

SURVEILLANCE UPDATE

2005 North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey



WHAT ABOUT SMOKELESS TOBACCO?

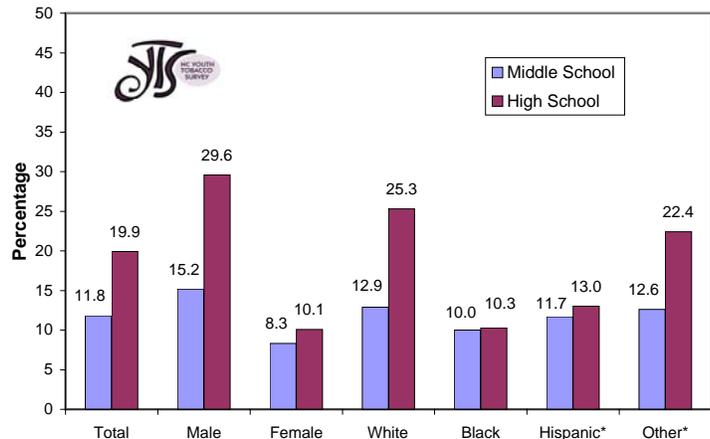
Tobacco continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and in North Carolina. Smokeless tobacco, commonly known as chewing tobacco, snuff or dip, is a leading delivery method for nicotine, but is not a safe alternative to cigarette smoking! Smokeless or spit tobacco contains 28 known cancer-causing agents, is a known cause of oral cancer, is associated with leukoplakia (a lesion of the soft tissue that consists of a white patch or plaque that cannot be scraped off), and recession of the gums. Spit tobacco is addictive, just like cigarette smoking, and young people who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.¹

Among North Carolina youth, smokeless tobacco use is a serious problem. In 2005 - as measured by the 2005 N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) - 11.8% of middle school students and 19.9% of high school students reported ever using smokeless tobacco. What's more, 2.7% of all middle school students and 9.2% of all high school students said they currently use chewing tobacco, snuff or dip, such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal, Skoal Bandits or Copenhagen. That's enough students to fill 711 middle school buses and 1,528 high school buses.²

Current spit tobacco use varied by gender and

(continued)

Percentage of N.C. middle and high school students who reported ever⁵ using smokeless tobacco, by gender and race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS 2005



"SMOKELESS DOES NOT MEAN HARMLESS"

The North Carolina Spit Tobacco Education Program (NCSTEP) is funded by the Health and Wellness Trust Fund to serve as a statewide spit tobacco prevention and cessation resource. The mission of NCSTEP is to assist the statewide tobacco prevention and control network in reducing spit usage rates among North Carolina's youth. The program provides consultation and information about spit tobacco; develops educational and school materials and resources; provides training for the medical, dental, public health, and school communities; and provides presentations to schools and youth groups. For more information, please contact:



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ethnicity. More boys (4.1% of middle school and 15.9% of high school) reported current use of smokeless tobacco than girls (1.3% of middle school and 2.3% of high school). White students in high school were more likely to use smokeless tobacco than black high school students (12.1% of white students and 3.4% of black students). These data indicate that white males are one of the primary risk groups for smokeless tobacco use throughout North Carolina.

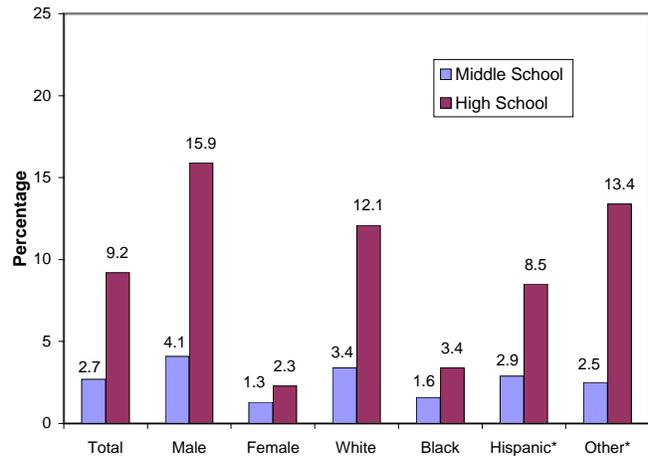
Perhaps surprisingly, current spit tobacco use did not follow a set pattern by grade level (age). 1.4% of 6th graders reported current smokeless tobacco use, followed by only 3.7% of 7th graders and 3.2% of 8th graders. In high school, 9.7% of 9th graders reported current smokeless tobacco use, compared with 9.9% of 10th graders, 7.1% of 11th graders and 9.1% of 12th graders. Specific, 95% confidence interval data is available at the N.C. YTS website.

Although differences exist between genders and ethnicities, an important criterion to examine when analyzing spit tobacco use is within geographic regions of North Carolina. There were no significant differences in prevalence of smokeless tobacco use among students throughout North Carolina. Students from North Carolina's Mountain (Western) Region (3.9% of middle school and 11.6% of high school) were just as likely to currently use smokeless tobacco than students from either the Piedmont (Central) Region (2.4% of middle school and 9.4% of high school) or the Coastal (Eastern) Region (2.9% of middle school and 6.9% of high school).

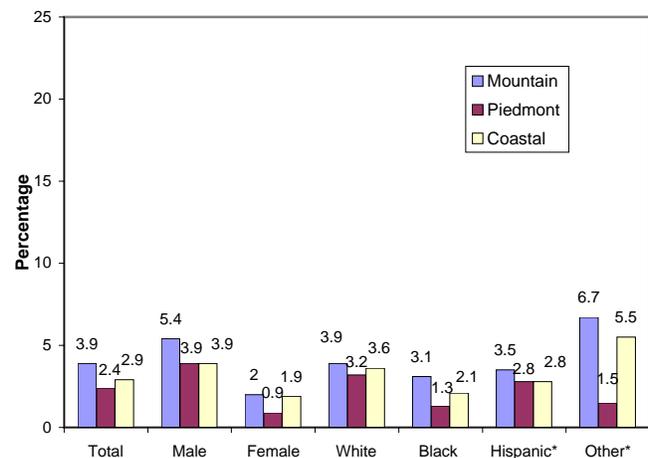
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Percentage of N.C. middle and high school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by gender and race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS 2005



Percentage of N.C. middle school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by region: N.C. YTS 2005

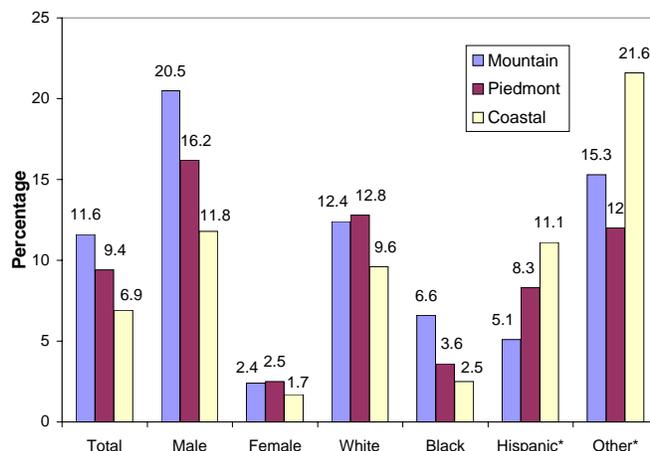


Current smokeless tobacco use among high school students in North Carolina is higher than that of the nation. In 2004, only 2.8% of all U.S. middle school students and 5.5% of all U.S. high school students reported current use of smokeless tobacco. That means, in 2005, North Carolina's middle school students were just as likely to use spit tobacco as their peers throughout the nation. Among high school students, however, North Carolinians were 67.3% more likely to use smokeless tobacco than their peers throughout the nation.

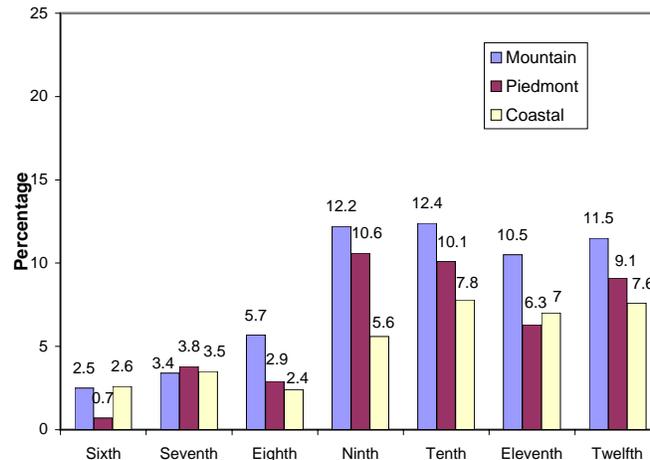
These results are particularly troubling, because spit tobacco use rates have not significantly declined from 1999 to 2005. Among high school students, active smokeless tobacco use has remained steady during this time period. Levels of use have stayed relatively high among male students in high school from 1999 to 2005 (14% to 15.9%) and among white students in high school (9.7% to 12.1%) In contrast, prevalence of use among their female and black peers in high schools have continued to be relatively low during that same time period (1.8% to 2.3% and 2.6% to 3.4%, respectively). These data indicate that smokeless tobacco use continues to be a key area that needs attention. North Carolina must implement further evidence-based programs that confront smokeless tobacco use, especially among white males in high school. Spit tobacco use must not become a greater problem for North Carolina; current cigarette smokers should not quit smoking, only to use smokeless tobacco as a type of substitute, allowing cigarette smoking to decline while smokeless tobacco use continues to increase.

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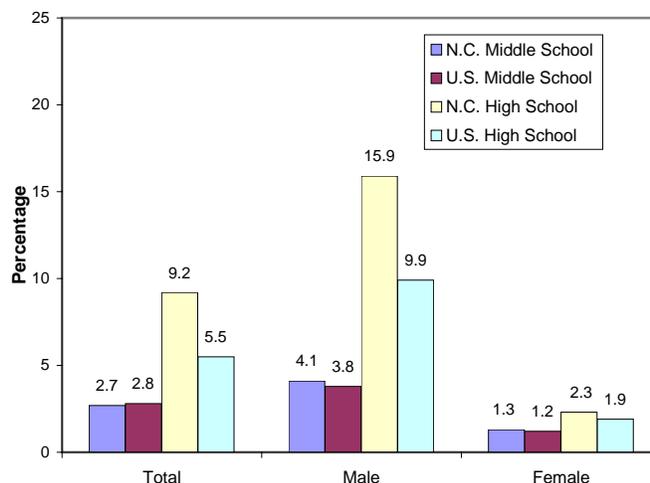
Percentage of N.C. high school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by region: N.C. YTS 2005



Percentage of N.C. students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by region: N.C. YTS 2005



Percentage of N.C. and U.S. middle and high school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by gender: N.C. YTS 2005 and U.S. NYTS 2004



For more information on tobacco use prevention and control, please visit the CDC Office on Smoking and Health's Tobacco Information and Prevention Source page at www.cdc.gov/tobacco.

[§] Ever using smokeless tobacco indicates that a student has used smokeless tobacco, even once or twice.

[†] Current smokeless tobacco use indicates that a student has used smokeless tobacco within the last 30 days.

* Caution when interpreting; results based on small sample size.

Specific, 95% confidence interval data is available at the YTS website.

References:

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheet. 2004.

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/factsheets/smokelesstobacco.htm

2. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/stats/statprofile05.pdf



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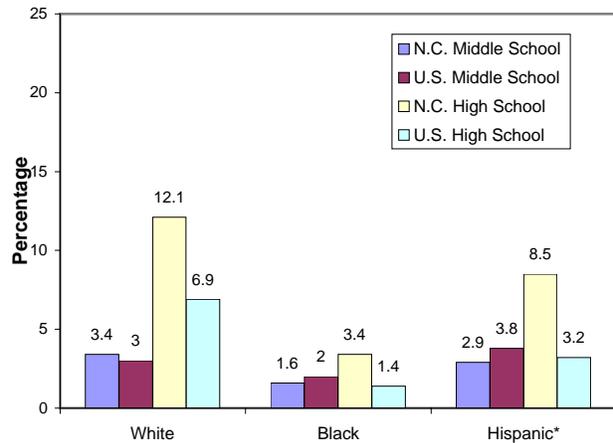


For more information, please contact:
Health and Wellness Trust Fund at
www.healthwellnc.org

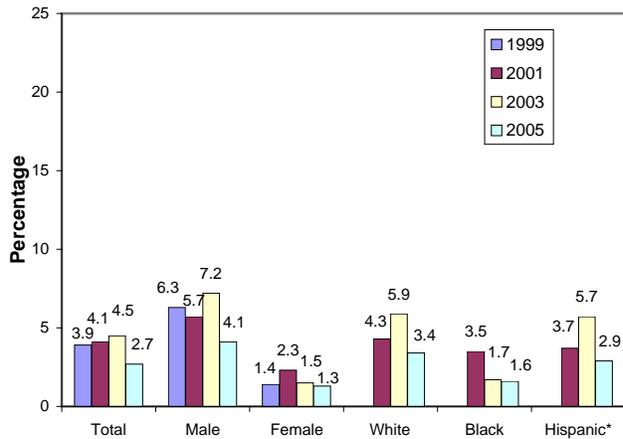


More information on North Carolina Youth Tobacco Survey (N.C. YTS) is available at www.communityhealth.dhhs.state.nc.us/tobacco.htm

Percentage of N.C. and U.S. middle and high school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by race/ethnicity: N.C. YTS 2005 and U.S. NYTS 2004



Percentage of N.C. middle school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by year: N.C. YTS 2005



Percentage of N.C. high school students who report current[†] smokeless tobacco use, by year: N.C. YTS 2005

