

THE IMPACT OF SMOKING ON LUNG HEALTH: A FOCUS ON RACIAL MINORITIES IN THE SOUTH

CATIE KIEFER, ISABELLA GARRISH, KATIE BAUMEISTER, KATE BROWN,
NIDHISHA KANCHARLA, VINCENT NGUYEN



Hidden dangers of smoking

- Smoking is the leading cause of lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer, which disproportionately affect racial minority groups¹

- Smoking has many hidden dangers as well, including increased risk of heart disease, reproductive health issues, weakened immune system, vision problems, and various other cancers¹



Understanding the Risks and Benefits

- Black men in the U.S. are 11% more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer and 9.8% more will die from lung cancer than the White population⁷



Where to Find Help

- Talk to your health care provider about smoking cessation⁶
- Join nicotine replacement therapy and support group classes⁶
- The American Lung Association has online advice programs on smoking cessation⁶
- Call the National Cancer Quitline at 877-448-7848⁶
- Each state has a quit call line CALL 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)⁶



Smoking Statistics

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, killing more than 480,000 Americans each year²
- In 2021, an estimated 11.5% (28.3 million) of U.S. adults were current smokers²
- Life expectancy for smokers is at least 10 years shorter than for nonsmokers³
- Quitting smoking before the age of 40 reduces the risk of dying from smoking-related disease by about 90%³



Unequal Burden on Racial Minorities

- Smoking prevalence among African American adults is significantly higher compared to White adults in many southern states¹⁰
- Limited access to healthcare, targeted tobacco marketing, and systemic inequities further exacerbate this disparity¹⁰
- In 2024, an estimated 10% of non-Hispanic Black youth currently used tobacco product, compared with 7.8% of non-Hispanic White youth¹¹
- An estimated 2.2% of non-Hispanic Black youth currently used cigars, compared with 0.9% of non-Hispanic White youth¹¹

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Resources

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