



## TOBACCO USE AND ETHNICITY

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Adult and youth tobacco use rates and related smoking-caused death rates vary considerably among different ethnic groups in the United States.

### **Adult Prevalence**

19.3 percent of American adults are current smokers, including 21.5 percent of men and 17.3 percent of women.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***African Americans***

- 20.6 percent of African American adults are current smokers (24.8% of men and 17.1% of women).<sup>2</sup>
- 75 percent of all African American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes as compared to 23 percent of all Caucasian smokers.<sup>3</sup>
- African Americans tend to start smoking at a later age, are more likely to attempt to quit smoking, and are less likely to succeed in quitting than their Caucasian counterparts.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Hispanics***

- 12.5 percent of Hispanic adults (15.8% of men and 9.0 % of women) are current smokers.<sup>5</sup>
- Smoking rates among Hispanic smokers born in the U.S. mainland are much higher than those born elsewhere, (19.1% versus 11%, respectively).<sup>6</sup> Among the major Hispanic subgroups, Cuban men and women have the highest rates of smoking (29.8% and 30.0%, respectively), followed by Puerto Rican (26.1% and 14.1%) and Mexican (22% and 8.9%) men and women, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

#### ***American Indian/Alaskan Natives***

- American Indian/Alaskan Native adults have the highest tobacco use rates of all major racial/ethnic groups in America. In 2010, smoking among American Indian/Alaskan Natives was 31.4 percent. In 2009, 29.7 percent of American Indian/Alaskan Native men smoked cigarettes, while in 2010, 36.0 percent of women smoked.<sup>8</sup>

#### ***Asian Americans***

- Asian Americans smoke at the lowest rates of all major American racial/ethnic groups at 9.2 percent. Smoking among Asian American men is significantly higher than smoking among Asian-American women. Only 4.3 percent of Asian-American women currently smoke, while 14.7 percent of Asian American men are current smokers.<sup>9</sup>

### **Youth Prevalence**

Nationwide, 19.5 percent of all high school students are current smokers, including 19.8 percent of males and 19.1 percent of females.<sup>10</sup>

#### ***African Americans***

- Throughout the nineties, African American high school students have smoked at lower rates than their white and Hispanic peers, and this trend continues today. Current smoking among African American high school students is 9.5 percent.<sup>11</sup>
- Smoking among African American high school students increased from 12.6 percent in 1991 to 22.7 percent in 1997, but smoking in this group began to decline in 1999.<sup>12</sup>

### **Hispanics**

- In 2009, 18 percent of Hispanic high school students smoked, an 18 percent decrease over the 2005 smoking rate of 22 percent.<sup>13</sup>

### **American Indian/Alaskan Natives**

- Current cigarette use among high school students in National Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funded schools is 56.5 percent,<sup>14</sup> more than double the smoking prevalence rate among all U.S. high school students (22.9 percent).<sup>15</sup> There is no significant difference between smoking rates among AI/AN boys and girls.
- 24.4 percent of students at BIA funded schools reported frequent cigarette use (having smoked  $\geq$  20 of the 30 days preceding the survey),<sup>16</sup> compared to 13.8 percent of all U.S. high school students.<sup>17</sup> BIA funds 185 schools located on 63 reservations in 23 states with approximately 8,500 high school students.<sup>18</sup>

### **Asian Americans**

- In 2006, 7.3 percent of Asian American high school students smoked, a significant decrease from the 2004 rate of 11.3 percent.<sup>19</sup>

## **Morbidity/Mortality**

More than 400,000 people die each year from tobacco related diseases.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, if current trends continue, more than 6 million kids under age 18 alive today will eventually die from smoking-related diseases.<sup>21</sup> Smoking is believed to cause nearly 90 percent of all cases of lung cancer and is a contributing factor in as many as 30 percent of all cancer deaths.<sup>22</sup>

### **African Americans**

- More than 45,000 African Americans die from smoking-related illnesses annually.<sup>23</sup>
- Both incidence and death rates for lung cancer are higher among African American men than among white men, partly because of differences in smoking behavior. Although African-American men begin smoking at a later age than white men and smoke fewer cigarettes per day than white men, on average, they tend to smoke cigarettes more intensively and are more likely to smoke mentholated cigarettes.<sup>24</sup> Seventy-five percent of African American smokers smoke mentholated cigarettes compared to about only 25 percent of white smokers.<sup>25</sup> Because of the cooling sensation produced by menthol, smokers can inhale more deeply and hold the smoke inside longer than smokers of non-mentholated cigarettes. This inhalation pattern may cause greater harm to the smoker's health.
- Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in both African American men and women and it kills more African Americans than any other type of cancer. In fact, in 2009, over 22,000 new cases of lung cancer are expected to occur among African Americans and more than 16,000 African Americans are expected to die from this disease.<sup>26</sup>
- The rate of all kinds of cancer among African Americans increased 66 percent between 1957 and 1987 – mainly due to lung cancer. During the same 30 years, the rate of lung cancer among African American men increased by 259 percent and quadrupled for African American women.<sup>27</sup>

### **Hispanics**

- Lung cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in both Hispanic men and women. In 2009, over 8,000 new cases of lung cancer are expected to occur among Hispanics and 5,000 Hispanics are expected to die from this disease.<sup>28</sup>

### **American Indians**

- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among AI/ANs, and tobacco use is an important risk factor.<sup>29</sup>
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death for those age 45 and older and the third leading cause of death for all ages of AI/AN, and lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death.<sup>30, 31</sup>
- American Indians/Alaska Natives experienced an increase in respiratory cancer death rates between 1990 and 1995, the only subgroup of the four major U.S. racial/ethnic subgroups to experience such an increase.<sup>32</sup>
- From 1986-1988, tobacco related diseases killed 9,566 American Indians (44% of 22,943 American Indian deaths).<sup>33</sup> The death rate among American Indians due to tobacco abuse is double the death rate of other Americans in the United States.<sup>34</sup>

### **Asian American/Pacific Islanders**

- Immigrants from Asian countries and their descendants suffer rates of lung cancer that fall between the low rates of their home countries and the higher rates of the United States, suggesting that environmental factors influence their cancer risk.<sup>35</sup>

### **Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, September 15, 2011 / Meg Riordan**

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2005-2010," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 60, September 9, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm>. Current smoking is defined as persons who reported having smoked ≥ 100 cigarettes and who reported now smoking every day or some days.

<sup>2</sup> CDC, "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2005-2010," *MMWR* 60, September 9, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *Reducing the Health Consequence of Smoking: 25 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*, 1989, <http://sgreports.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/B/X/S/>.

<sup>4</sup> HHS, *Tobacco Use Among US Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups – African Americans, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics: A Report of the Surgeon General*, 1998, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm).

<sup>5</sup> CDC, "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2005-2010," *MMWR* 60, September 9, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Acevedo-Garcia, D, et al., "The effect of immigrant generation on smoking," *Soc Sci Med* 61(6), September 2005. Also, Bethel, J, Schenker, M, "Acculturation and smoking patterns among Hispanics: A review," *Am J Preventive Medicine* 29(2), 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Howe, H, et al., "Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer, 1975-2003, featuring Cancer Among US Hispanic/Latino Populations," *Cancer*, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> CDC, "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2005-2010," *MMWR* 60, September 9, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm>; CDC, "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2009," *MMWR* 59(44), September 7, 2010, [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5935a3.htm?s\\_cid=mm5935a3\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5935a3.htm?s_cid=mm5935a3_w). Smoking rates among American Indian/Alaskan Native men are available for 2009, but not 2010, while smoking rates among American Indian/Alaskan Native women are available in 2010, but not 2009.

<sup>9</sup> CDC, "Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥ 18 Years—United States, 2005-2010," *MMWR* 60, September 9, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a5.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009," *MMWR* 55(SS-5), June 4, 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5905.pdf>. Using a different survey methodology, the 2006 Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) found a 19.7% high school smoking rate (18.4% for girls, 21.2% for boys); but the results from the YRBS and YTS cannot be compared because they use different methodologies. Current smoker defined as having smoked in the past month. YRBS is done in odd-numbered years, YTS in even.

<sup>11</sup> CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009," *MMWR* 55(SS-5), June 4, 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5905.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> CDC, "Cigarette Use Among High School Students—United States, 1991-2009," *MMWR* 59(26):797-801, July 9, 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5926a1.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2009," *MMWR* 55(SS-5), June 4, 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5905.pdf> <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5905.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> CDC, "Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use Among High School Students in Bureau of Indian Affairs-Funded Schools—United States, 2001," *MMWR* 52(44):1070-1072, November 7, 2003, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5244.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> CDC, "Tobacco Use Among Middle & High School Students—United States, 2002," *MMWR* 52(45), November 14, 2003, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5245a2.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> CDC, *MMWR* 52(44), November 7, 2003, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5244.pdf>.

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- <sup>17</sup> CDC, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2001," *MMWR* 51(SS-4), June 28, 2002, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00001886.htm>.
- <sup>18</sup> CDC, "Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Use Among High School Students in Bureau of Indian Affairs-Funded Schools—United States, 2001," *MMWR* 52(44):1070-1072, November 7, 2003. CDC, *MMWR* 52(44), November 7, 2003, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5244.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> CDC, 2006 National Youth Tobacco Survey, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/surveys/NYTS/00\\_pdfs/table\\_2\\_06.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/surveys/NYTS/00_pdfs/table_2_06.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> CDC, "Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States, 2000-2004," *MMWR* 57(45), November 14, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5745.pdf>.
- <sup>21</sup> CDC, *Sustaining State Programs for Tobacco Control, Data Highlights, 2006*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/state\\_data/data\\_highlights/2006/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/state_data/data_highlights/2006/index.htm); See also, U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), "CDC's April 2002 Report on Smoking: Estimates of Selected Health Consequences of Cigarette Smoking Were Reasonable," letter to U.S. Rep. Richard Burr, July 16, 2003, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03942r.pdf>.
- <sup>22</sup> HHS, *The Health Consequences of Smoking. A Report of the Surgeon General, 2004*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2004/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2004/index.htm). See also, American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures for African-Americans 2009-2010, 2009*, <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/cffaa20092010pdf.pdf>; HHS, *Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2000*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2000/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2000/index.htm).
- <sup>23</sup> ALA Fact Sheet - Black Americans and Lung Disease.
- <sup>24</sup> American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts and Figures for African-Americans 2007-2008, 2007*, <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/caff2007aaacspdf2007pdf.pdf>.
- <sup>25</sup> HHS, *Reducing the Health Consequence of Smoking: 25 Years of Progress--A Report of the Surgeon General, 1989*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm).
- <sup>26</sup> American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures for African-Americans 2009-2010, 2009*, <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/cffaa20092010pdf.pdf>.
- <sup>27</sup> HHS, *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1998*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm).
- <sup>28</sup> American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanics/Latinos 2009-2011, 2009*, <http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@nho/documents/document/ffhispanicslatinos20092011.pdf>.
- <sup>29</sup> HHS, *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, Report of the Surgeon General, 1998*. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm).
- <sup>30</sup> Cancer Resources, Association of American Indian Physicians.
- <sup>31</sup> HHS, *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, Report of the Surgeon General, 1998*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/1998/index.htm).
- <sup>32</sup> Cancer Resources, Association of American Indian Physicians.
- <sup>33</sup> The American Indian Cancer Control Project, 1991, Berkeley, CA. Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1994.
- <sup>34</sup> The American Indian Cancer Control Project, 1991, Berkeley, CA. Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1994.
- <sup>35</sup> ALA - Asian-American/Pacific Islanders and Lung Disease (web factsheet).