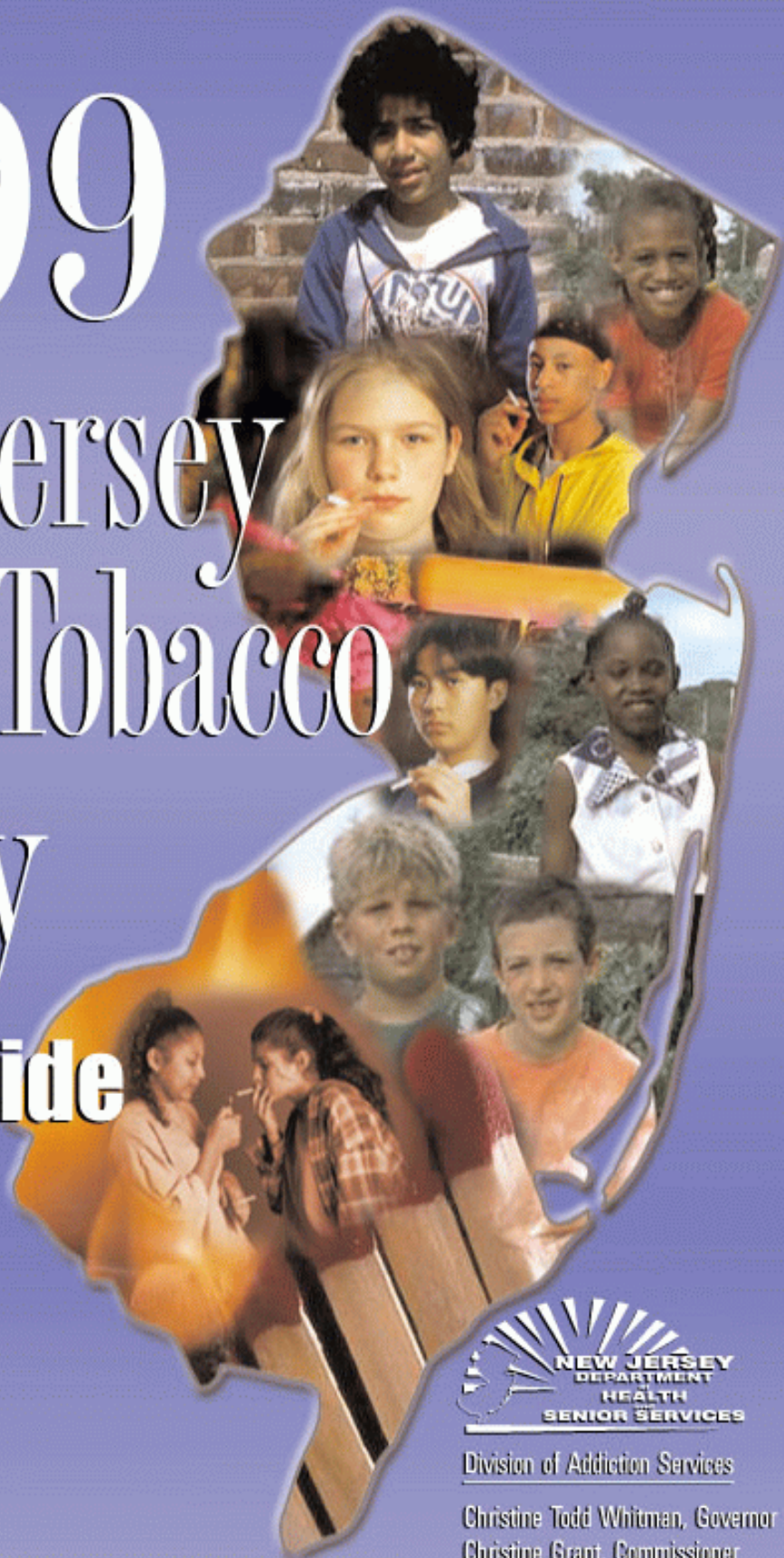


1999 New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey

**A Statewide
Report**

April 2000



Division of Addiction Services

Christine Todd Whitman, Governor
Christine Grant, Commissioner

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Introduction

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in New Jersey. Equally alarming is the fact that youth comprise a disproportionate share of all new smokers. Furthermore, more than 80% of current adult tobacco users started smoking cigarettes before the age of 18. Clearly, youth are a critical target population for tobacco control strategies.

Through the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) between the states and the tobacco companies, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is implementing a sustained, comprehensive tobacco control program to decrease disability, disease and death associated with the use of tobacco among New Jerseyans. Fundamental goals of the program include, but are not limited to, decreasing the acceptability of tobacco use; decreasing the initiation of tobacco by youth; increasing the initiation of smoking cessation treatment among all smokers, including youth; reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke; and reducing disparities related to tobacco use among different population groups.

Surveillance and evaluation are integral to successful tobacco control programming. Accurate baseline surveillance data will allow DHSS to determine New Jerseyans' current knowledge and attitudes about tobacco and tobacco practices prior to the implementation of a comprehensive tobacco control program. Given the high priority placed on youth tobacco prevention, the DHSS initiated a New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey (NJYTS) to provide comprehensive baseline and trend data on the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors of middle and high school students in the State. The information obtained from the NJYTS will guide the design, implementation and evaluation of a youth targeted tobacco control program.

During the Fall of 1999, the UMDNJ-School of Public Health, under contract to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, conducted the first New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey (NJYTS), with technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Office on Smoking and Health. The NJYTS was administered to 16,000 students in 164 middle and high schools throughout the State.

The data collected by the 1999 NJYTS provides not only statewide prevalence data on youth tobacco behavior and attitudes, but also data for the State's *Communities Against Tobacco Regional Coalitions* (CAT).¹ The CAT coalitions work in communities to meet the goals of the New Jersey Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program.

This report is the first in a series of reports about tobacco use and attitudes in New Jersey.

¹ In a joint decision, DHSS and the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) defined the study sample by region rather than county to minimize response burden at individual schools.

Acknowledgments

The NJYTS was a success thanks to the cooperation and hard work of numerous individuals, schools, agencies and organizations. Commissioner Christine Grant of DHSS and Commissioner David Hespe of the New Jersey Department of Education have both been very supportive of the NJYTS. The survey was coordinated by the UMDNJ-School of Public Health, under contract to DHSS, with technical assistance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Office on Smoking and Health.

We thank Pamela Castelleanos and the County School Superintendents for their support of this survey as well as Gary Vermeire and Tom Collins of the New Jersey Department of Education for helping with initial coordination.

We would like to thank the following NJDHSS staff who assisted with the coordination of the NJYTS in a variety of tasks, from recruiting schools to monitoring the surveys in schools throughout the State: Allison Gertel, Cynthia Kirchner, Susan Goldman, Mianne Edwards, Florence Wisn, Beverly Coleman, and Patricia Belmont.

Additional support was received from individuals at the New Jersey Department of Education, local health departments, and Communities Against Tobacco Coalitions who facilitated recruiting and monitoring schools. We thank Brenda Cook, Jamie Gable, Lynn Kurkasky, Albert Petroni, Steve Poset, Emma Rodriguez, Nancy Stek, Barry Ward, and Karen Widico.

Our utmost appreciation goes out to the superintendents, principals, teachers, and students of NJYTS high schools and middle schools without whom this endeavor would have not been possible.

Lastly, a special thanks to Wick Warren and Eric Pevzner, CDC-Office on Smoking and Health. Their expert guidance was fundamental to the success of the first NJYTS.

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Executive Summary

Overall, the NJYTS data show that in New Jersey....

...18.9% of middle school students and 38.9% of high school students are current users of **any** tobacco products (cigarettes, smokeless, cigars, or bidis). *Current tobacco use is defined as using tobacco on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.*

...one out ten middle school students and 27.6% of high school students are current cigarette smokers.

...cigar use is common with 9.3% of middle school students and 18.4% of high school students classified as current users.

...7.9% of middle school students and 14.1% of high school students currently use bidis¹.

...smokeless tobacco use is reported by 4.3% and 10.7% of middle school and high school students respectively.

... male students are more likely to use smokeless tobacco and cigars than female students in both middle schools and high schools. Additionally, male high school students were more likely to report bidis use than female high school students.

...in the middle schools, current cigarette use was similar among all racial/ethnic groups. However, in the high schools, Black students have the lowest rates of current cigarette use.

...in the middle schools, Black students report the highest rates of bidis and smokeless tobacco use. No racial/ethnic differences were noted among high school students.

...the proportion of students currently using tobacco products increases notably by grade. The most significant increase is noted between 7th and 8th grade for cigarettes.

...current cigarette use varied among the five CAT regions. Region One (Union/Essex counties) had the lowest cigarette prevalence rates for middle and high school students.

The NJYTS data show that among current smokers....

...the most common cigarette brands smoked by students are Newport (43.5%) followed by Marlboro (30.8%).

...over a third purchase their cigarettes, and among those students, they purchase cigarettes primarily in convenience stores (37.1%) and gas stations (26.1%).

...over two-thirds of students report that they were not asked to show proof of age when purchasing cigarettes or refused a sale because of their age.

¹Bidis are small, brown, hand-rolled cigarettes primarily made in India and other southeast Asian countries.

...more than half of the established, current cigarette smokers express an interest in quitting. A large proportion of those wanting to quit did not think they could be successful (43.4%).

...perceptions towards the benefits of smoking and the harmful effects of smoking were related to current tobacco use. Current users were most likely to perceive benefits and least likely to perceive harmful effects.

...current cigarette use is related to social influences. Students who lived with someone who smoked had double the prevalence of cigarette use. Additionally, current cigarette use is lowest among students who have no friends who smoke and is highest among students whose four closest friends smoke.

...current cigarette smokers are twice as likely than non-smokers to report that they have items with a tobacco company's name or logo on it, that they would wear such items, and have received mail from tobacco company.

Implications for Comprehensive Tobacco Control

The NJYTS provides critical information to better understand youth tobacco use in the State. Youths' use of cigars, bidis, and smokeless tobacco demonstrates that tobacco control programs must focus on all tobacco products, not just cigarettes. Middle school students use tobacco products in sizable numbers, as do high school students. More research is needed on those youth who begin to use tobacco even before middle school. Tobacco control programs must address the needs of youth of all ages.

A key finding of the NJYTS concerns tobacco use by different population groups. Previous state and national data show that among high school students, White students have higher cigarette smoking rates while Black students have lower rates. It is unclear why the historic trend of cigarette use by race does not hold for New Jersey middle school students where rates were similar for all groups. Racial/ethnic differences also exist among middle school students for bidis and smokeless tobacco with Black students having higher prevalence rates. Future research is clearly warranted to examine this changing trend.

Cigarette use was associated with several factors. Youth who live with others who smoke, have friends who smoke, perceive the “positive consequences” of cigarette use, or own products with a tobacco company's name or logo, are more likely to be current smokers than other youth. Program implications include targeting adult smokers with children in the household for smoking cessation treatment to prevent youth from initiating tobacco use. Also, tobacco control programs must address not only the harmful effects of smoking, but clarify the “positives” youth perceive with regards to tobacco.

The NJYTS finding on enforcement is disturbing; despite laws prohibiting sales to minors, over two-thirds of current youth smokers were not asked for age identification or refused a sale because of their age. New Jersey must increase the number of vendors that do not sell tobacco products to youth. A community needs only one vendor to sell tobacco to youth in order for youth to gain access to tobacco products.

Lastly, the NJYTS demonstrates that youth are interested in quitting tobacco use. Youth smoking cessation treatment is an unmet need as few programs exist specifically for youth. Smoking cessation treatment programs that are age appropriate must be readily available and accessible.

RESULTS

Tobacco Prevalence-Any Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days

- Overall, 18.9% of New Jersey middle school students and 38.9% of high school students are current users of **any** tobacco products (cigarettes, smokeless, cigars, or bidis¹). *Current tobacco use is defined as using tobacco on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.*
- Male high school students have a significantly higher prevalence of current use of **any** tobacco products than female high school students.
- Among middle school students, Black and Hispanic students report significantly higher rates of **any** tobacco use than White students. However, among high school students, White students have a significantly higher rate of **any** tobacco use than Black students.

Figure 1: Any Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days by Gender

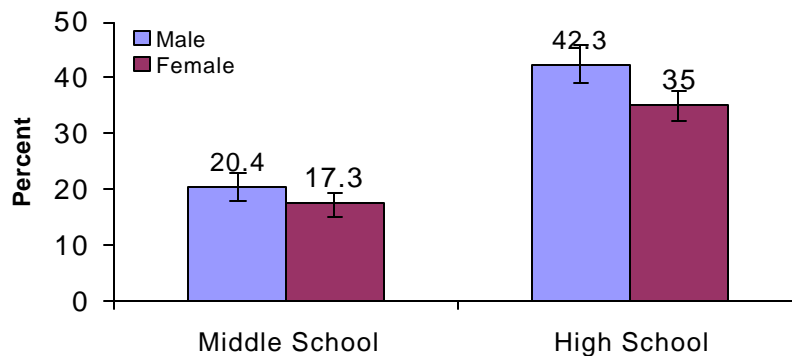
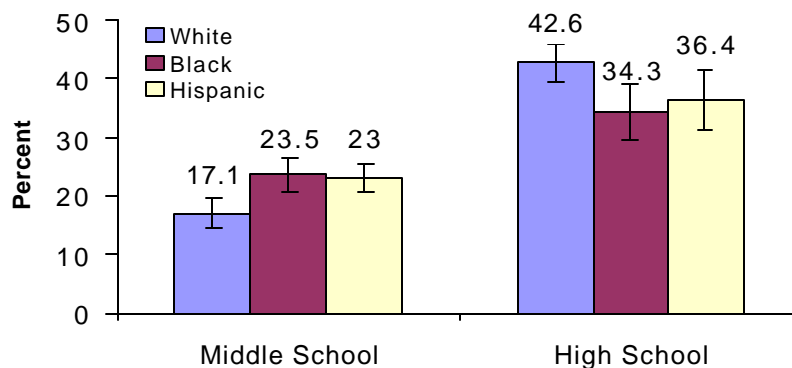


Figure 2: Any Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days by Race/Ethnicity



¹ Bidis are small, brown, hand-rolled cigarettes primarily made in India and other southeast Asian countries.

Tobacco Prevalence-Cigarette Use in Past 30 Days

- Overall, 10.5% of New Jersey middle school students and 27.6% of high school students report smoking cigarettes in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Current cigarette use is similar among the racial/ethnic groups for middle school students. However, among high school students, Black students have a lower prevalence of current cigarette use than Hispanic and White students.

Figure 3: Cigarette Use in Past 30 Days by Gender

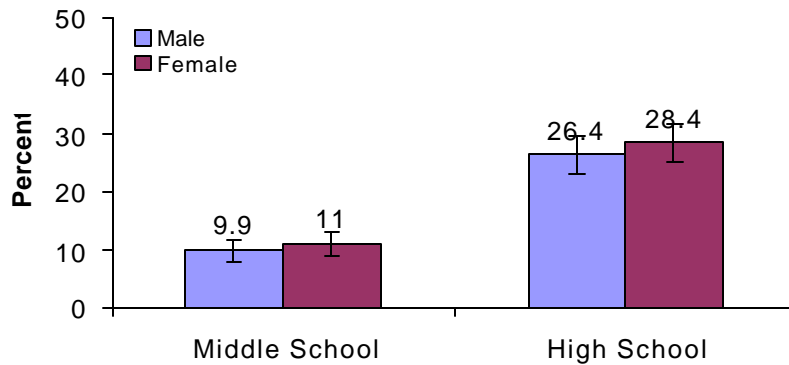
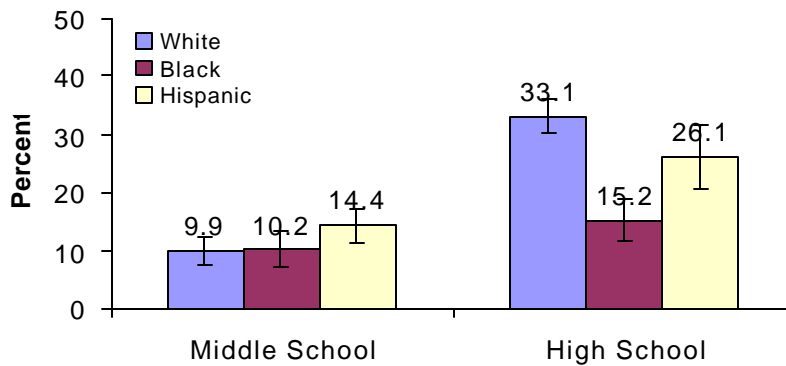


Figure 4: Cigarette Use in Past 30 Days by Race/Ethnicity



Tobacco Prevalence-Cigar Use in Past 30 Days

- Overall, 9.3% of New Jersey middle school students and 18.4% of high school students are current cigar smokers. *Current use is defined as using cigars on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey.*
- Male students have significantly higher rates of cigar use than females in both middle schools and high schools.

Figure 5: Cigar Use in Past 30 Days by Gender

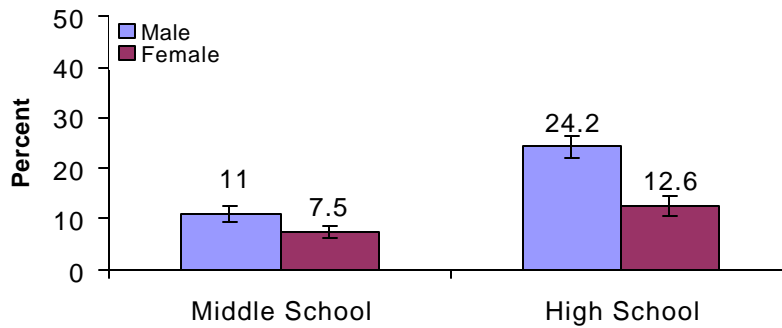
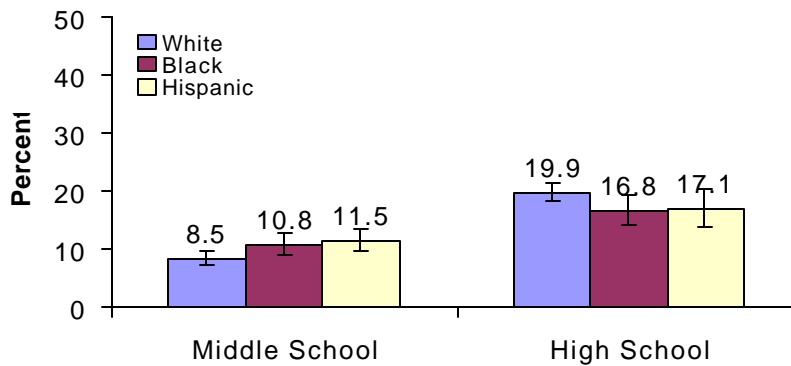


Figure 6: Cigar Use in Past 30 Days by Race/Ethnicity



Tobacco Prevalence-Bidis Use in Past 30 Days

- Overall, 7.9% of New Jersey middle school students and 14.1% of high school students report smoking bidis¹ cigarettes in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Gender differences exist for current bidis use among high school students; male students were more likely than female students to smoke bidis.
- Among middle school students, Black and Hispanic students had higher rates of bidis use than White students. However, there were no racial/ethnic differences among high school students.

Figure 7: Bidis Use in Past 30 Days by Gender

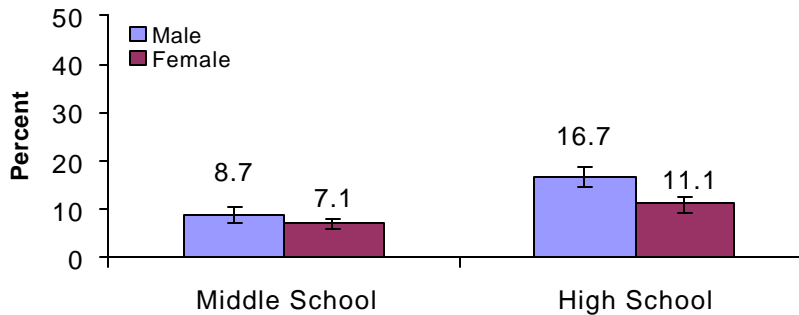
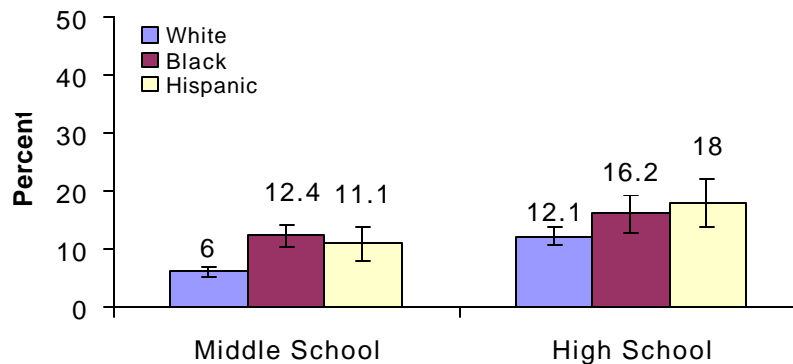


Figure 8: Bidis Use in Past 30 Days by Race/Ethnicity



¹ Bidis are small, brown, hand-rolled cigarettes primarily made in India and other southeast Asian countries.

Tobacco Prevalence-Smokeless Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days

- Overall, 4.3% of New Jersey middle school students and 10.7% of high school students report use of smokeless tobacco (i.e., chewing tobacco or dip) in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Male students have significantly higher rates of smokeless tobacco use than females in both middle schools and high schools.
- Among middle school students, Black students were more likely to report smokeless tobacco use than White students. No racial/ethnic differences exist among high school students.

Figure 9: Smokeless Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days by Gender

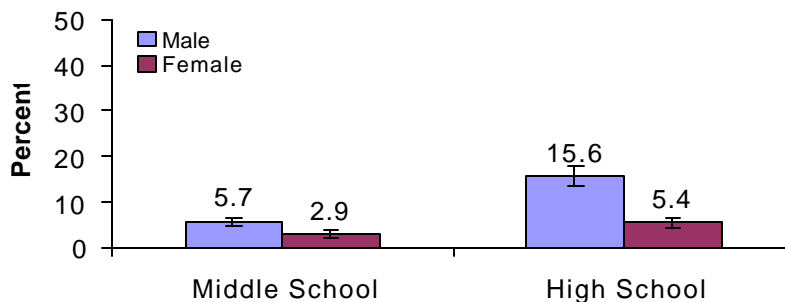
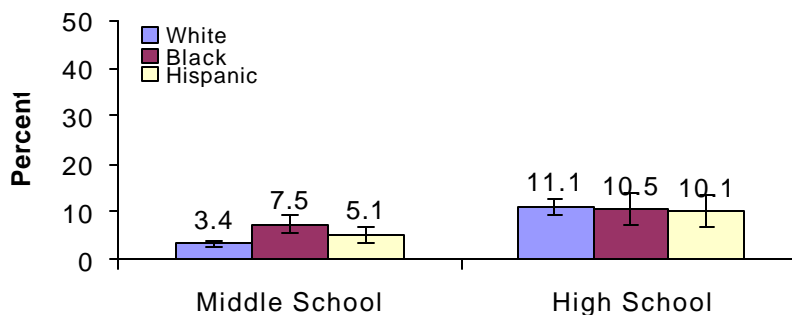


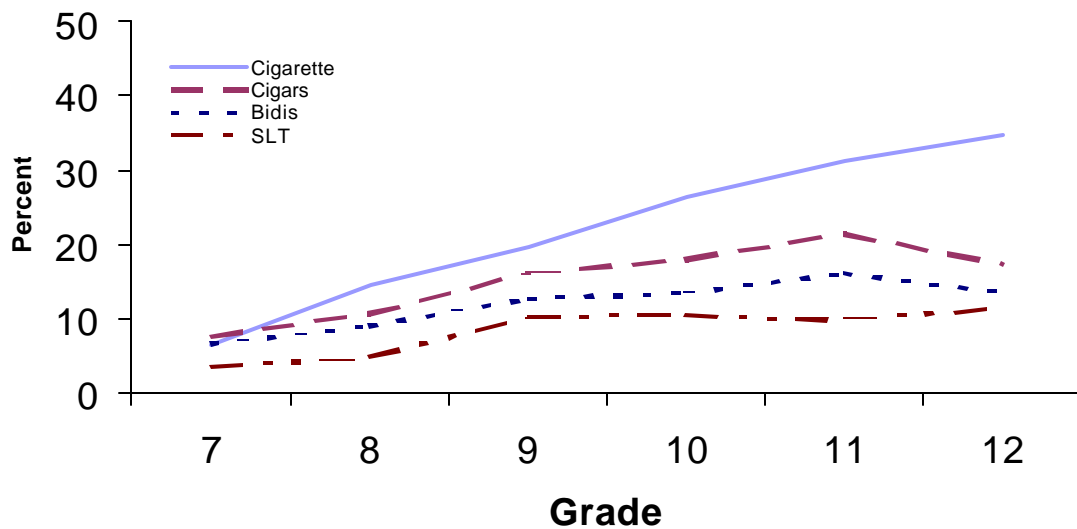
Figure 10: Smokeless Tobacco Use in Past 30 Days by Race/Ethnicity



Tobacco Prevalence by School Grade

- The proportion of students currently using tobacco products increased notably by grade.
- A significant increase is noted between 7th and 8th grade where cigarette use increased by 128% and bidis use increased by 39%.
- The largest increase for cigar and smokeless tobacco use occurred between 8th and 9th grade, 49% and 112% respectively.

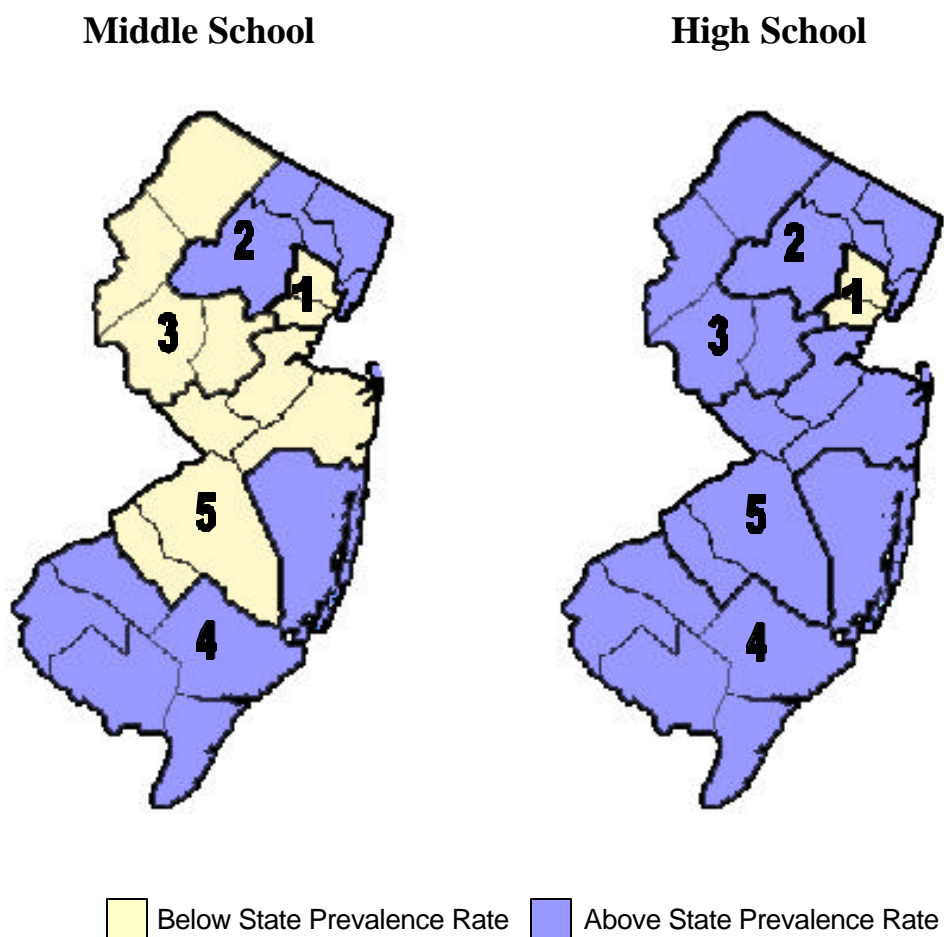
Figure 11: Tobacco Use by School Grade



Tobacco Prevalence: Current Cigarette Use at the Regional Level

- The current prevalence of cigarette use, statewide was 10.5% for middle school students and 27.6% for high school students. Cigarette prevalence varies among the five CAT regions. Among middle school students, rates of current cigarette use range from 6.7% (Region 1) to 13.9% (Region 4). Among high school students, prevalence rates range from 19.3% (Region 1) to 30.5% (Region 3). CAT region 1 has the lowest prevalence of smoking cigarettes for middle school and high school; this trend is consistent within race categories.

Figure 12: Current Cigarette Use by School Type and Region

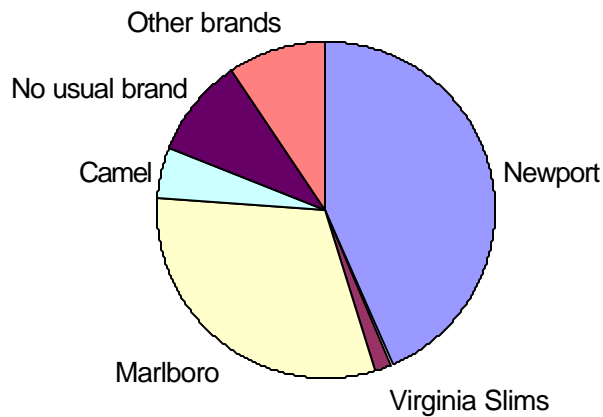


Communities Against Tobacco Regional Coalitions: 1=Essex, Union; 2=Bergen, Passaic, Morris; 3=Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, Somerset; 4=Ocean, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, Atlantic, Cape May; 5=Camden, Burlington, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth

Usual Cigarette Brand

- Among students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days preceding the survey, the most common usual brand was Newport (43.5%) followed by Marlboro (30.8%). Other usual brands were Camel (4.8%) and Virginia Slims (1.8%); 9.7% reported that they had no usual brand. This trend held for gender and school type (middle school vs. high school).
- Usual brand differed substantially by race; Newport is the most common brand among Black (71.7%) and Hispanic (62.2%) students, while Marlboro is the most common brand among White students (40.7%).

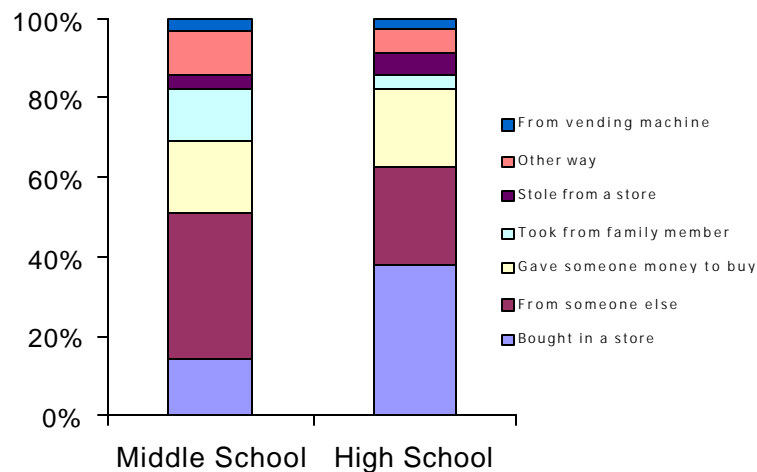
Figure 13: Usual Cigarette Brand Smoked in Past 30 Days



Access/Purchasing

- Points of Access*- Among current smokers, the most common method of obtaining cigarettes is buying them in a store (33.2%), getting them from someone else (27.3%) and giving someone money to purchase them (19.4%). Access differs for middle and high school students; middle school students were most likely to get their cigarettes from “someone else” (36.9%) while high school students were most likely to purchase them (37.9%).
- Vendors*- Among current smokers who purchased cigarettes in the past 30 days, 39.1% report that they purchased their cigarettes at a convenience store and 26.4% purchased them at gas stations.
- Sales to Minors*- More than two-thirds of students who purchased cigarettes were not asked to show proof of age (67.1%). Furthermore, a large majority were not refused a cigarette sale due to their age (67.4%). Surprisingly, middle school students who purchased cigarettes did not report that they were proofed or refused sales more often than high school students.

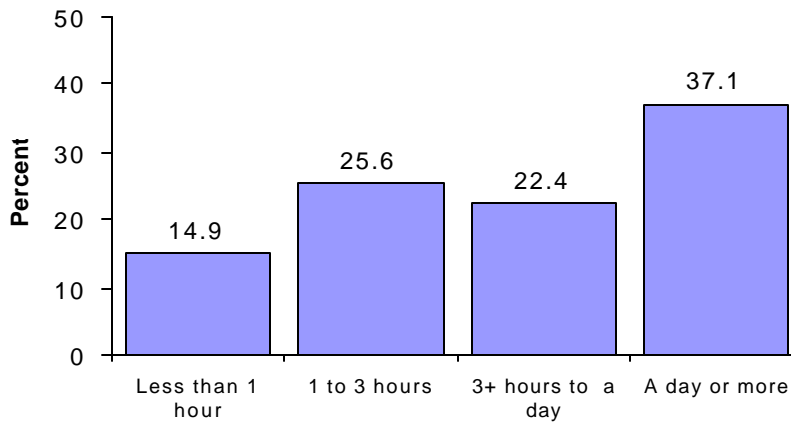
Figure 14: Access to Cigarettes by School Type



Cessation

- Among current established¹ cigarette smokers, more than half (55%) express an interest in quitting and report a serious quit attempt in the past year (51.3%).
- Among current established smokers wanting to quit, self efficacy (i.e., the belief that they could quit) is low; 43.4% did not think they could.
- Nicotine dependence² is notable, with over a third (40.5%) of current established smokers indicating they can not go more than 3 hours before needing a cigarette.
- Lastly, half (49.5%) of the current established smokers who had seen a doctor in the past year report that they were not asked about their smoking behavior.

Figure 15: Nicotine Dependence² among Current Established Smokers



¹ Established smokers are those who report having smoked more than 5 packs in their lifetime

² Nicotine dependence was assessed by asking participants how long they can go before they need a cigarette

Attitudes and Perceptions

- The NJYTS included a series of items on the perceived benefits¹ of smoking (e.g., keeps weight down, look grown-up, relaxing) and the perceived harmful effects² (e.g., yellow teeth, less energy, shorter lives). High school students are more likely than middle school students to perceive that cigarettes have benefits, yet less likely to perceive its harmful effects.
- A strong association was also found between cigarette use and perceptions. Current cigarette users are more likely to perceive that tobacco has benefits, yet less likely to perceive its harmful effects than students who do not currently smoke.

Figure 16: Attitudes by School Type

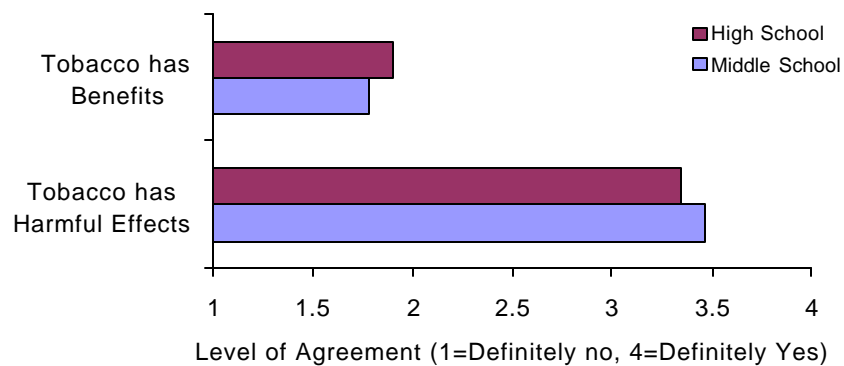
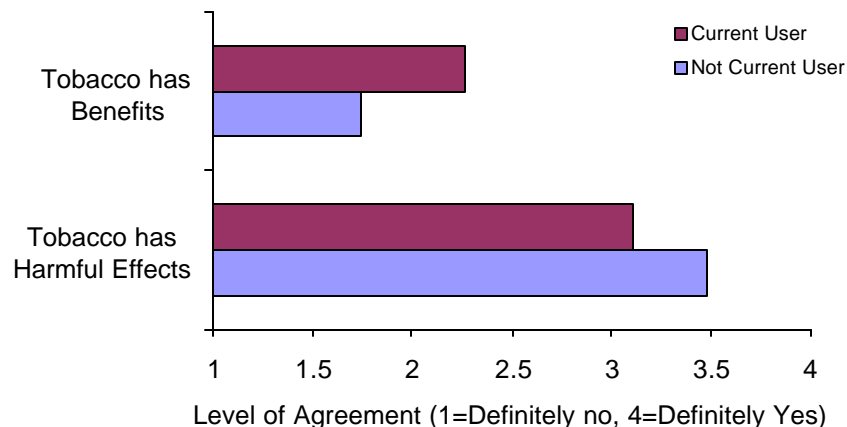


Figure 17: Attitudes by Current Cigarette Use



¹ Index composed of 6 items, scale reliability =.73

² Index composed of 8 items, scale reliability =.72

Social Influences

- The rate of current cigarette smoking by middle and high school students almost doubles when a student lives with someone who smokes.
- Similarly, a linear relationship exists between current cigarette smoking behavior and the number of close friends who smoke. Current cigarette use is lowest (4.8%) among students who have no close friends who smoke and highest (65.9%) among students whose four closest friends all smoke.

Figure 18: Cigarette Prevalence by Living with a Smoker

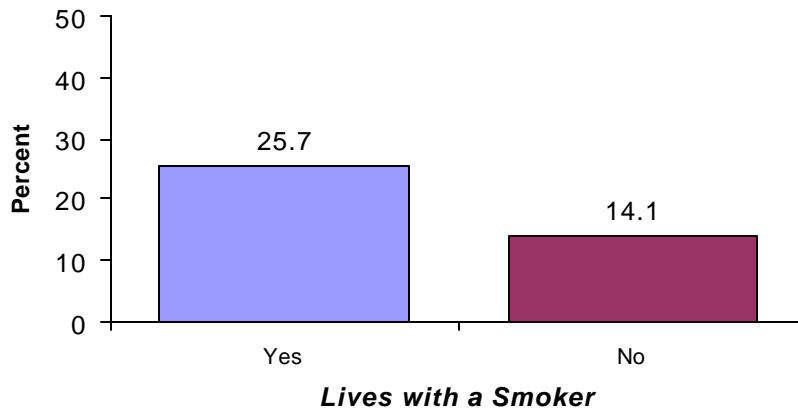
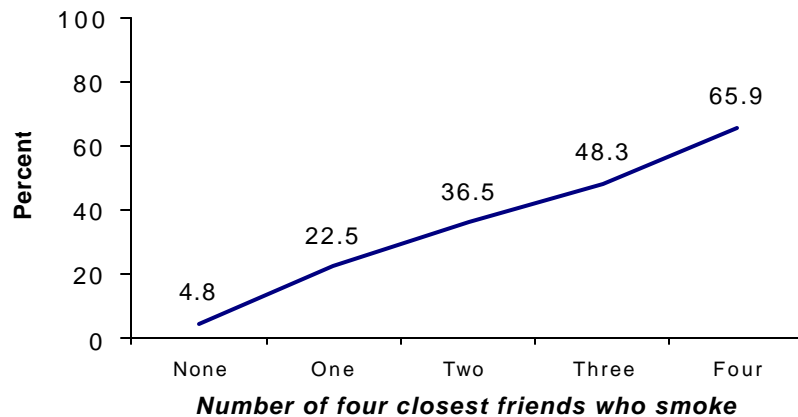


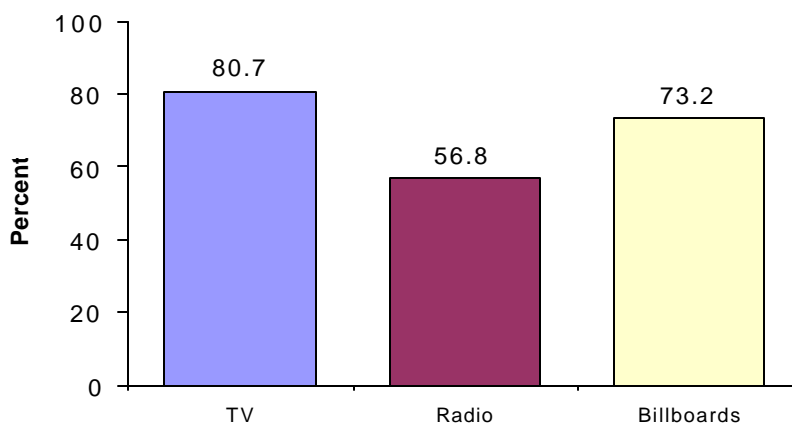
Figure 19: Cigarette Prevalence by Number of Friends who Smoke



Mass Media

- The large majority of middle and high school students in New Jersey have seen messages about the dangers of smoking on television (80.7%) and on billboards (73.2%). Fewer have heard such messages on the radio (56.8%).
- Many middle and high school students (86.9%) report that they see actors smoking “most” or “some” of the time.
- Almost a quarter (24.5%) of youth who use the Internet report that they see tobacco advertisements on the Internet “most” or “some” of the time.

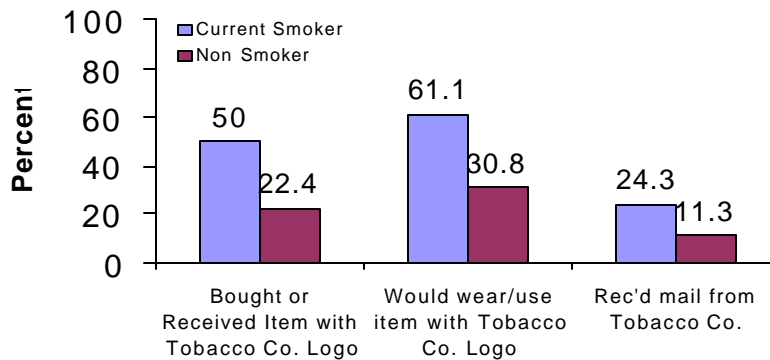
Figure 20: Percent of Middle and High School Students who have Seen or Heard Messages about the Dangers of Smoking



Tobacco Company Tactics/ Tobacco Companies' Promotional Efforts

- More than a quarter of middle and high school students (27.7%) report that they have bought or received items (e.g., t-shirt, hat) with a tobacco company's name or logo on it. Furthermore, over a third (36.8%) report that they would use or wear such an item.
- Approximately one in ten students (13.8%) report that they have received mail addressed to them from a tobacco company.
- Current cigarette smokers are more than twice as likely than non-smokers to report that they have items with tobacco company's name or logo, they would wear such items, and have received mail from tobacco company.

Figure 21: Tobacco Company Promotional Efforts by Current Smoking Status



TECHNICAL NOTES AND TABLES

Instrument

Students were surveyed using the *New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey* (NJYTS) instrument. The instrument was designed to meet specific needs of the New Jersey Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program and was based on existing instruments: CDC Youth Tobacco Survey, National Youth Tobacco Survey, and the California Independent Evaluation High School Tobacco Survey. The instrument is self administered and utilizes a scannable questionnaire booklet. The NJYTS addresses eight content areas: tobacco prevalence; access to tobacco products; smoking cessation; smoking intention; perceived consequences of tobacco use; mass media; awareness of tobacco industry strategies; and environmental tobacco smoke.

Sample

The NJYTS is a representative survey of all middle and high school students in New Jersey. The survey was administered to 8798 middle school students (grades 7-8) in 84 schools, and 7318 high school students (grades 9-12) in 80 high schools located throughout New Jersey.

A two-stage cluster sample design was utilized to assess both statewide and regional trends. The first stage sampling frame was constructed from all public, private, charter and vocational middle and high schools in New Jersey and included 1766 schools. The sampling frame was stratified by school classification (i.e., middle or high school) and *Communities Against Tobacco* coalition planning regions (5). Approximately 20 schools were selected with a probability proportional to size (PPS), without replacement, from each school classification region for a total of 99 high schools and 102 middle schools. The second stage of sampling involved the random selection of classes within the sampled schools. The second stage sampling was designed to yield approximately 120 students per school.

An overall participation rate of 71% was achieved; school, student and overall participation rates by region are found in Table 1. Overall participation rates are calculated by multiplying the school participation rate by the student participation rate. Weighting the data adjusts for non-response at the grade, school and regional level, providing results which are representative of New Jersey's 7-12 grade student population.

Table 1: 1999 NJYTS Student, School and Overall Participation Rates by School Type and Region

School Type	Region	Students Participated	Student Rate	Schools Participated	School Rate	Overall Participation
Middle School	1	1877	88%	18	90%	79%
	2	1637	91%	16	80%	73%
	3	1758	92%	17	81%	74%
	4	1675	90%	17	81%	73%
	5	1851	93%	16	76%	71%
	<i>Statewide</i>		8798	91%	84	82%
High School	1	1428	82%	17	85%	70%
	2	1380	82%	16	84%	69%
	3	1731	87%	17	85%	74%
	4	1652	85%	15	75%	64%
	5	1127	76%	15	83%	63%
	<i>Statewide</i>		7318	83%	80	82%
Total		16116	87%	164	82%	71%

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Table 2: 30 day prevalence* of tobacco use among New Jersey middle school students by gender, race/ethnicity, grade and tobacco coalition regions

Category	Any†		Cigarette Use		Cigar Use		Bidis Use		Smokeless Tobacco Use	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Gender										
Male	20.4	2.4	9.9	1.9	11.0	1.4	8.7	1.3	5.7	0.9
Female	17.3	2.2	11.0	2.0	7.5	1.2	7.1	1.5	2.9	0.9
Race/Ethnicity										
White	17.1	2.5	9.9	2.2	8.5	1.2	6.0	1.0	3.4	0.7
Black	23.5	2.8	10.2	3.1	10.8	1.8	12.4	2.2	7.5	2.1
Hispanic	23.0	2.4	14.4	2.9	11.5	1.9	11.1	2.4	5.1	1.5
Grade										
7	14.4	1.7	6.4	1.1	7.7	1.2	6.6	1.2	3.7	0.8
8	23.3	2.7	14.6	2.4	10.8	1.4	9.2	1.4	4.9	1.1
Regions										
1	18.0	4.2	6.7	2.1	8.5	2.1	9.8	3.1	5.8	2.7
2	19.0	4.8	11.8	4.2	8.5	2.4	8.5	2.8	4.1	1.1
3	15.9	4.7	8.1	2.6	7.6	3.2	5.4	2.0	3.5	1.9
4	22.2	3.5	13.9	2.6	10.8	2.0	7.7	2.8	4.9	1.8
5	18.3	4.2	9.9	3.7	9.9	1.7	7.5	1.7	3.8	1.4
Total	18.9	2.1	10.5	1.8	9.3	1.0	7.9	1.2	4.3	0.8

* 30 day prevalence is defined as tobacco use on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey, † includes cigarettes, cigars, bidis, or smokeless tobacco.

Table 3: 30 day prevalence* of tobacco use among New Jersey high school students by gender, race/ethnicity, grade and tobacco coalition regions

Category	Any†		Cigarette Use		Cigar Use		Bidis Use		Smokeless Tobacco Use	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Gender										
Male	42.3	3.4	26.4	3.0	24.2	2.1	16.7	2.3	15.6	2.2
Female	35.0	2.6	28.4	3.3	12.6	1.8	11.1	1.7	5.4	1.2
Race/Ethnicity										
White	42.6	3.1	33.1	3.0	19.9	1.7	12.1	1.6	11.1	1.6
Black	34.3	4.7	15.2	3.5	16.8	2.6	16.2	3.1	10.5	3.4
Hispanic	36.4	5.1	26.1	5.6	17.1	3.1	18.0	4.5	10.1	3.3
Grade										
9	32.3	2.9	19.7	2.7	16.1	1.8	12.8	2.2	10.4	2.2
10	36.9	3.4	26.3	4.0	18.0	2.2	13.5	2.3	10.5	2.2
11	42.5	3.5	31.2	4.0	21.5	2.7	16.1	3.2	10.0	1.8
12	45.0	4.4	34.6	4.7	17.5	2.9	13.6	1.9	11.6	2.3
Regions										
1	32.9	5.9	19.3	5.1	16.1	3.8	15.1	4.8	10.0	4.4
2	39.1	5.2	28.0	5.6	17.7	2.2	12.4	1.9	9.4	3.2
3	41.2	4.7	30.5	4.5	18.9	2.7	13.6	2.3	11.6	1.6
4	41.2	4.6	30.0	3.6	21.6	2.9	11.9	3.3	11.9	3.5
5	39.7	4.9	29.0	5.4	17.9	2.9	16.5	3.4	11.2	1.9
Total	38.9	2.4	27.6	2.6	18.4	1.3	14.1	1.6	10.7	1.4

* 30 day prevalence is defined as tobacco use on one or more of the 30 days preceding the survey, † includes cigarettes, cigars, bidis, or smokeless tobacco.



This report was prepared for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Public Health

