

Smart Drugs

We asked Canadian General Practitioners (GPs) about their awareness and attitudes about smart drugs and the extent to which they're concerned about their use.

Nootropics, or "smart drugs", is an umbrella term referring to supplements, drugs, or functional foods that enhance cognitive functions such as intelligence, memory, and focus.



Vitamins & Minerals



Stimulants



Cognitive Enhancers

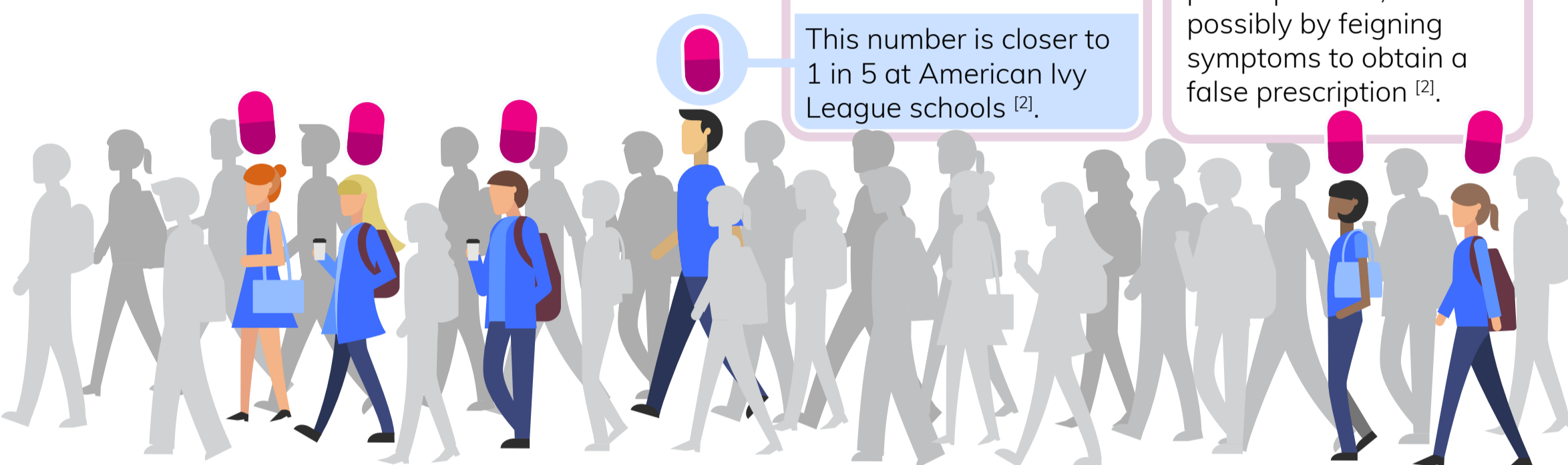
Use of smart drugs is high, particularly among students

Despite this, only 38% of GPs are aware of the term

A 2013 study of UBC students found that 1 in 30 admitted to obtaining ADHD medication they had not been prescribed for the purpose of aiding study and the completion of coursework [1].

This number is closer to 1 in 5 at American Ivy League schools [2].

Stimulants for treating ADHD are thought to be the most commonly used nootropics, especially among students, because they can be obtained from friends with prescriptions [1], or possibly by feigning symptoms to obtain a false prescription [2].



The online perpetuation of the benefits of smart drugs could impact public safety

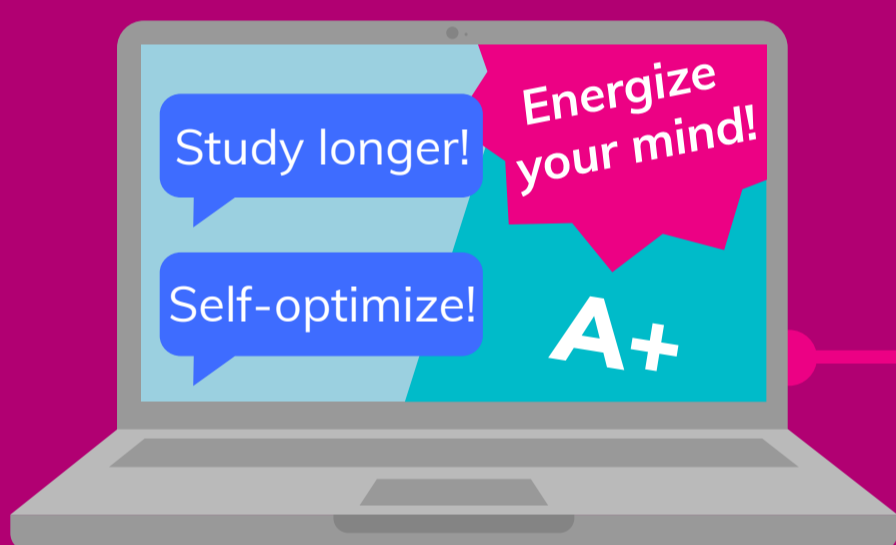
When introduced to the concept of smart drugs:

81%

of GPs believe they are a significant public health issue.

69%

of GPs are concerned about safety as it relates to the long term use of smart drugs.

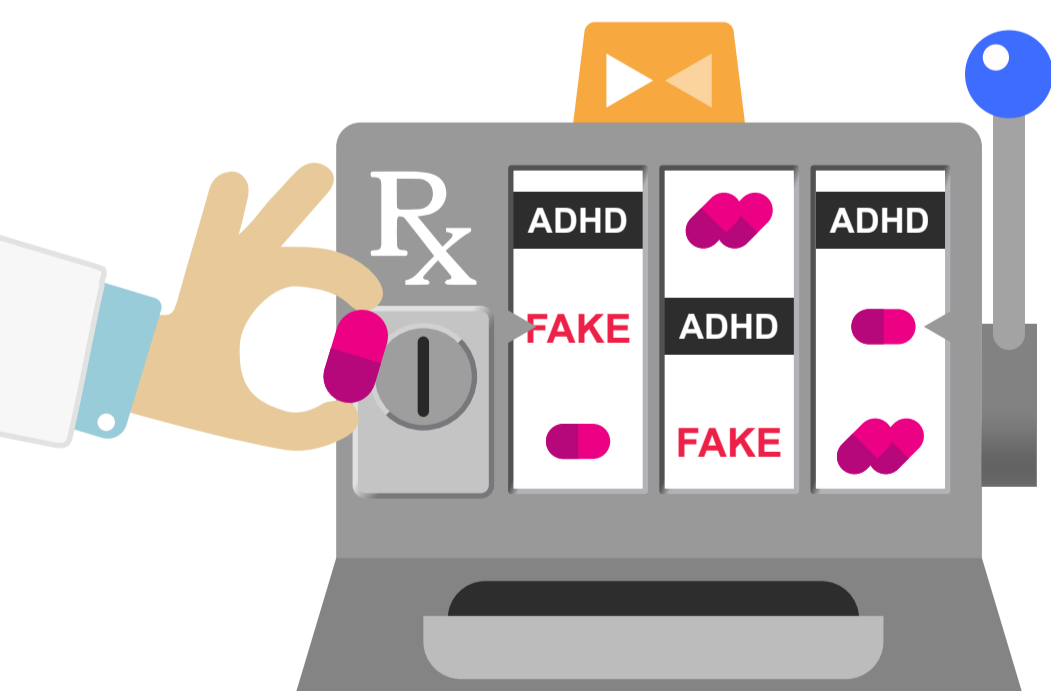


85%

think the marketing materials used to promote smart drugs are perpetuating false information about the benefits of these products.

Safety concerns over prescription meds being misused as smart drugs may have implications for legitimate ADHD patients

With the availability and increased use of ADHD medication for non-prescription purposes, there is concern that smart drugs could impact how ADHD is diagnosed and treated in Canada.



80%

Believe that students and young professionals could falsify their answers to ADHD diagnostic tools in order to get a prescription.

71%

Believe that ADHD medications are the most commonly used smart drugs.

There is a need to further educate and support frontline physicians.

Industry stakeholders can play an important role in helping physicians become more familiar with the growing use of prescription medications as nootropics.

Increased familiarity will help balance public safety concerns while still supporting optimal treatment of those legitimately suffering from ADHD.



Data based on survey of n=118 Canadian GPs. June 2017.



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1. University students using ADHD drugs as study aid. (2014). Retrieved from <http://montrealgazette.com/news/national/university-students-using-adhd-drugs-as-study-aid>
2. Cederström, C. (2016). Like It or Not, "Smart Drugs" Are Coming to the Office. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/05/like-it-or-not-smart-drugs-are-coming-to-the-office>