



## TOBACCO USE AND HISPANICS

---

- According to the 2008 National Health Interview Survey, 15.8 percent of Hispanic adults in the United States are current smokers (20.7% of men and 10.7% of women). The overall current smoking rate for adults in the United States is 20.6 percent (23.1% of men and 18.3% of women).<sup>1</sup>
- While smoking rates among Latino women are lower than those among White or African American women<sup>2</sup>, almost half of Latino women who have ever smoked remain current smokers.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2007, 16.7 percent of Hispanic high school students smoked, a 24 percent decrease over the 2005 smoking rate of 22 percent. Current smoking rates for Hispanic high school students are higher than smoking rates for African-American students, but lower than the rates of White students. The overall current smoking rate for high school students is 20 percent.<sup>4</sup>
- Hispanic smokers (both male and female) tend to consume fewer cigarettes than non-Hispanic white smokers. 64.1 percent of Hispanic smokers smoke less than 15 cigarettes a day, compared to 31.6 percent of non-Hispanic whites.<sup>5</sup>
- A study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that Latinos who were older, US-born and more educated were less likely to be current smokers.<sup>6</sup>
- 81 percent of Hispanic youth smokers (ages 12-17) prefer Marlboro, Newport, and Camel— three heavily advertised brands. 41.6 percent of Hispanic smokers ages 12 to 17 report smoking Marlboro most often in the past month followed by Newport (24.1%) and Camel (15.5%). Interestingly, Hispanic youth ages 12-17 who prefer Camel increased by 70 percent in just one year, from 9.1 percent to 15.5 percent, which could be a result of increased marketing efforts.<sup>7</sup>
- Hispanic smokers in all age groups are more likely than non-Hispanic blacks or whites to quit or cutback their smoking in response to increases in cigarette prices.<sup>8</sup>
- In addition to tobacco use, economic, social and cultural factors influence cancer incidence and survival rates. In the US, Hispanics have lower levels of education than non-Hispanic whites and are more likely to live in poverty.<sup>9</sup>
- Hispanics have low rates of health insurance coverage and limited access to medical care, thus, it is less likely that Hispanic smokers will be advised by a health care provider to quit smoking or have access to cessation treatments.<sup>10</sup>

### Health Consequences of Tobacco Use Among Hispanic Americans

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.<sup>11</sup> Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and according to the 1998 Surgeon General's Report, smoking and other tobacco use takes its toll on the health of Hispanic Americans. Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death among Hispanic Americans, and tobacco use is an important risk factor.<sup>12</sup> Smoking is responsible for 87 percent of all lung cancer deaths in the United States and lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among Hispanic men and second among Hispanic women.<sup>13</sup> Lung cancer death rates within Hispanic subpopulations differ according to differences in smoking patterns. In the U.S., lung cancer death rates are higher among Cuban men than among Puerto Rican and Mexican men. Tobacco use is also a major cause of chronic bronchitis, emphysema, gastric ulcers, and cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, uterine cervix, kidney, stomach, and bladder.<sup>14</sup>

## Tobacco Industry Philanthropy to Hispanic Organizations

For political purposes, the tobacco industry frequently provides large cash contributions to organizations representing ethnic minorities. For example, in 1994 Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds each gave the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce \$75,000. That same year, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce mailed 92,000 letters urging business owners and employees to lobby against a proposed tobacco tax increase.<sup>15</sup> The Congressional Hispanic Caucus' political action committee "Building our Leadership Diversity" or "BOLD PAC" has received campaign contributions from the tobacco industry.<sup>16</sup>

### Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, December 7, 2009 / Meg Riordan

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults - United States, 2008," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, Vol. 58 No. 44, November 13, 2009. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5844.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults - United States, 2006," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, Vol. 56 No. 44, November 9, 2007 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5644.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Perez-Stable, E., et al., "Cigarette smoking behavior among US Latino men and women from different countries of origin," *American Journal of Public Health*, September, 2001, 91(9): 1424-1430.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, United States, 2007," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, June 6, 2008 55 SS-4 [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07\\_mmwr.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_mmwr.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, *National Health Interview Survey*, 1987-1991.

<sup>6</sup> Perez-Stable, E., et al., "Cigarette smoking behavior among US Latino men and women from different countries of origin," *American Journal of Public Health*, September, 2001, 91(9): 1424-1430.

<sup>7</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, (SAMHSA), HHS, Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH, <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k5nsduh/tabs/Sect7peTabs58to67.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> CDC, "Responses to Cigarette Prices By Race/Ethnicity, Income, and Age Groups - United States 1976-1993," *MMWR* July 31, 1998, 47(29): 605-609.

<sup>9</sup> American Cancer Society, 2007. *Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanic-Latinos 2006-2008*, Atlanta, GA <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/CAFF2006HisPWSecured.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Houston T., et al., "Patient smoking cessation advice by health care providers: the role of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and health," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> HHS, *Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2001. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr\\_forwomen/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr_forwomen/index.htm)

<sup>12</sup> *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups, Report of the Surgeon General*, 1998. [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr\\_1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr_1998/index.htm)

<sup>13</sup> American Cancer Society, 2007. *Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanic-Latinos 2006-2008*, Atlanta, GA. See also, HHS, *Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups - African Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998 [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr\\_1998/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr_1998/index.htm)

<sup>14</sup> HHS, *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*, 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/index.htm> <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/CAFF2003PWSecured.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> "Invisibly, Tobacco Firms Back Campaign Against Higher Cigarette Taxes." *Washington Post*, 26 August 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, "Campaign Contributions by Tobacco Interests - Quarterly Report," October, 2001.