



Student Smoking

October 2004

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this survey is students' smoking behavior and attitudes related to smoking. Included in the survey are questions concerning students' tobacco use, perceptions of the risks associated with smoking and secondhand smoke, and attitudes toward clean air policies. This survey, conducted by Student Affairs Research and Assessment, was administered by phone and also by Web¹ at the request of Penn State's Office of Health Promotion and Education. A similar survey was conducted in 1999 allowing comparisons over time for several of the questions.

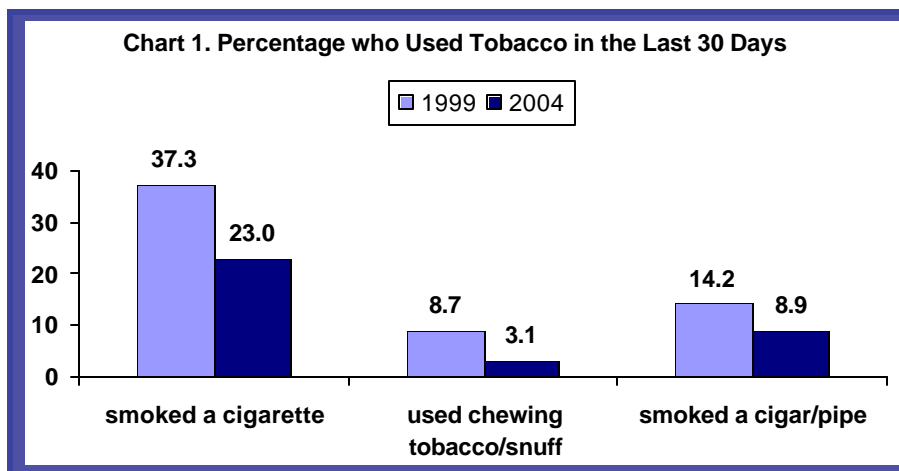
In total, 1180 undergraduate students at University Park responded to the survey. By phone, 775 responded for a 43.5% response rate, and, of those contacted, 75.0% participated. By Web, 405 responded for a 15.6% response rate. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.80%. The respondent demographics are relatively proportional to the population.

Of the respondents, 52.1% are female; 45.4% are between 18 and 19 years old and 41.9% are between 20 and 21 years old; 57.0% live on campus; and 84.8% are White/Caucasian. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please go to <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

FINDINGS

Tobacco Use

All students were asked about their tobacco use in the last 30 days. In Chart 1, the percentages of students who had smoked a cigarette, used chewing tobacco/snuff, or smoked a cigar/pipe are presented. Data suggest a decline in tobacco use among Penn State undergraduate students since 1999. Furthermore, comparisons indicate that men and women as well as White students and students of color smoke at similar rates.



The focus of this survey is students' smoking behavior and attitudes related to smoking. Data suggest a decline in tobacco use.

For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

¹ The survey is also administered via the Web to account for students for whom local phone information was unavailable.



Penn State Pulse is a project of Student Affairs Research and Assessment.

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Division of Student Affairs

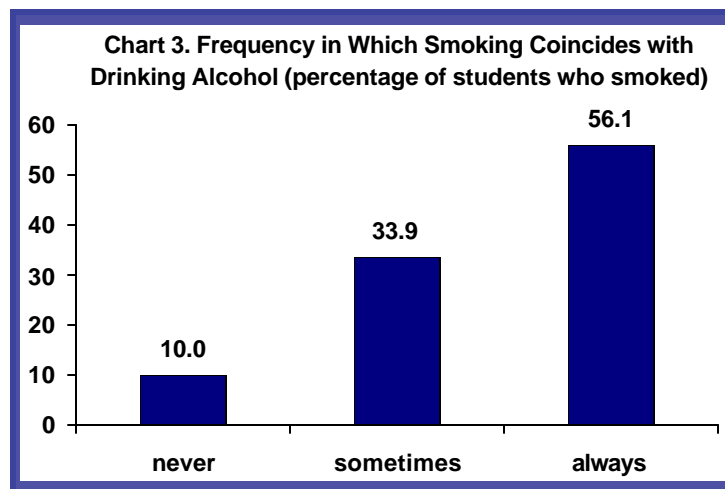
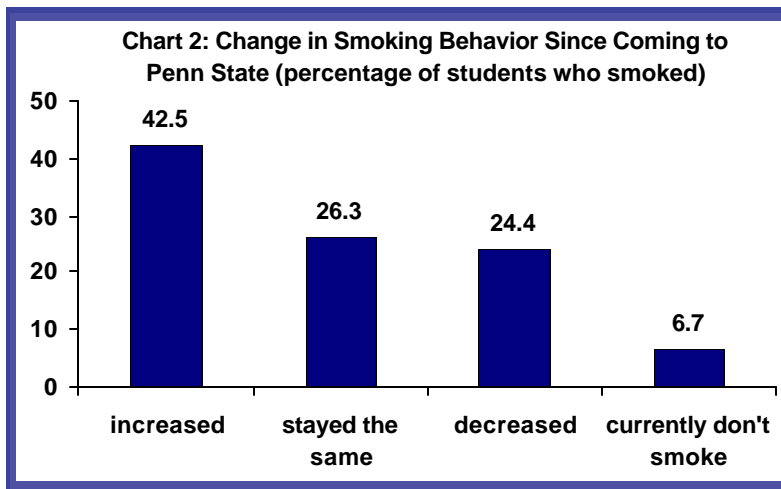
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Smoking Behavior

When all students were asked to describe their current smoking behavior, 72.7% responded they don't smoke; 13.0% smoked mostly in social situations; 7.7% smoked cigarettes every day; 3.7% used to smoke but quit; and 2.9% smoked occasionally (data not shown).

When students who smoked² were asked a series of questions about their smoking behavior, the data reveal the following:

- they averaged 4.85 cigarettes on the days they smoked (data not shown),
- 37.5% typically smoked 5 or more cigarettes on the days they smoked (data not shown),
- 76.0% smoked before coming to Penn State (data not shown),
- 42.5% indicated their smoking increased since coming to Penn State (see Chart 2),
- 56.1% responded that their smoking always coincides with drinking alcohol (see Chart 3),
- 65.7% have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lives (data not shown), and
- 76.0% do not have their first cigarette until after they have been awake for over an hour (data not shown).



Students were asked the most influential reason they smoked; 35.5% responded that it was drinking (see Table 1).

Table 1: Primary Reason Students Smoke

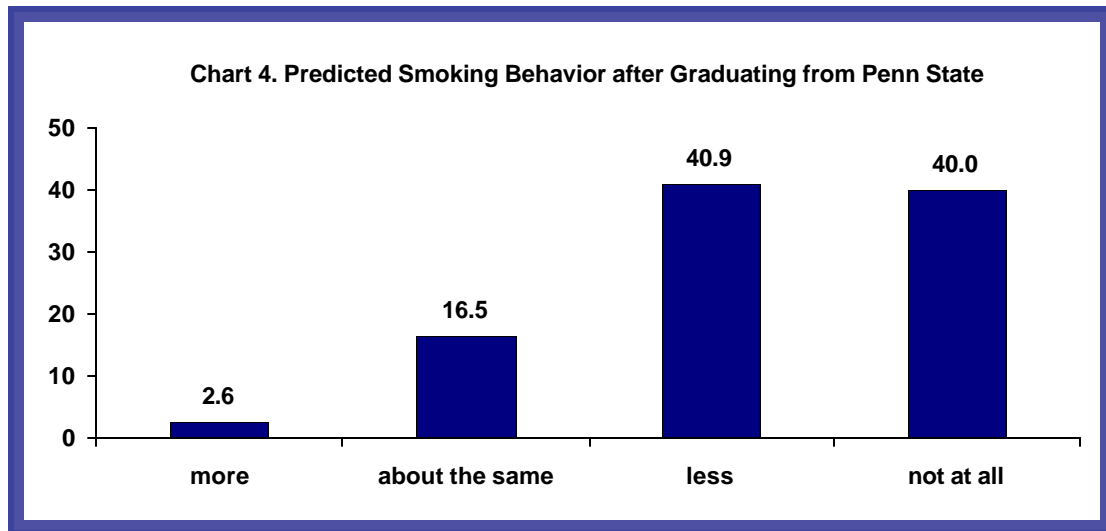
Most influential reason students smoke	percent
Drinking (parties/bars/tailgates)	35.5
Friends who smoke (peer pressure)	16.1
Addiction/habit	14.5
Personal stress	13.2
Other social occasions (meals/sports/sex)	7.1
Academic stress	3.9
Other	9.6

² These include students who indicated they used to smoke but quit, smoked occasionally, smoked every day, or were social smokers.

Quitting

Of students who smoked on a regular basis (some days or every day),

- 76.5% said they were “very likely” to quit smoking, and another 17.6% said they were “somewhat likely” (data not shown),
- 40.5% of students who smoked had not tried to quit in the last 12 months, while 34.5% had tried to quit 1 to 3 times, 13.8% tried to quit 4 to 10 times, and 11.2% had tried to quit more than 10 times, (data not shown),
- 73.0% were aware of resources available to help them quit (such as the PA telephone quit lines, the Quit and Win Challenge, and University Health Services) (data not shown), and
- 40.0% predicted they would not smoke at all after graduating from Penn State and 40.9% predicted they would smoke less (see Chart 4).



Perceptions of Risk

All students (regardless of their smoking status) were asked about their awareness of the risks associated with smoking and secondhand smoke.

- Close to 91% agreed that smoking is physically addictive (data not shown).
- Ninety-three percent agreed that secondhand smoke is harmful to one’s health (data not shown).
- In Table 2, data are presented on students’ awareness of the medical conditions associated with smoking.

Table 2: Medical Conditions Associated with Smoking (percent who agree)

Caused by smoking	percent	Caused by secondhand smoke	percent
Lung Cancer	99.0	Respiratory problems in children	95.1
Heart Attack	82.6	Lung cancer in adults	92.1
Stroke	77.3	Heart disease in adults	76.6
Impotence	54.4	Colon cancer	40.9

Marketing Campaigns

To provide some initial data on the effectiveness of social marketing efforts regarding smoking, students were asked whether or not they were aware of a number of initiatives including the following:

- 77.4% indicated they had seen at least one anti-smoking messages in the last 7 days (data not shown),
 - 72.0% had seen the posters in the HUB bathroom stalls or other locations on campus since coming to Penn State,
 - 38.3% were aware of the smoke-free bar campaign from the spring of 2004 (data not shown),
 - 23.2% had seen the Penn State Television public service announcements since coming to Penn State (data not shown), and
 - 16.1% of returning students were aware of the “What’s in the box?” campaign (data not shown).
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Clean Air Policies

All students were also asked a series of questions regarding clean air policies. Students said the following:

- 85.6% believed smoking should not be allowed in campus buildings (see Table 3),
- 62.4% responded that smoking should not be allowed in restaurants (off campus), and 35.9% said it should be allowed in some areas (see Table 3),
- 28.0% were aware of the Penn State policy banning smoking near most campus buildings (data not shown), and
- 21.2% indicated they would go out more if there was a smoke-free bar option in State College (58.3% said it would not make a difference; 4.5% indicated they would go out less; and 16.0% said they didn't go to bars).

Table 3: Clean Air Policies

Area	Allowed in all areas	Allowed in some areas	Not allowed at all
Campus buildings	1.1	13.3	85.6
Outside of campus buildings	26.8	57.0	16.2
Indoor area of restaurants (off campus)	1.6	35.9	62.4
Indoor bars or taverns	23.7	46.3	30.1

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