An analysis of college students' Twitter use finds mentions of the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drug Adderall spikes during finals.

Tweets about the drug are most common in the northeast and south. Some students use Adderall and other ADHD medications to help them focus while studying,

Researchers at Brigham Young University monitored all public-facing Twitter mentions of Adderall over a six-month period, removing those who indicated they were promoting the drug. They found 213,633 tweets from 132,099 users, MedicalXpress reports. Adderall-related tweets averaged 930 per day, but jumped to 2,813 on December 13, and 2,207 on April 30, they report in the Journal of Medical Internet Research.
"Adderall is the most commonly abused prescription stimulant among college students," lead researcher Carl Hanson said in a news release. "Our concern is that the more it becomes a social norm in online conversation, the higher risk there is of more people abusing it."

Tweets mentioning Adderall were more common in the middle of the week, and declined by the weekend. "It's not like they're using it as a party drug on the weekend," Hanson noted. "This data suggests that they're using it as a study aid. Many of the tweets even made a study reference."

Per-capita tweets about Adderall were highest in Vermont, Massachusetts and Alabama. Southeast Texas, central Illinois and northern California had the lowest rates.

The study found 9 percent of tweets mentioning Adderall included another substance such as alcohol, cocaine, marijuana or Xanax. Study co-author Michael Barnes said, "Tweets hinting at co-ingestion are particularly troubling because morbidity and mortality risk increases when substances are combined."

Dozens of colleges are instituting stricter rules for diagnosing and medicating ADHD. The rules are a reaction to the growing overuse of these medications. One study at a large university found 34 percent of students had used a prescription stimulant drug to help them focus when they felt academic stress.