

Associations Between Adolescent Smoking and Beliefs about the Weight-controlling Aspects of Cigarettes



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Background

The Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, is a school-based anonymous survey of middle and high school students, that has been conducted annually since 1998.

In 2008, 5.0 percent of Florida middle school students and 14.5 percent of Florida high school students were current smokers, or had smoked cigarettes one or more times during the past 30 days. Among the current smokers, 22.7% of middle schools students and 38.8% of high school students were frequent smokers, or had smoked cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days.

Methods

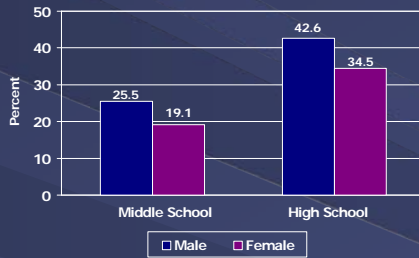
The FYTS was administered to 38,510 middle school students and 40,283 high school students in 744 Florida public schools with response rates of 79% and 73%, respectively.

Data from the 2008 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS) were analyzed using SAS 9.1.3 and SUDAAN 10.0. FYTS data were weighted to be representative of all Florida middle and high school students.

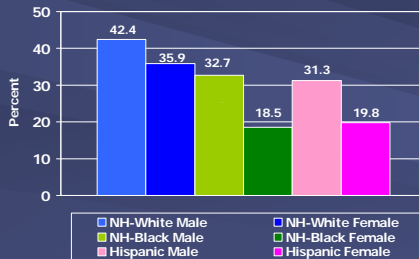
Introduction

The belief that smoking cigarettes is a means of weight control has been shown to be associated with smoking behaviors. In this study, we examined the relationship between frequent smoking, weight control beliefs, and perception that one needs to lose weight using data from the 2008 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS).

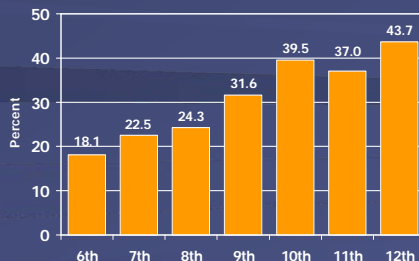
Prevalence of Frequent Smoking among Current Smokers, by Gender and School Level



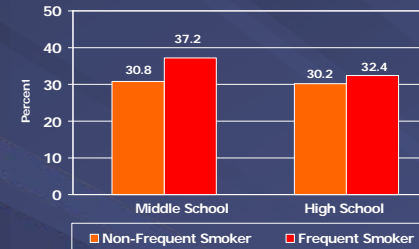
Prevalence of Frequent Smoking among Current Smokers, by Gender by Race/Ethnicity



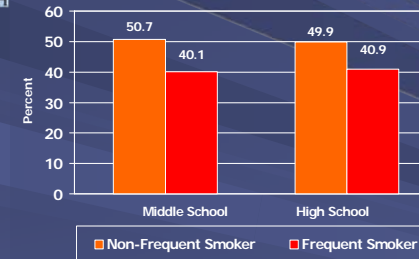
Prevalence of Frequent Smoking among Current Smokers, by Grade Level



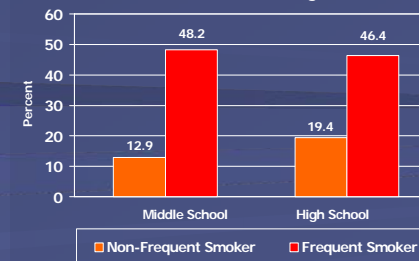
Prevalence of Students that Describe Themselves as Slightly or Very Overweight, by School Level and Smoking Status



Prevalence of the Intention to Lose Weight, by School Level and Smoking Status



Prevalence of the Belief that Smoking Cigarettes Helps People Maintain or Control Body Weight, by School Level and Smoking Status



Results

There is a significantly higher prevalence of frequent smoking among:

- high school students vs. middle school students;
- males vs. females; and
- non-Hispanic White students vs. their non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic counterparts.

This study also found that:

- Students who thought that smoking definitely helps control weight were 13.4 times more likely to be frequent smokers than students who thought that smoking definitely does not help control weight.
- Non-Hispanic Black females were significantly less likely than those in all other sex-race/ethnicity categories to be frequent smokers.
- The likelihood of being a frequent smoker (compared to 6th graders) increased with increasing grade level from 1.8 times more likely in 7th grade to 14.0 times more likely in 12th grade.
- Among middle school students, frequent smokers had a significantly higher prevalence of describing themselves as overweight.
- Perception that one needs to lose weight was not significantly associated with frequent smoking.

Discussion

This study shows that students who hold the belief that smoking cigarettes helps people maintain or control body weight have a significantly higher prevalence of being frequent smokers.

Holding misguided attitudes and beliefs can have a negative impact on the decisions made about tobacco use. Tobacco prevention/intervention programs should emphasize that the immediate and severe adverse health effects from tobacco use far out-weigh potential weight-control benefits.

For more information...

<http://www.floridachronicdisease.org>