Lo et al., 2020). Substance addiction, also known as substance use disorder (SUD), involves addictive substances such as alcohol, tobacco, opioids, stimulants, marijuana, etc. (Carter et al., 2022). Alcohol use disorder is one of the most common forms of substance addiction worldwide. Harmful use of alcohol, which causes 230 different diseases worldwide, kills 3 million people annually, 13.5% of whom are young people (WHO, 2019). This rate represents 5.3% of all deaths. Total worldwide consumption in 2018 was equal to 6.2 liters of pure alcohol per person aged 15 years and above (WHO, 2019). Unregistered consumption constitutes 26% of total consumption worldwide (WHO, 2019). However, this figure can vary considerably by country and region (Glantz et al., 2020). This rate is 12.1% in Türkiye (TurkStat, 2023). The literature review showed that university students widely consume alcohol (Crisafulli et al., 2024). The fact that university students start consuming alcohol this way and become addicted is a serious condition that may cause numerous health (Denardi et al., 2023), social and psychological (Bartholomay et al., 2023) problems in university students. Tobacco addiction, one of the substance addictions (Zamboni et al., 2022), has been an important health problem, especially through smoking (Kim et al., 2023). In 2020, 22.3% of the world's population used tobacco, 36.7% of males and 7.8% of females. While 28.0% of individuals aged 15 years and above used tobacco products daily in Türkiye in 2019, this rate increased to 28.3% in 2022. This rate was found to be 41.3% for males and 15.5% for females in 2022 (TurkStat, 2023). Substance addiction, including addiction to prescription analgesics and illicit opioids such as heroin, has become an increasing source of concern in many parts of the world (Buresh et al., 2024). A considerable increase in the prevalence of substance use has occurred on university campuses (van den Bos et al., 2023). Substance use constitutes a significant concern and has become a global problem, especially among university students (Pérez et al., 2023).

This has shown that universities should pay attention not only to academic achievement but also to their students' general health (Dietz et al., 2020). Dormitory personnel contribute to establishing an environment where students feel safe and supported (Cole, 2016; Simpeh et al., 2021). This includes physical safety and emotional and psychological

well-being (Cole, 2016). Personnel who work in student dormitories are generally the first line of defense in this respect and are of extreme importance in monitoring and enhancing student health (Hallett et al., 2019). Therefore, the health perception of dormitory personnel should be taken into account and questioned (Whitney et al., 2023).

Moreover, considering the prevalence of substance use on university campuses (van den Bos et al., 2023), awareness of the cultural, social, and psychological factors encouraging substance use is critical (Zilberman et al., 2020). Personnel play an essential part in establishing a safe and supportive environment, promoting healthy lifestyles, and providing guidance on substance use (Scherer et al., 2021). This situation suggests that the health awareness and perception of personnel affect their attitudes toward their own substance use and addiction and those of the students they serve. Health perception, which is a concept covering all of individuals' thoughts, feelings, prejudices, and expectations concerning their health, is also a key point in maintaining the health-related system (Dursun et al., 2019). Hence, the system has created a need to enhance health perception levels and strengthen them. This suggests that determining the health perception of dormitory personnel and evaluating substance awareness are important for public health. The present study was conducted to contribute to this deficiency and provide support to students' awareness problems regarding substance addiction from a different perspective.

## Research Questions

- What is the health perception of the staff working in student dormitories, and which factors affect it?
- Do the health perceptions of the employees differ according to demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and education level?
- Is there a relationship between the health perceptions of the staff working in student dormitories and their substance abuse awareness levels?

## Methods

### Study design and sample

This study is a cross-sectional design and was reported according to the STROBE (Medicine, 2024) checklist. The target population consisted of cleaning personnel, security guards, civil servants, workers, youth leaders, and spiritual advisors working in dormitories at a university in Turkey (N=412). All dormitory employees were invited to

participate in the study between April and May 2023. After applying the inclusion criteria, the target population was determined to be 270 individuals. Informed consent was obtained. Individuals who filled out the measurement tools incompletely were excluded from the study. The research was completed with 208 dormitory personnel.

#### **Inclusion criteria,**

- Being a staff member working in student dormitories.
- Voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study and signing the informed consent form.
- To have completed the measurement tools used in the study completely.
- To be capable of communicating during the research process
- Voluntary participation in the study was one of the inclusion criteria.

#### **Instruments**

The personal information form included questions about dormitory personnel's age, gender, marital status, educational status, occupation, smoking and alcohol consumption.

The Health Perception Scale, developed by Diamond et al. (Diamond et al., 2007), consists of four sub-factors and 15 items. The sub-factors of the five-point Likert-type Health Perception Scale are "Center of control," "Self-awareness," "Certainty," and "Importance of health." Participants respond to each item by choosing one of the options: "I strongly agree (5)," "I agree (4)," "I am undecided (3)," "I disagree (2)," and "I strongly disagree (1)." Items 1, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 14 are positive, and items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, and 15 are negative. Negative items on the scale are reverse-scored. The minimum score that participants can obtain from the scale is 15, and the maximum is 75. The person's health perception level increases with an increase in the participants' score. Kadioğlu and Yıldız (2012) (Kadioğlu et al., 2012) adapted this scale to Turkish. The Cronbach's alpha values for sub-factors of the scale are as follows: Center of control 0.90; Self-awareness 0.91; Certainty 0.91; Importance of health 0.82. Table 2 lists the internal consistency reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha values of health perception and its sub-factors in this study.

Arabacı and Yurtsever (Arabacı et al., 2021) evaluated the validity and reliability of the SAAS in adult individuals in 2021. It evaluates the levels of substance addiction awareness. The SAAS consists of 27 items and four factors, including "Support and legal regulations" (9 items), "Symptoms and effects of substance use" (8 items), "Personal attitudes and

opinions" (6 items), and "Factors causing addiction" (4 items). The SAAS was prepared in a 5-point Likert format. The minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 1 point, and the maximum is 5 points. The score obtained from the scale indicates the level of substance addiction awareness. The validity and reliability study by Arabacı and Yurtsever (2021) found Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient to be  $\alpha=0.862$ . Table 2 contains the internal consistency reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha values for the SAAS in this study.

#### **Precautions**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the ethics committee of Atatürk University, Faculty of Health Sciences, with the decision numbered 2023/03/06. Then, after obtaining permission, the university dormitory administration was contacted, and days and hours appropriate for data collection were determined. Informed consent forms were collected. Dormitory personnel were informed about the study's purpose and procedure. Additionally, they were informed about voluntary participation, and the privacy and confidentiality of their answers were guaranteed. The tools were collected face-to-face from dormitory personnel. The application of the data collection tools lasted about 20 minutes.

#### **Ethical Consideration**

Atatürk University Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Committee Number:2023/03/06, Date:24.03.2023. Informed consent was obtained from the dormitory personnel. The study was conducted following the Declaration of Helsinki.

#### **Analytical strategy**

Data were analyzed using the program IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Chicago, IL) for Windows version 25.0. Health perception and substance addiction awareness constituted dependent variables. Dormitory personnel's descriptive characteristics were the independent variables. Numbers, percentages, means and standard deviations were used when presenting the descriptive statistics. Univariate and multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the Health Perception and Substance Addiction Awareness Scales and the independent variables.

**Results**

Of the dormitory personnel, 142 individuals were excluded from the study since they did not provide their consent for participation, and 62 individuals were excluded from the study since they filled out the forms incompletely/incorrectly. The research was completed with 208 individuals. The participation rate in the study was 50.48%.

The average age of the individuals included in the study was 38.76±8.84; 59.1% were male, and 73.1% were married. Of the participants, 42.8% were high school graduates, 33.2% worked as cleaning personnel, 46.2% smoked, and 100% did not consume alcohol (Table 1).

Table 2 contains the Health Perception Scale and Substance Addiction Awareness Scale mean scores of the individuals included in the study. Participants scored 8.57±4.51 on the Center of Control sub-factor of the Health Perception Scale, 10.76±5.58 on the Certainty sub-factor, 11.38±3.10 on the Importance of Health sub-factor, 11.55±4.14 on the Self-Awareness sub-factor, and 42.37±8.97 in total. Participants scored 93.86±13.68 points on the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale (Table 2).

Table 3 presents the distribution of the participants' descriptive characteristics by their Health Perception Scale mean scores. Upon comparing the Health Perception Scale mean scores according to participants' marital status, it was found that the Self-Awareness sub-factor mean scores of married participants were higher compared to single ones, and the difference between them was statistically significant (p<0.05).

**Table 1.** Distribution of Participants' Descriptive Characteristics (n=208)

Characteristics	n	(%)
<b>Average age:</b> 38.76±8.84 (20-60 years)		
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	85	40.9
Male	123	59.1
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	152	73.1
Single	56	26.9
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Secondary school	37	17.8
High school	89	42.8
University	82	39.4
<b>Occupation</b>		
Cleaning personnel	69	33.2
Security guard	41	19.7
Civil servant	21	10.1
Worker	33	15.9
Youth leader	16	7.7
Spiritual advisor	28	13.5
<b>Smoking Status</b>		
Yes	96	46.2
No	92	44.2
I quit	20	9.6
<b>Alcohol Consumption Status</b>		
Yes	0	0.0
No	208	100.0

**Table 2.** Distribution of Participants' Health Perception Scale and Substance Addiction Awareness Scale Mean Scores

Scale Mean Score	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Distributi on Range	X±SD
Center of control	5	0.93	5-24	8.57±4.51
Certainty	4	0.93	4-20	10.76±5.58
Importance of health	3	0.72	3-15	11.38±3.10
Self-awareness	3	0.99	3-15	11.55±4.14
<b>Health Perception Scale Total</b>	15	0.72	20-74	42.37±8.97
<b>Substance Addiction Awareness Scale</b>	27	0.75	35-121	93.86±13.68

SD= Standard Deviation

**Table 3.** Comparison of Participants’ Descriptive Characteristics by the Health Perception Scale Mean Scores

Variables	Center of control X±SD	Certainty X±SD	Importance of health X±SD	Self-awareness X±SD	Health Perception X±SD
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	9.19±4.95	10.66±5.29	10.92±3.12	11.15±4.35	41.95±9.33
Male	8.15±4.14	10.83±5.79	11.70±3.05	11.83±3.97	42.66±8.74
	t=1.644	t=0.216	t=1.796	t=1.159	t=0.557
	p=0.102	p=0.829	p=0.074	p=0.248	p=0.578
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Married	8.25±4.51	11.03±5.45	11.31±3.30	11.98±3.95	42.59±8.67
Single	9.45±4.42	10.04±5.90	11.57±2.47	10.39±4.43	41.79±9.80
	t=1.704	t=1.136	t=0.540	t=2.483	t=0.569
	p=0.090	p=0.257	p=0.590	<b>p=0.014*</b>	p=0.570
<b>Educational Status</b>					
Secondary school <sup>1</sup>	6.57±2.32	12.81±6.11	11.89±3.25	13.05±3.33	44.32±8.38
High school <sup>2</sup>	9.11±5.28	9.96±5.60	11.74±3.29	11.16±4.38	42.18±9.41
University <sup>3</sup>	8.89±4.12	10.71±5.12	10.76±2.72	11.30±4.09	41.70±8.71
	F(Welch)=10.706	F=3.508	F=2.817	F(Welch)=4.092	F=1.131
	<b>p=0.000*</b>	<b>p=0.032*</b>	p=0.062	<b>p=0.019*</b>	p=0.325
	<b>1&lt;2,3</b>	<b>1&gt;2</b>		<b>1&gt;2,3</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>					
Cleaning Personnel <sup>1</sup>	7.36±3.23	10.81±6.14	11.09±3.36	11.96±4.28	41.22±9.51
Security Guard <sup>2</sup>	10.46±4.77	9.95±5.06	9.51±2.51	10.76±4.02	40.68±8.49
Civil Servant <sup>3</sup>	7.48±4.00	9.52±5.13	13.05±2.06	12.00±4.02	42.05±7.28
Worker <sup>4</sup>	6.97±4.31	12.18±6.07	13.55±2.58	13.27±4.04	46.55±9.63
Youth Leader <sup>5</sup>	10.56±6.27	10.50±4.09	9.75±2.97	10.69±3.94	41.69±6.66
Spiritual Advisor <sup>6</sup>	10.36±4.60	11.21±5.31	11.96±2.15	9.86±3.54	43.39±8.81
	F(Welch)=4.915	F(Welch)=0.824	F(Welch)=12.704	F=10.602	F=2.098
	<b>p=0.001*</b>	p=0.537	<b>p=0.000*</b>	<b>p=0.000*</b>	p=0.067
	<b>1&lt;2,6;</b>		<b>2&lt;3,4,6; 1&lt;4;</b>	<b>4&gt;6</b>	
	<b>4&lt;2,6</b>		<b>5&lt;3,4</b>		
<b>Smoking</b>					
Yes	8.19±4.20	10.73±5.87	11.60±3.15	12.16±3.99	42.88±9.06
No	8.87±4.69	10.65±5.48	11.20±3.06	10.89±4.30	41.64±9.30
I quit	9.05±5.16	11.40±4.72	11.15±3.08	11.70±3.75	43.30±6.83
	F=0.659	F=0.149	F=0.466	F=2.232	F=0.561
	p=0.519	p=0.862	p=0.628	p=0.110	p=0.572

SD= Standard Deviation; \*Significant at the p<0.05 level

When the Health Perception Scale mean scores were compared according to individuals’ educational status, it was found that secondary school graduates had lower Center of Control sub-factor mean scores than high school and university graduates, higher Certainty sub-factor mean scores

than high school graduates, and higher Self-Awareness sub-factor mean scores than high school and university graduates, and the difference between them was statistically significant (p<0.05). Further analysis determined that the difference originated from this group. Upon comparing the Health

Perception Scale mean scores according to participants' occupations, it was found that cleaning personnel and workers had lower Center of Control sub-factor mean scores than security guards and spiritual advisors, and the difference between them was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Cleaning personnel, security guards, and youth leaders had lower Importance of Health sub-factor mean scores compared to the other groups, and the difference between them was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The Self-Awareness sub-factor mean scores of workers were higher than those of spiritual advisors, and the difference between them was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Further analysis revealed that the difference arose from these groups.

The study found no statistically significant difference between the groups in the Health Perception Scale mean scores according to participants' gender and smoking status ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

Table 4 contains the comparison of participants' descriptive characteristics according to their Substance Addiction Awareness Scale mean scores. The study revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups in the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale mean scores according to participants' gender, marital status, education, occupation, and smoking status ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Comparison of Participants' Descriptive Characteristics by the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale Mean Scores

Characteristics	X±SD	Test and p
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	94.84±13.59	t=0.853
Male	93.19±13.76	p=0.394
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	93.62±13.97	t=0.420
Single	94.52±12.97	p=0.675
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Secondary school	90.51±13.99	F=1.892
High school	93.55±13.53	p=0.153
University	95.71±13.55	
<b>Occupation</b>		
Cleaning Personnel	92.58±14.72	
Security Guard	93.93±11.49	F=0.620
Civil Servant	91.33±12.34	p=0.684
Worker	94.64±15.43	
Youth Leader	95.38±9.26	
Spiritual Advisor	97.04±15.14	
<b>Smoking Status</b>		
Yes	93.36±14.49	F=0.228
No	94.00±13.17	p=0.797
I quit	95.60±12.42	

Pearson's correlation analysis examined the relationship between participants' ages, and their Health Perception Scale and Substance Addiction Awareness Scale mean scores, and the results are presented in Table 5. A weak negative correlation was identified between participants' ages and the Health Perception Scale Center of Control sub-factor and the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale scores ( $p < 0.05$ ). A weak negative correlation was found between the Centre of Control sub-factor and the Importance of Health sub-factor, while a

moderate positive correlation was identified between the Health Perception Scale and the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). A high positive correlation was found between the Certainty sub-factor and the Health Perception Scale, and a moderate positive correlation was revealed with the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). A weak positive correlation was identified between the Importance of Health sub-factor and the Health Perception Scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was a moderate positive correlation between

the Self-Awareness sub-factor and the Health Perception Scale and a weak positive correlation with the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale ( $p<0.05$ ). A moderate positive correlation was

determined between the Health Perception Scale and the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Correlation Between Participants' Ages and Scale Mean Scores

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1) Age	<i>r</i>	-						
	<i>p</i>	-						
(2) Center of control	<i>r</i>	-.197**	-					
	<i>p</i>	<b>0.004</b>	-					
(3) Certainty	<i>r</i>	0.058	0.057	-				
	<i>p</i>	0.404	0.410	-				
(4) Importance of health	<i>r</i>	0.053	-0.236	0.012	-			
	<i>p</i>	0.448	<b>0.001</b>	0.867	-			
(5) Self-awareness	<i>r</i>	0.121	0.093	0.103	0.046	-		
	<i>p</i>	0.081	0.184	0.141	0.509	-		
(6) Health Perception Scale	<i>r</i>	<b>0.006</b>	0.405**	0.712**	0.251**	0.502**	-	
	<i>p</i>	0.936	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	-	
(7) Substance Addiction Awareness Scale	<i>r</i>	-0.165*	0.359**	0.343**	-0.031	0.265**	0.525**	-
	<i>p</i>	<b>0.017</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.657</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	-

\* $p<0.05$  \*\* $p<0.00$

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the health perception and substance addiction awareness of personnel working in student dormitories. Substance addiction has become a growing concern among university students in recent years (Caner et al., 2022; Weyandt et al., 2022). Additionally, identifying problems related to health perception is essential in public health (Gül et al., 2022). This research examined the health perception of dormitory personnel, its association with substance addiction, and their substance addiction awareness.

The study found that married individuals had significantly higher scores in the Self-Awareness sub-factor of the Health Perception Scale compared to single participants ( $p<0.05$ ). Similar to previous research (Tadiri et al., 2021), this finding highlights the role of social support and stability, which marriage provides, in enhancing self-awareness related to health (Berli et al., 2021). Self-awareness is essential, as it reflects confidence in adopting preventive health behaviors (Commodari et al., 2020). This finding underscores the importance of social factors like marriage in fostering self-awareness about health, suggesting that interventions might consider leveraging social support systems to improve health perceptions.

Education level significantly influenced multiple sub-factors of health perception. Secondary school graduates scored lower in the Center of Control sub-factor than high school and university graduates, indicating that education fosters a stronger sense of control over health ( $p<0.05$ ). Similarly, the Certainty and Self-Awareness sub-factor scores were higher for secondary school graduates than for some other groups, emphasizing the complex relationship between education and health perception. Higher education is generally associated with preventive health behaviors and a greater understanding of personal health (Yuan et al., 2021). The role of education in shaping health perception highlights the need for health literacy initiatives, particularly among less-educated groups, to enhance their sense of control and self-awareness regarding health.

Occupational roles also impacted health perception scores. Cleaning personnel and workers scored lower in the Center of Control sub-factor compared to security guards and spiritual advisors ( $p<0.05$ ). Similarly, cleaning personnel, security guards, and youth leaders scored lower in the Importance of Health sub-factor compared to other groups ( $p<0.001$ ). These findings underline the role of occupation in shaping health perception, potentially through exposure to health-related knowledge and job responsibilities (Mirowsky, 2017). This result suggests that occupations

requiring less education or providing limited health-related knowledge may contribute to lower health perception, highlighting the need for targeted health promotion programs in specific occupational groups.

No statistically significant differences in health perception scores were observed based on gender or smoking status ( $p>0.05$ ). This indicates that these demographic variables do not have a notable impact on individuals' health perceptions. The lack of differences by gender or smoking status suggests that health perception interventions should focus more on factors like education and occupation rather than demographic characteristics.

The study revealed no statistically significant differences in Substance Addiction Awareness Scale scores based on gender, marital status, education, occupation, or smoking status ( $p>0.05$ ).

Uniformity in substance addiction awareness across demographic groups suggests the success of broad-based public health campaigns, though tailored strategies could still enhance awareness among specific subgroups.

The absence of differences suggests that substance addiction awareness campaigns and programs have effectively reached diverse demographic groups, ensuring broad and inclusive dissemination of information (Hsiung et al., 2022). This finding aligns with a previous study showing that substance addiction awareness is generally consistent across populations (Abid et al., 2023). This indicates the effectiveness of current public health efforts but also underscores the need to evaluate the depth and impact of such programs in achieving behavioral change beyond awareness.

It was anticipated that smokers might have higher awareness due to their direct exposure to substance use. However, the lack of significant differences suggests that public health strategies may need to better target smokers to enhance their understanding of substance addiction (Colston et al., 2021). This finding points to a potential gap in public health strategies in which smokers, despite their exposure, may not be effectively engaged in substance addiction awareness initiatives.

A weak negative correlation between participants' ages and the Health Perception Scale Center of Control sub-factor scores ( $p<0.05$ ), indicating that younger participants perceive greater control over their health. The weak effect may be due to the fact that the average age of the study participants was 38.76. In a study, a statistically significant difference was found between the

alcohol dependence group and the substance dependence group in terms of mean age, and it was interpreted that the diagnosis of alcohol dependence increased with increasing age (Khalifeh et al., 2024). This result supports the findings of the study. A weak negative correlation between age and Substance Addiction Awareness Scale scores ( $p<0.05$ ), suggests younger individuals have slightly higher awareness levels. This finding may highlight the effectiveness of recent substance addiction awareness campaigns targeting younger populations, possibly due to their greater engagement with media and digital platforms (Çakar and Öztunç, 2023).

Positive correlations between the sub-factors of the Health Perception Scale and the Substance Addiction Awareness Scale, particularly a moderate positive correlation between the overall scales ( $p<0.05$ ). Molinero et al. found no significant difference in health self-perception between toxic substance users and non-users (Molinero et al., 2011). Another study also found that adolescents who did not consume toxic substances and spent long periods of time on school tasks did not differ in terms of perceived health from those who used electronic devices, engaged in physical activity, and had a propensity for substance abuse (Nuviala et al., 2009). These findings support that lifestyle and health self-perception are the result of the interaction of individual and social factors. The relationship between health perception and substance addiction awareness suggests that improving one aspect (e.g., health perception) could positively influence the other, offering a dual benefit for public health programs.

These results demonstrate that individuals with higher health perception tend to have greater substance addiction awareness, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these concepts.

This conclusion reinforces the need for integrated approaches that address both health perception and substance addiction awareness simultaneously to maximize public health outcomes.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study concluded that substance addiction and health perception were moderate, below the necessary level. A moderate positive relationship was identified between health perception and substance addiction awareness. Nurses working in primary health care should create a regularly updated training plan on substance abuse. It should provide training and counseling to

the staff working in student dormitories. This training should cover the definition and types of substances (tobacco, alcohol, prescription drugs, illicit drugs), the biology of addiction and its impact on the brain and body, psychological, social and economic factors contributing to the underlying cause, prevalence of substance use, risk factors and protective factors.

### Strengths and Limitations

This study is one of the first to reveal the health perception and substance addiction awareness of student dormitory personnel. The results obtained from the present study will guide interventions designed for substance addiction. The study offers a unique viewpoint on evaluating factors related to substance addiction in university students.

The study has some limitations. Since this is a single-center study, the generalizability of the results is limited. The cross-sectional design may limit definitive causal relationships. Furthermore, it may be more effective to provide studies on the occupations of dormitory personnel.

### Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all the staff who voluntarily participated in the study.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** Atatürk University Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Committee Number:2023/03/06, Date:24.03.2023.

**Peer-review:** External referee evaluation.

**Author Contributions:** Idea/concept: SY; Design: SY; Supervision: ES; Resources: SY; Materials: KT, ES; Data Collection and/or Processing: SY, ES; Analysis and/or Interpretation: SY; Literature Search: SY, EV, KT; Writing Manuscript: SY; Critical Review: ES; KT.

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Financial Disclosure:** No financial support has been received for this research.

### What did the study add to the literature?

- The research determines the health perception and substance abuse awareness of the staff working in university dormitories.
- Determining the health perception and awareness of substance addiction of student dormitory staff will contribute to the literature as a guide for education-oriented studies.
- The study serves as an important data source that can contribute to the literature.

### References

- Abid A, Suneel I. (2023). Role of Socio-Demographic Factors in Codependency of Spouses of Substance Users. *Journal of Professional & Applied Psychology*, 4(2), 258-265. <https://doi.org/10.52053/jpap.v4i2.137>
- Arabacı LB, Yurtsever B. (2021). Validity and reliability of the Substance Abuse Awareness Scale and Substance Abuse Knowledge Test in adults. *Fenerbahçe University Journal of Health Sciences*, 1(3), 206-225.
- Bartholomay EM, Stone BM, Lyons GA. (2023). Depression and social anxiety symptoms explain substance use problems beyond amount/frequency of substance use. *Current Psychology*, 42(8), 6249-6256. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01984-1>
- Berli C, Schwaninger P, Scholz U. (2021). "We feel good": Daily support provision, health behavior, and well-being in romantic couples. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 622492. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.622492>
- Buresh C, Kaplan R. (2024). Opioid Use Disorder, Adolescents, and the Importance of Treatment in the Emergency Department. *Pediatric Emergency Care*, 40(1), 51-55. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PEC.00000000000003104>
- Caner A, Özcebe H. (2022). Water pipe smoking among public versus private university students in Ankara, Turkey: an online survey. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1), 1256. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13616-9>
- Carter G, Yu Z, Aryana Bryan M, Brown JL, Winhusen T, Cochran G. (2022). Validation of the tobacco, alcohol, prescription medication, and other substance use (TAPS) tool with the WHO alcohol, smoking, and substance Involvement screening test (ASSIST). *Addictive Behaviors*, 126, 107178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2021.107178>
- Chen WL, Chen JH. (2020). "College fields of study and substance use". *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1631. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09722-1>
- Cole KM. (2016). Residence Hall Staff Response to Student Mental Health Needs. University of California, Davis.
- Colston DC, Xie Y, Thrasher JF, Emery S, Patrick ME, Titus AR, et al. (2021). Exploring How Exposure to Truth and State-Sponsored Anti-Tobacco Media Campaigns Affect Smoking Disparities among Young Adults Using a National Longitudinal Dataset, 2002-2017. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(15), 7803. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18157803>
- Commodari E, La Rosa V, Coniglio M. (2020). Health risk perceptions in the era of the new coronavirus: are the Italian people ready for a novel virus? A cross-sectional study on perceived personal and comparative susceptibility for infectious diseases. *Public Health*, 187, 8-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.07.036>

- Crisafulli MJ, Flori JN, Dunn, ME, Dvorak RD. (2024). College student alcohol use: understanding the role of alcohol expectancies, social anxiety, social connectedness, and need to belong. *Psychiatry*, 87(1), 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.2023.2286845>
- Çakar, İ., & Öztunç, M. (2023). Investigation of Turkish Red Crescent's Public Ads in the Framework of Social Impact with Reception Analysis. *International Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 3(1), 116.
- Denardi IP, Amorim PB, Macedo AKS, Fernandes JB, de Moraes TG. (2023). Alcohol use among students at a higher education institution. *International Seven Journal of Health Research*, 2(5), 1057-1076. <https://doi.org/10.56238/isevjhv2n5-013>
- Diamond JJ, Becker JA, Arenson CA, Chambers CV, Rosenthal MP. (2007). Development of a scale to measure adults' perceptions of health: Preliminary findings. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35(5), 557-561. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20164>
- Dietz P, Reichel JL, Edelmann D, Werner AM, Tibubos AN, Schäfer M, et al. (2020). A systematic umbrella review on the epidemiology of modifiable health influencing factors and on health promoting interventions among university students. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8, 525485. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00137>
- Dursun Sİ, Vural B, Keskin B, Kaçar HK, Beyhan A, Kadioğlu H. (2019). The Relationship Between Traditional/Complementary Medical Attitude and Health Literacy and Health Perception in Adults. *Journal of Public Health Nursing*, 1(1), 1-10.
- Glantz MD, Bharat C, Degenhardt L, Sampson NA, Scott KM, Lim CCW et al. (2020). The epidemiology of alcohol use disorders cross-nationally: Findings from the World Mental Health Surveys. *Addict Behav*, 102, 106128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2019.106128>
- Gül E, Erci B. (2022). Investigating the correlation of health literacy with eating behavior and health perception in adult individuals. *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14635240.2022.2088590>
- Hallett RE, Crutchfield RM, Maguire JJ. (2019). Addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in higher education: Strategies for educational leaders. Teachers College Press.
- Hsiung H, Patel K, Hundal H, Baccouche BM, Tsao KW. (2022). Preventing Substance Abuse in Adolescents: A Review of High-Impact Strategies. *Cureus*, 14(7), e27361. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.27361>
- Kadioğlu H, Yıldız A. (2012). Validity and Reliability of Turkish Version of Perception of Health Scale. *Türkiye Klinikleri Journal of Medical Sciences*, 32(1), 47-53. <https://doi.org/10.5336/medsci.2010-21761>
- Khalifeh L, Caspi A, Dent K, Harrington H, Meier M, Poulton R, et al. (2024). Characterizing Midlife-Onset Alcohol Dependence: Implications for Etiology, Prevention, and Healthy Aging. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 13(12). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21677026241260249>
- Kim K, Picciotto MR. (2023). Nicotine addiction: More than just dopamine. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, 83, 102797. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conb.2023.102797>
- Leadbeater B, Ames ME, Contreras A. (2020). Male-Dominated Occupations and Substance Use Disorders in Young Adulthood. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 14(2), 1557988320908105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988320908105>
- Lo TW, Yeung JWK, Tam CHL. (2020). Substance Abuse and Public Health: A Multilevel Perspective and Multiple Responses. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(7), 2610. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17072610>
- Medicine P. (2024). STROBE checklist <http://www.plosmedicine.org/>
- Mirowsky J. (2017). Education, social status, and health. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351328081>
- Molinero O, Salguero, A, Castro-Piñero J, Mora J, Márquez S. (2011). Abuso de sustancias y percepción de la salud en niños y adolescentes españoles. *Nutrición Hospitalaria*, 26(2), 402-409.
- Mutiso VN, Ndeti DM, E NM, Musyimi C, Osborn TL, Kasike R, et al. (2022). Prevalence and perception of substance abuse and associated economic indicators and mental health disorders in a large cohort of Kenyan students: towards integrated public health approach and clinical management. *BMC Psychiatry*, 22(1), 191. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-022-03817-2>
- Nuviala AN, Cruces AG, Martínez AF, Schönemann OA, Abad JB, Pons AJ. (2009). Autopercepción de la salud, estilo de vida y actividad física organizada. *Revista Internacional de Medicina y Ciencias de la Actividad Física y del Deporte/International Journal of Medicine and Science of Physical Activity and Sport*, 9(36), 414-430.
- Özdelikara A, Alkan SA, Mumcu N. (2018). Determination of health perception, health anxiety and effecting factors among nursing students. *Medical Journal of Bakirkoy*, 14(3), 275-282. <https://doi.org/10.5350/BTDMJB.20170310015347>
- Pérez T, Pardo MC, Cabellos Y, Peressini M, Ureña-Vacas I, Serrano DR, et al. (2023). Mental health and drug use in college students: Should we take action? *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 338, 32-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.05.080>
- Scherer LA, Leshner AI. (2021). Mental health, substance use, and wellbeing in higher education: Supporting the whole student. National Academies Press.
- Simpeh F, Adisa S. (2021). Evaluation of on-campus student housing facilities security and safety performance. *Facilities*, 39(7/8), 470-487. <https://doi.org/10.1108/F-04-2020-0051>

- Tadiri CP, Gisinger T, Kautzky-Willer A, Kublickiene K, Herrero MT, Norris CM, et al. (2021). Determinants of perceived health and unmet healthcare needs in universal healthcare systems with high gender equality. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1), 1488. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11531-z>
- TurkStat. Turkey Health Survey.2023:Ankara. <https://www.tuik.gov.tr/Home/Index>
- Van den Bos A, Blaauw E, Bieleman B. (2023). University students and the normalization of illicit recreational drug use. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 26(7), 894-906. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2053668>
- Weyandt LL, Gudmundsdottir BG, Holding EZ, Marraccini ME, Keith M, May SE. et al. (2022). Prescription opioid misuse among university students: A systematic review. *Journal of American College Health*, 70(4), 1119-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1786095>
- Whitney P, Kluge MA, Morris P, Taylor J, Hoban MT. (2023). Determinants of perceived health in university employees. *Journal of American College Health*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2023.2283731>
- WHO. (2019) Global Information System on Alcohol and Health. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/global-information-system-on-alcohol-and-health>
- Yuan S, Xiong Y, Michaëlsson M, Michaëlsson K, Larsson SC. (2021). Genetically predicted education attainment in relation to somatic and mental health. *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 4296. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-83801-0>
- Zamboni L, Campagnari S, Giordano R, Fusina F, Carli S, Congiu A, et al. (2022). A virtual reality craving study in tobacco addiction: The role of non-pharmacological support in tobacco detox therapy. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13, 940100. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.940100>
- Zilberman N, Yadid G, Efrati Y, Rassovsky Y. (2020). Who becomes addicted and to what? Psychosocial predictors of substance and behavioral addictive disorders. *Psychiatry Research*, 291, 113221. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113221>