

Operation Storefront Survey: An urban perspective on tobacco products and advertisement accessibility

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Learning objectives:

1. Identify and assess the impact of interior and exterior advertising throughout convenient/corner stores.
2. Demonstrate the influence of tobacco advertising on consumer/ non-consumer decision making.
3. Identify and discuss methods for engaging convenient/corner store owners to participate in Operation Storefront.
4. Design an education curriculum on how to create anti-tobacco healthy messaging.

Background:

Studies show that point-of-purchase advertising and promotion in combination with access to products directly influence brand and product selection. Cleveland, Ohio is a large metropolitan city which is inundated with retail outlets/corner stores whose counters are beleaguered with tobacco displays, and signage. The “Operation Storefront” study has enabled public health to partner with community development neighborhood agencies and youth volunteers to conduct interior and exterior surveillance of tobacco signage and products in corner and convenience stores.

Purpose:

The Operation Storefront (OS) project intends to highlight the prevalence of tobacco advertising of retail storefronts and its impact on the community and youth tobacco use. Some of the goals include the following:

- Reduce negative cues – increase healthy messaging [see ad]
- Empower youth to become health advocates
- Engage youth to inform, advocate, help develop policy for change
- Utilize various mediums of health promotions to educate the public and raise community awareness of the hazards of tobacco
- Create concept of healthy messaging promotions for store display
- Engage storeowners to decrease the number of exterior and interior tobacco displays and reposition products away from youth direct access.

There is evidence that tobacco advertising and promotional campaigns, whether intended or not, directly appeal to youth and create an environment in which consumption of these products is desirable, normal, and cool. The OS program is designed to educate youth on the power of tobacco advertising and empower youth through anti-tobacco advocacy, education and health promotion activities in order for them to understand how to bring about positive change in their community.



Method:

This study uses the survey research method to 1) ascertain surveillance data on exterior and interior tobacco promotions and product placement and 2) spatial analysis of corner/convenient stores demonstrating higher quantity of advertisements and products and proximity to schools and parks. SPSS & ArcGIS were utilized to analyze the data. The list below describes additional study methods;

- The study included a sample of corner stores (15) in the metropolitan area of Cleveland, Ohio
- 15 youth conducted surveys measuring the amount of alcohol and tobacco ads placed on the exterior and interior of storefronts
- Surveyed store zip code regions included:
 - (2) 44102—Cudell/Detroit Shoreway
 - (2) 44103—St. Clair/Superior
 - (3) 44114—Downtown
 - (4) 44119—North Collinwood
 - (4) 44128—Lee Harvard



- Surveyed zip codes were reviewed comparing the number of cases of chronic disease and the quantity of tobacco advertising and tobacco product placement per store

Results:

The partnership enabled public health to work with store owners to reduce the number of exterior and interior tobacco signage and utilize posters promoting healthy messages, created by youth, that counter tobacco companies marketing efforts for interior and exterior store display. This section highlights the results from the survey implementation;

- Three (3) stores refused to allow interior data collection
- Zip code 44102 had the highest number (prevalence) of individuals with Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, Asthma, and Obesity—chronic diseases [Maps 1-4]
- Newport (cigarettes) highest number of products on interior and exterior display with Marlboro trailing [Chart 1]
- Black & Mild’s (cigars) were displayed most frequently [Chart 2 & 3]
- Skoal (smokeless) was the product most frequently displayed [Chart 4]
- Newport was highest for tobacco products below 3 feet [Chart 5]
- Little to no advertisement for wine coolers when compared to wine and beer (interior or exterior) [Chart 6 & 7]

Discussion:

The implications of the findings will be used to engage community stakeholders in advocating for change through health education and promotion activities in addition, to local policy change and legislation enforcement.

Limitations:

1. Store types limited:
 - Majority of stores were corner stores.
 - Others : (1) grocer; (1) convenience
2. Low number of stores participating (sample size too small)
3. Twelve of the fifteen surveys were completed in which both interior and exterior data was collected
4. Stores were not randomly selected
5. Possible surveyor bias
6. Difficulty in recruitment of youth

Conclusion:

There is a relationship between the corner stores analyzed and spatial referencing of chronic disease in these communities in addition to correlation of schools near these stores that specifically have targeted school agers through placement of tobacco advertisement and products. Further research should be conducted in a broader geographical region to validate the causation of corner store tobacco product placement and advertisements and its effects on tobacco use decision making and its correlation to the prevalence to chronic disease. The implications of our study is that the findings will be used to further engage community stakeholders in advocating for change through health education and promotion activities in addition, to local policy and legislation enforcement.

