



Health Effects and Patterns of Use of Premium Cigars

NASEM Committee Meeting

April 23, 2021

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In my role at Truth, I lead a team of
research scientists to investigate the
impact of tobacco-related policies on
youth and young adults

My current research portfolio is funded
by Truth Initiative



Who we are?

Truth Initiative

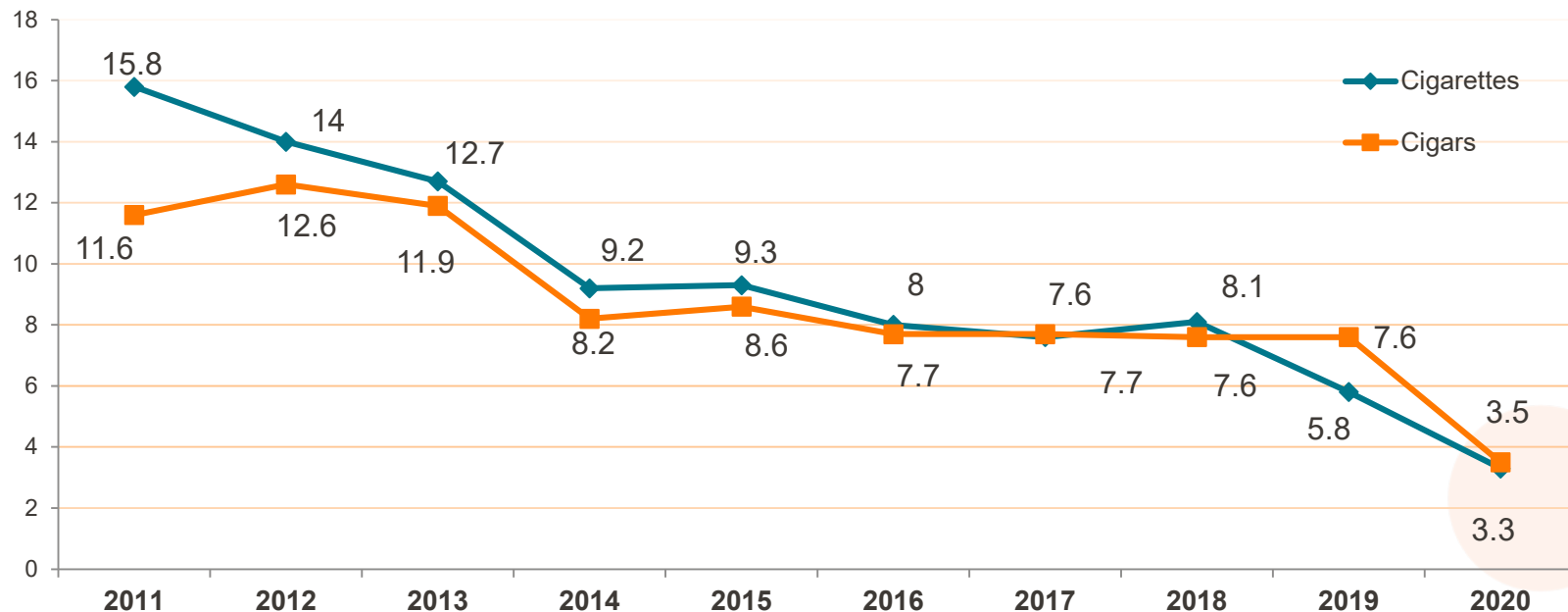
is America's largest nonprofit public health organization dedicated to a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are things of the past.

What we do

We seek, speak and spread the truth about smoking, vaping and nicotine through education for youth and young adults, tobacco control research and policy study, community activism and engagement, and digital cessation programs.

Prevalence Among Youth

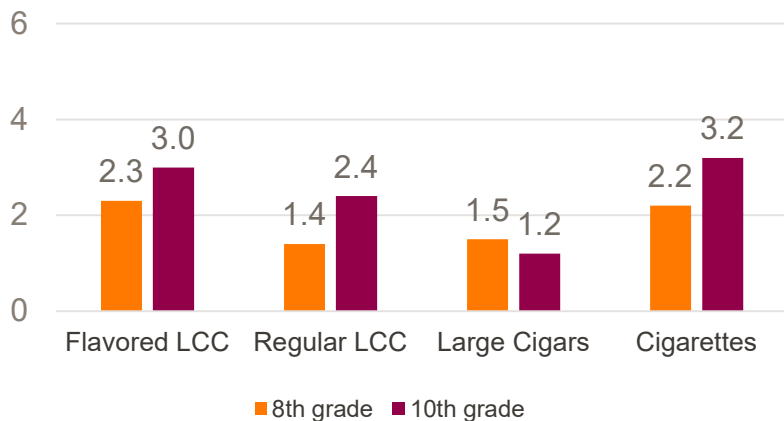
National Youth Tobacco Survey: Past 30 Day Cigar and Cigarette Use Among High School Students And Middle School Students (Percentage)



Prevalence Among Youth

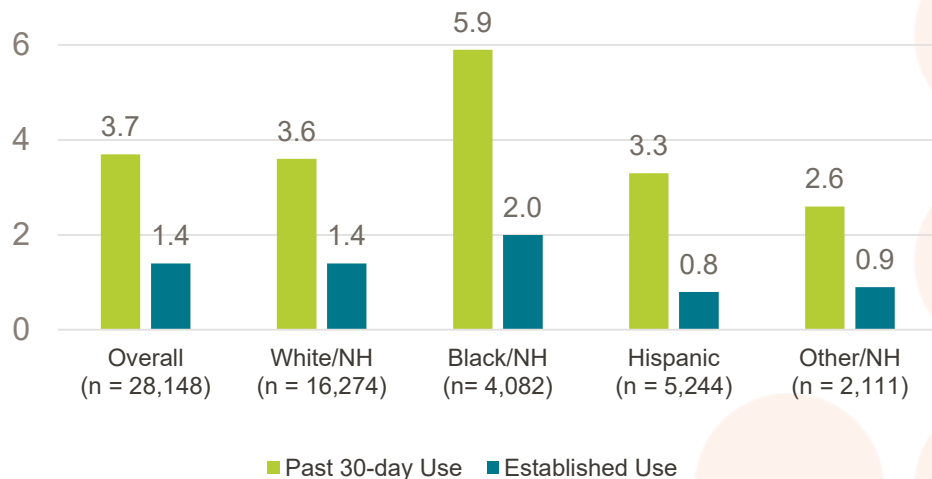
30-Day Prevalence of Tobacco Products Among Youth in 2020

(12th Grade sample too small for cigars in 2020)



Weighted Prevalence of Traditional Cigar Smoking by Race/Ethnicity

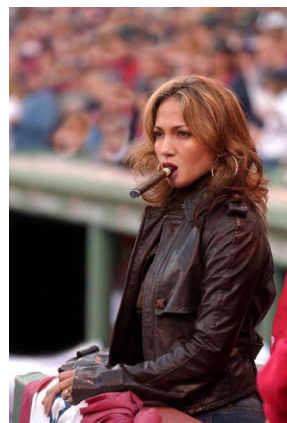
(PATH Wave 3 Adult Survey 2015-2016)



Source: Monitoring the Future (2020). <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drug-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>

Chen-Sankey, JC, et al.(2021). Cigar-Smoking Patterns by Race/Ethnicity and Cigar Type: A Nationally Representative Survey Among US Adults. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 60(1), 87-94.

Marketing to Youth and Young Adults



Marketing To Youth and Young Adults cont.

“[o]ne of the things a lot of people say to me is: ‘You’re so young to like cigars.’...It is a narrative that I’m aware of, and actually something that I love being able to speak to...I think that cigars as a whole should be something that you share with friends, and there shouldn’t be any barriers around who can enjoy them...And no matter your age—you should be able to enjoy the process.”



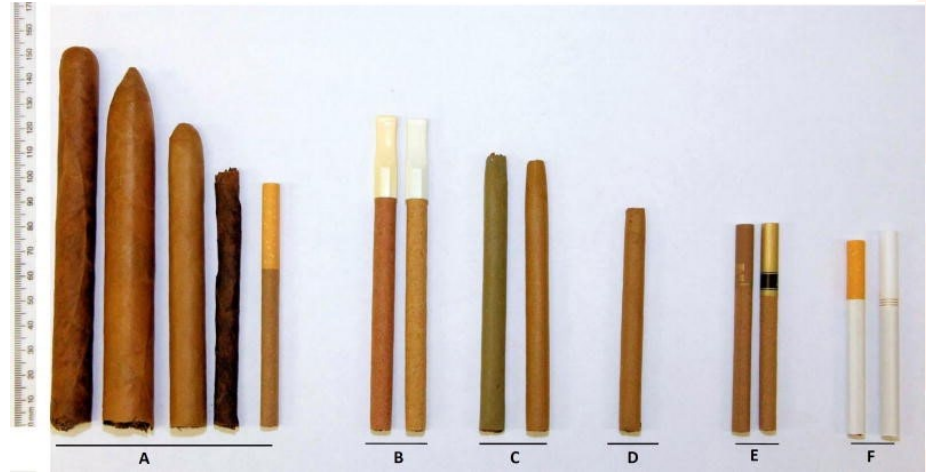
Overview

- Point of View on Formally Defining Premium Cigars
- Recommendations on Preliminary Research Questions



Defining Large Cigars

- Large or “premium” cigars are largely a **marketing construct** from the industry
- There is variability in the large cigar category
- Attempts to differentiate between cigar products for regulatory purposes make them vulnerable to industry manipulation



Source: Lawler, et al Surveillance of Nicotine and pH in Cigarette and Cigar Filler. Tobacco regulatory science. 2017;3(Supp 1): 101-116.

If defined:

- These definitions may need to evolve as products evolve so that research is examining the actual products that are being consumed in real time.

Required Elements:

- Price
- Hand-made/ hand-rolled
- Whole-leaf tobacco
- Weight
- No characterizing flavors other than tobacco

Preliminary Research Questions

Patterns of Use

Where and how do youth obtain cigars and how this changes over time?

What do trends in self reported use and retail sales data tell us about

- Use among youth and young adults: Co-use; use with marijuana; risk trajectories for future use?
- Introduction of new cigar products on the market? What appeals to youth and how is this reflected in sales?
- Where are most of the sales?

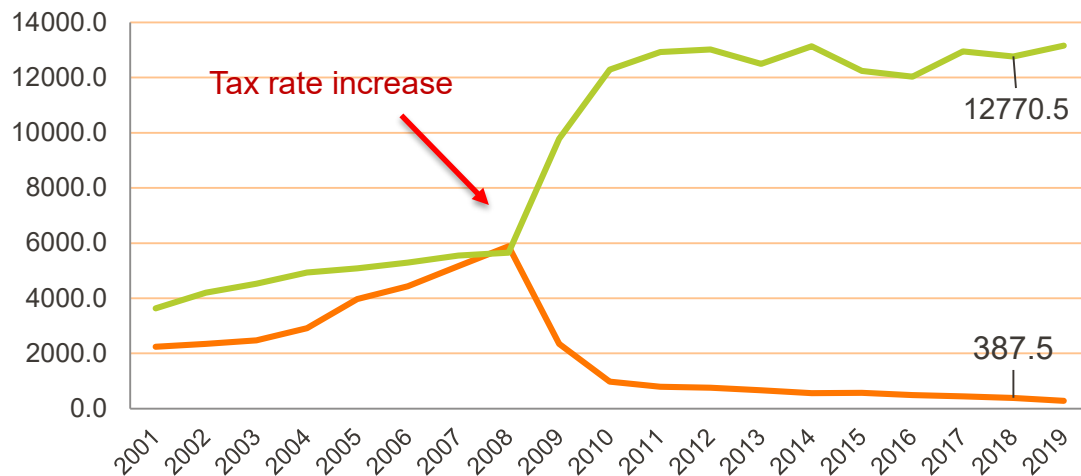
Consumer perceptions: How do youth perceive and understand the risks of cigar use?

Impacts of tobacco control policies applied to cigars?

Research on Policy Impacts

Case in Point: Impact of Federal Tax Disparity

U.S. Sales of Small and Large Cigars
Before and After the Federal Tax Increase
in 2009 (in millions)



Tobacco Product and Weight Definition	Tax / Tax per Package
Cigarettes (weigh 3,000 pounds ≥ per thousand)	\$50.33 per 1,000 units / \$1.01 per pack of 20
Small Cigars (weigh 3,000 pounds ≥ per thousand)	\$50.33 per 1,000 units / \$1.01 per pack of 20
Large Cigars (weigh > 3,000 pounds per thousand)	52.75% of sales price with a cap of \$0.4026 each

— Small Cigars
— Large Cigars

Preliminary Questions cont.

Are there point of sale policies that could be effective in preventing underage use of cigars?

What impact do coupons and discounts have on youth use?

What does price sensitivity look like for youth and young adults for cigar products? What are effective minimum prices for youth prevention?



418 West Church Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Savor the pleasures and save \$3.50.

Dear Mr. _____,

The character of a fine wine. The smooth, satisfying taste and wonderful aroma of blended Middleton pipe tobaccos. The best of both have come together for a completely new smoking experience – Black & Mild® Wine Cigars. Try them today, and save up to \$3.50.

- Cigars made with carefully blended pipe tobaccos for a perfect balance of flavor and body
- Slow-burning, for smoking pleasure that lasts
- A naturally sweet, wine-like aroma those around you will enjoy (product contains no wine)

Simply take the coupons below to your favorite retailer to save instantly on Black & Mild Wine Cigars. Savor the pleasures...and the savings!

Sincerely,
John Middleton, Inc.
P.S. To sign up for coupons and promotional offers, call 1-866-379-3377. You must be at least 21.

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth And Low Birth Weight.

\$2 Off Two 5-Packs
of Black & Mild® Wine Pipe-Tobacco Cigars

1691588-0108

Limit: One pack per coupon. Take this coupon to your local retailer to redeem. VOID IF COPIED.

Terms & Conditions on reverse side.

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth And Low Birth Weight.

\$1.50 Off A 5-Pack
of Black & Mild® Wine Pipe-Tobacco Cigars

1691588-0108

Limit: One pack per coupon. Take this coupon to your local retailer to redeem. VOID IF COPIED.

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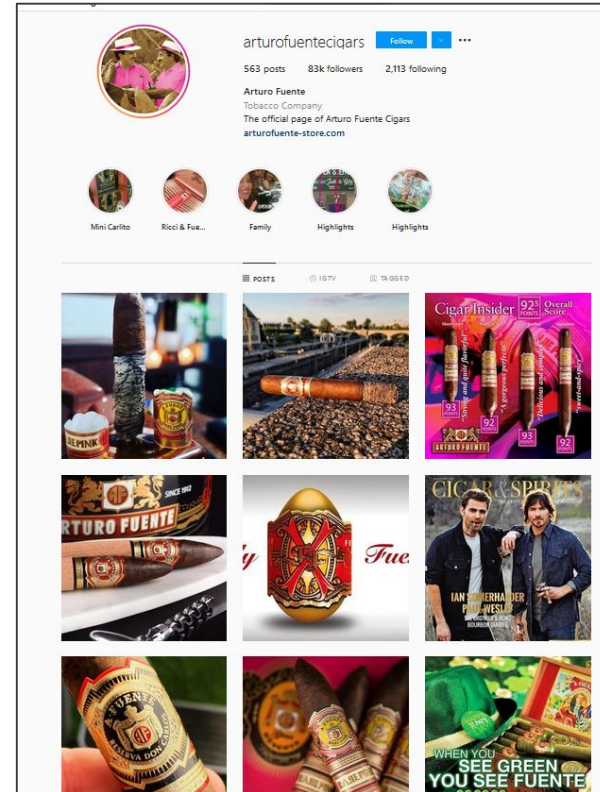
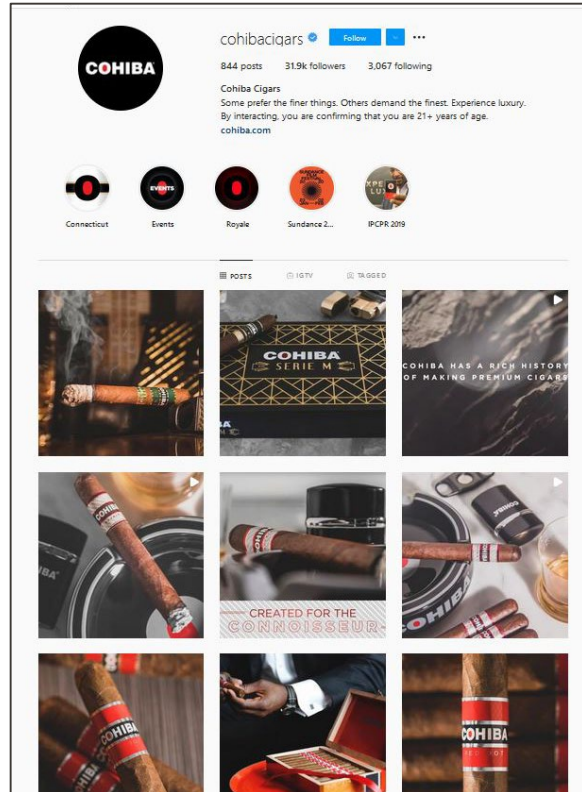
Preliminary Research Questions cont.

Research is needed on the marketing of cigars

- Celebrity endorsements
- Social media influencers



Influencer Marketing



Marketing cont.

- New-comer ACID brand cigars promote botanical and herb infused flavors in a hand-rolled leaf.
- They use marketing appealing to youth sub-culture/individualism rather than luxury and exotic themes like other premium brands.



Preliminary Research Questions cont.

Health Effects of Users and Non-Users:

- How are youth and young adults using cigars? Are they exposing others (users) or being exposed (nonusers)?

Abuse Liability:

- Given the addiction potential of large cigars and the high nicotine content, there is a need to examine abuse liability specifically among youth and young adults

Measurement:

- Research needed to ensure that youth and young adults are accurately reporting cigar type and brand

Conclusions

Cigars are not safe and have a negative impact on youth and youth adults

- Infrequent use and reports of not inhaling do not negate the adverse effects
- Consumers believe cigar smoking to be less harmful and more socially acceptable than cigarette smoking

Future research should advance evidence based and common-sense regulations

- Restrictions on marketing to youth
- Product standards that reduce appeal, toxicity and addictiveness

The cigar industry markets cigar products using the same strategies for marketing cigarettes. Research into these strategies to inform regulation is needed.

thank you

truthinitiative.org

