

1999 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey

Report Three: Social Influences: Kids and Tobacco

Volume 1, Report 3

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During the Spring of 1999, the TN Department of Health in cooperation with the TN Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and numerous partners from local health organizations and school districts, conducted the first comprehensive survey of tobacco use among Tennessee youth. Respondents were 1,348 middle school students (grades 6-8) from 20 middle school districts and 1,501 high school students (grades 9-12) from 26 high school districts.

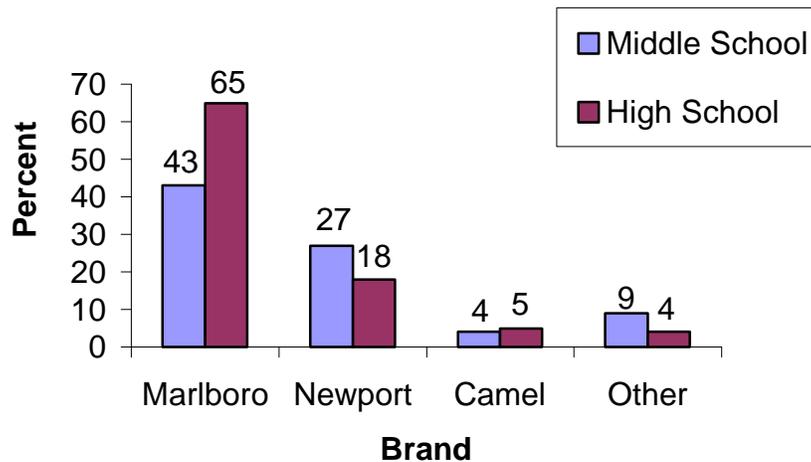
The data collected by the 1999 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey (TnYTS) provides prevalence data on tobacco use at the state level. The survey instrument measured tobacco knowledge, attitudes, and use among Tennessee youth and will provide critical baseline data for development of tobacco use prevention programs.

This report addresses adolescent brand preference, assistance to tobacco products, media influences, friends' cigarette use, and adolescent knowledge of the effects of smoking.

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Cigarette Brand Preference Among Current Smokers

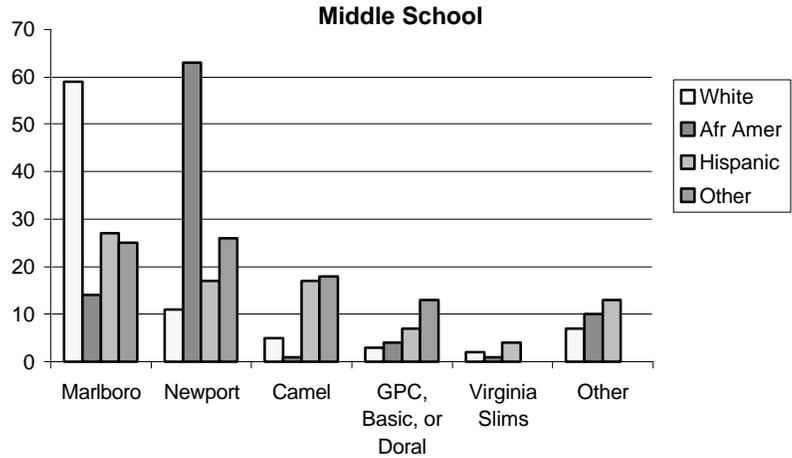


- Among Tennessee middle school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 43% reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- 27% reported Newport as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- Among Tennessee high school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 65% reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- 18% reported Newport as being their usual brand of cigarettes.

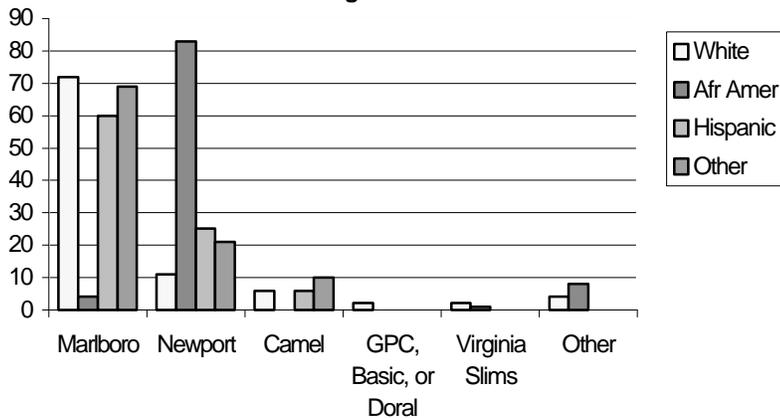
A U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study showed that 88% of 12th graders, 86% of 10th graders and 82% of 8th graders who smoke choose the three most heavily advertised brands, Marlboro, Newport, or Camel.

Cigarette Brand Use by Race

- Overall, among Tennessee middle school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 59% of white students and 27% of Hispanic students reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- 63% of African American middle school students said their usual brand is Newport.



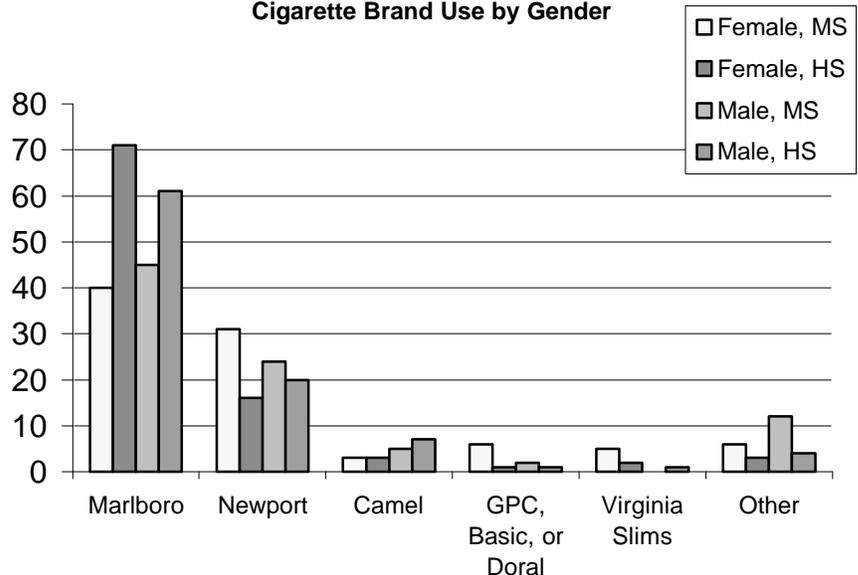
High School



- Overall, among Tennessee high school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 72% of white students and 60% of Hispanic students reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- 83% of African American high school students said their usual brand is Newport.

- Overall, among Tennessee high school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 71% of female students and 61% of male students reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.
- Overall, among Tennessee middle school students who smoked cigarettes in the 30 days prior to the survey, 40% of female students and 45% of male students reported Marlboro as being their usual brand of cigarettes.

Cigarette Brand Use by Gender



Assistance Obtaining Cigarettes

- Overall, about 51% of under-age current smokers (<18 years of age) obtained their cigarettes with the assistance of others: they gave money to others to buy their cigarettes, borrowed them, or were given cigarettes by an older person.
- About 61% of female students reported obtaining cigarettes with someone's assistance compared to about 41% of male students.
- Reported assistance obtaining cigarettes was highest in 8th and 9th grade: over 63% of current smokers in these grades reported getting cigarettes with the assistance of others.
- In the 11th grade, 41% of current smokers reported buying their own cigarettes. In the 12th grades, 73% of current smokers reported purchasing their own cigarettes.

In Tennessee, it is illegal for minors to purchase and possess tobacco products.

Data indicate that access to tobacco products is dependent upon adult assistance without which tobacco access for minors would become increasing difficult.

Proof of Age

According to Tennessee law:

It is unlawful for any person to sell or distribute any tobacco product to a minor.

It is unlawful for any person to assist a minor in obtaining any tobacco product.

It is unlawful for a minor to possess tobacco products

- 67% of middle school students who are current smokers were NOT refused cigarettes because of their age when buying cigarettes in a store.
- 63% of high school students who are current smokers were NOT refused cigarettes because of their age when buying cigarettes in a store.
- 84% of middle school students who are current smokers were NOT asked to show proof of age when buying cigarettes in a store.
- 63% of high school students who are current smokers were NOT asked to show proof of age when buying cigarettes in a store.
- Approximately 82% of male high school students who use chewing tobacco, dip or snuff reported that their age did not keep them from buying those products.
- Interestingly, 51% of male high school current smokers were asked to show proof of age, but only 25% of female high school current smokers were asked to show proof of age.

Media Influences

- 67% of high school students and 59% of middle school students who are **current tobacco users** report that they **would use or wear** items with a tobacco name or picture on it.
- 46% of high school students and 47% of middle school students who are **current tobacco users** report **owning or having** items with a tobacco company name or picture on it. More males than females report owning or having such merchandise.
- A dramatic jump between 6th and 7th grade is seen with 27% of 6th graders (n=29) and 51% of 7th graders (n=101) reporting they own or have such merchandise.
- 30% of high school students and 22% of middle school students report **having** items with a tobacco company name or picture on it. More males than females report owning or having such merchandise.

“Participation in tobacco marketing often precedes, and is likely to facilitate progression to established smoking. Hence, restrictions on tobacco marketing and promotion could reduce addiction to tobacco.” (Am J Public Health. 2000;90:401-411)

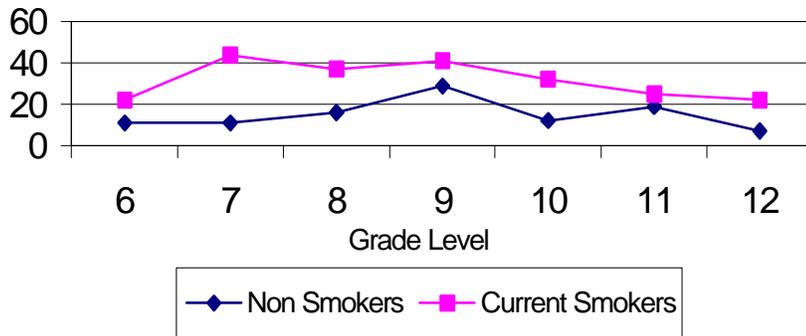
In 1997 the cigarette industry spent \$5.66 billion dollars in advertising according to the Federal Trade Commission’s annual report to Congress.

It has been found that in Hollywood movie productions the prevalence of smoking by both female (42%) and male (38%) actors is substantially higher than the national smoking prevalence for either females (24.3%) and males (29.2%) ages 18-44 (Am J Public Health. 2000; 90:412-414). Thus, adolescents are misled with a distorted picture of “reality” when viewing such movies.

- 91% of high school students and 89% of middle school students see actors smoking on TV or at the movies.
- 93% of high school students and 91% of middle school students who watch TV or use the Internet report seeing ads for tobacco products or see actors and athletes using tobacco products.

Friends' Cigarette Use

Students Who Think Smokers Have More Friends



- Seventh graders were found to be the highest percentage of **current smokers** who think young people who smoke have more friends.
- **Nonsmokers** in 9th grade reveal the highest percentage of students who think smokers have more friends.

- 77% of high school students have one or more friends who smoke cigarettes, increasing from 68% in 9th grade to 82% in 12th grade.
- 51% of middle school students have one or more friends who smoke cigarettes, increasing from 32% in 6th grade to 64% in 8th grade.
- 33% of current smokers in middle school and 20% of current smokers in high school think smoking cigarettes makes young people look cool or fit in, while only 8% of nonsmokers in middle school and 6% of nonsmokers in high school think smoking cigarettes makes young people look cool or fit in.

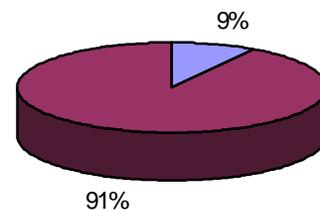
Perception of Risk

- 91% of students who are current smokers think people risk harming themselves if they smoke one or more packs a day.

Tennessee students *know* that smoking is harmful. Future efforts toward reducing adolescent tobacco use must include cessation and prevention components.

36% of Tennessee high school students and 14% of middle school students are current smokers.

Students Who Think Smoking is Harmful vs. Students Who Think Smoking is Not Harmful



Legend: Not Harmful (light blue), Harmful (maroon)

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Tobacco advertising billboards were required to come down in April of 1999 as part of the Master Settlement Agreement with the major tobacco companies and 46 state attorneys generals. In this agreement, the tobacco industry was required to continue to pay for the rent of the boards through the end of their contract period. Tennessee replaced approximately 100 tobacco billboards with anti-tobacco messages which can still be seen one year later.

Acknowledgements

The 1999 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey was a successful endeavor due to the strong support of the school superintendents, administrators, principals, teachers, and staff of the Tennessee public school system, coupled with the efforts of the regional coordinators for the Tennessee Department of Health. Also, much appreciation goes out for the tremendous support from the staff of the Office on Smoking and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia.

2000 Tennessee Youth Tobacco Survey

The efforts of regional health coordinators, county health educators, school health nurses, and community members have made for a successful region and statewide youth tobacco survey. The Tennessee Tobacco Surveillance Program would like to acknowledge and commend these efforts. Also, the cooperation and participation of the Tennessee public schools is greatly appreciated. Reports from this survey are due out in the Fall of 2000.

Mailing List

If you would like to be added to our mailing list to receive future TnYTS reports, please complete and return the following:

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