

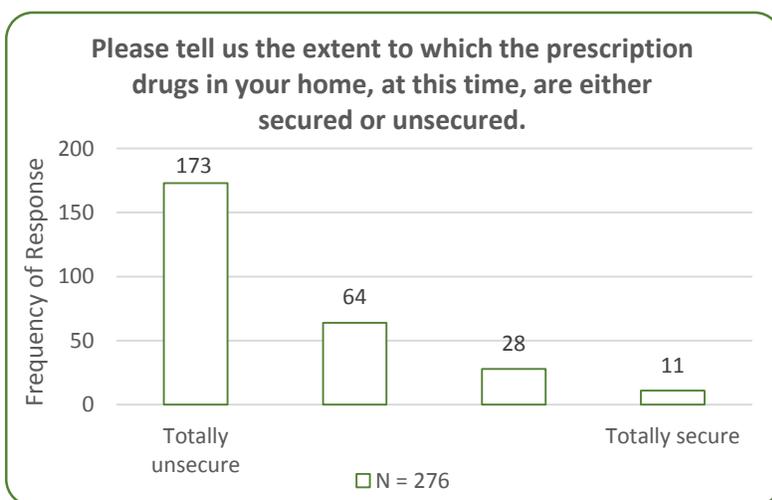
INTRODUCTION

PreventionFIRST! is committed to taking action against Ohio's opioid epidemic. One strategy being advocated by PreventionFIRST! is decreasing access to prescription drugs that have the potential to be abused. It is clear that abusers of prescription drugs obtain those drugs *not* directly from physicians, but mostly from peers or from members of their families (see Center for Prevention Science, Student Drug Use Survey, 2014; McCabe & Boyd, 2005; Wang, Fiellin & Becker, 2014). While it is not entirely clear how often the drugs are voluntarily given to the abuser, it is reasonable to assume that, often, the drugs are taken from the peer or family member without their knowledge. Thus PreventionFIRST! is promoting efforts to encourage people to be more conscientious about securing the prescription medications in their homes.

In service of that goal, PreventionFIRST! recently conducted an exploratory survey assessing attitudes toward medication security strategies and current practices involving prescription medications in the home. A short survey was posted online and the link disseminated through a variety of formal and informal strategies.¹

BRIEF RESULTS

Respondents. A total of 277 responses were recorded. Overall, 193 (72%) of respondents were female and 76 (28%) were male. A total of 4 (2%) were under 25 years of age, 35 (13%) were between 26-35, 97 (36%) were between 36-45, 56 (21%) were between 46-55, 53 (20%) were between 56-65 and 26 (10%) were over 65 years of age.

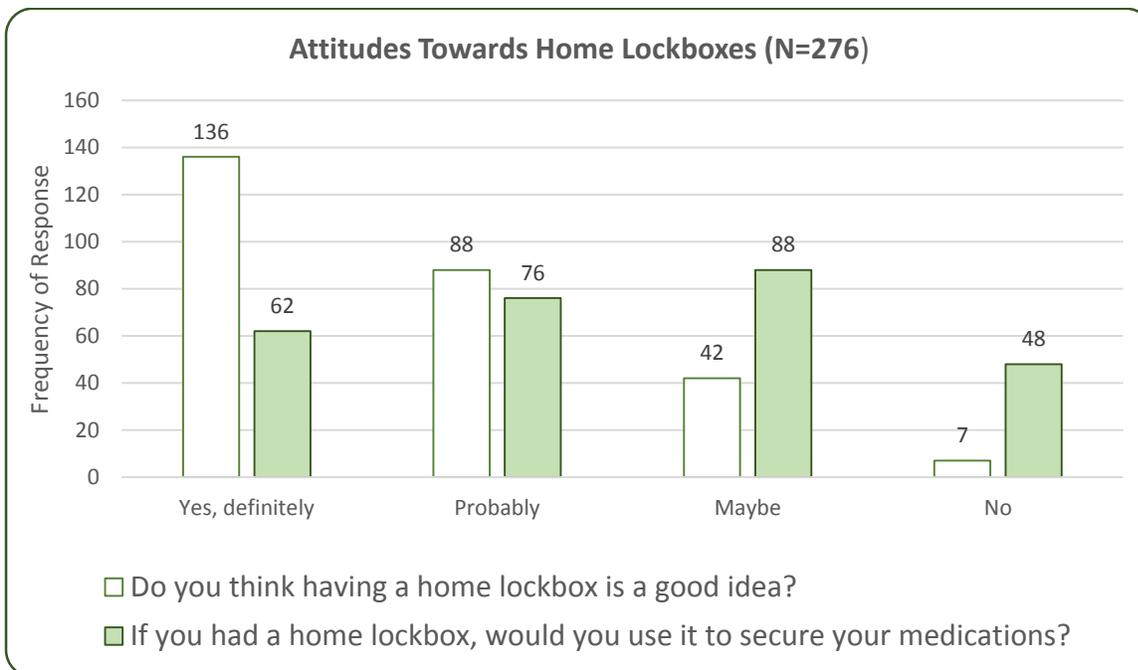


Current Practices. All respondents indicated the extent to which the prescription medications in their homes were currently secured (1=totally unsecured; 4=totally secured). The accompanying chart displays a summary of the data for this item. The data revealed that 173 of 276 respondents (63%) indicated

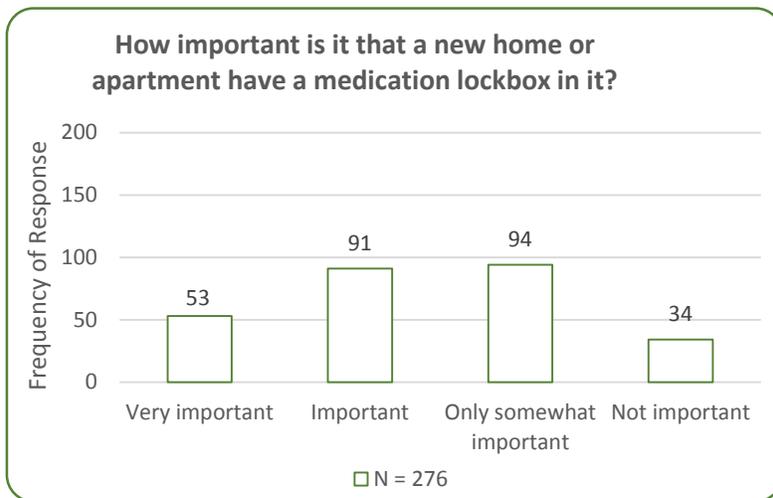
¹ Members of the Center for Prevention Science at PF! disseminated the link through their networks. The link was posted on the PF! website and sent to all member coalitions. All PF! staff and coalition members were encouraged to disseminate the link via their social media sites.

that the prescription medications in their homes were totally unsecured with another 23% (64) indicating their medications were relatively unsecure. **Only 11 respondents (4%) indicated that they had completely secured the medications in their homes.**

Home Lockboxes. One strategy for securing medications is the use of a home lockbox. These are small “safe-like” devices that prohibit anyone from simply grabbing a medication bottle and removing some of the drugs. Respondents provided data on their general attitudes about the use of home lockboxes. First, they indicated the extent to which they thought having a home lockbox for medications was a good idea. Then, they indicated the likelihood that they would use a lockbox if they had one. The chart below summarizes their responses.



Results indicate that while people seem to think lockboxes are a good idea in general, some are not yet at a point where they would themselves use a lockbox. Overall, 49% (136) indicated that having a home lockbox was definitely a good idea with another 32% (88) also responding positively. Only 7 of 276 respondents (3%) thought that having a home lockbox was not a good idea. However, the data asking about the actual use of the lockbox was less positive. Nearly half of the respondents answered on the negative side of the scale. A total of 88 (32%) responded “maybe” to the item asking them about use and another 48 (17%) responded that they would not use it. Overall, 22% (62) did say that they would definitely use the lockbox and another 76 (28%) indicated they would “probably” use it.



Realtors and homebuilders in Cincinnati have shown an interest in collaborating with PreventionFIRST! to provide homeowners and renters with home lockboxes. Thus a series of questions on the survey were aimed at assessing the community's attitudes toward having lockboxes in new homes. The

accompanying chart provides a summary of the data on the item assessing attitudes about the importance of having a lockbox in a new home. A slight majority of respondents answered on the positive side of the scale with 19% (53) indicating "very important" and 33% (91) indicating "important." However the numerically most frequent response was "only somewhat important" with 34% (94) choosing that response.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The sample for this survey was strictly a volunteer sample. Thus results cannot be interpreted as accurately representative of our entire community. However, this preliminary data does provide direction for future research and initial prevention planning. First, the data suggests that prescription medications can probably be easily accessed by potential abusers within most homes. The data also suggests that most people have a positive orientation to the idea of having a secure place in their homes for prescription medications. Taken together, this data suggests that access to prescription medications for nonmedical use could be significantly reduced by community efforts bringing the issue into people's awareness and providing them with relatively low effort solutions like home lockboxes.

The data also suggests that collaborations with local realtors and builders could be productive. Generally, respondents were positive about the value of having a medication lockbox in a new home.

REFERENCES

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