



April 8, 2010

Recent Smoking Cessation

In Brief

- **Among people who smoked cigarettes 13 to 24 months prior to the survey interview (i.e., year-before-last smokers), 4.1 percent (2.2 million persons) had successfully stopped smoking by the next year (i.e., did not smoke in the year prior to the survey interview)**
- **The past year smoking cessation rate was higher among females than males, higher among adults aged 26 to 34 than among persons in other age groups, and increased with increasing levels of education and income**
- **Past year smoking cessation rates varied by State, ranging from a high of 6.8 percent in Vermont to a low of 1.8 percent in South Carolina**

Cigarette smoking continues to be a leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, costing our Nation approximately \$193 billion each year in health care costs and lost productivity.¹ Given the substantial health and economic burdens caused by the use of cigarettes, much effort has gone into the development of effective smoking cessation programs, such as medications, counseling, telephone help lines, and self-help groups. However, even with the widespread knowledge of the health consequences of smoking and the availability of cessation support services, many people continue to smoke. Understanding the characteristics of individuals who *are* able to stop smoking may be important to policymakers and service providers in making critical decisions about improving and targeting smoking cessation and outreach efforts.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) includes a series of questions about the use of cigarettes and other tobacco products. Respondents aged 12 or older are asked whether they ever smoked all or part of a cigarette, when they last smoked a cigarette, and whether they ever smoked cigarettes on a daily basis. This report examines smoking cessation (i.e., no cigarette use during the 12 months prior to the interview) among individuals who smoked on a daily basis at some time in their lives and who smoked any cigarettes during the period 13 to 24 months prior to the interview (hereafter referred to as "year-before-last smokers"). Excluded from the study are persons who had never smoked daily and those who had stopped smoking more than 2 years prior to the survey interview.² All findings are annual averages based on combined 2005 through 2008 data.

Past Year Smoking Cessation, by Sociodemographic Characteristics

Of year-before-last smokers, 4.1 percent, or 2.2 million persons, had successfully stopped smoking (i.e., did not smoke in the year prior to the survey interview) (Table 1). Rates of past year smoking cessation did not vary by race/ethnicity (data not shown), but differences were found for other sociodemographic characteristics. Among year-before-last smokers, the past year smoking cessation rate was higher among females than males and higher among adults aged 26 to 34 than among persons in other age groups. Cessation rates were also higher among married persons than among persons who were never married and those who were divorced or separated.

Table 1. Past Year Cigarette Smoking Cessation among Year-Before-Last Smokers Aged 12 or Older, by Sociodemographic Characteristics: 2005 to 2008

Sociodemographic Characteristic	No Use in Past 12 Months, Number (in Thousands)	No Use in Past 12 Months, Percent
Total	2,206	4.1%
Aged 12 to 17	40	3.8%
Aged 18 to 25	328	3.6%
Aged 26 to 34	592	5.6%
Aged 35 or Older	1,245	3.8%
Male	1,078	3.8%
Female	1,128	4.5%
Married*	1,252	5.4%
Widowed*	63	2.8%
Divorced or Separated*	335	3.2%
Never Married*	549	3.2%
Less Than High School**	241	2.2%
High School Graduate**	673	3.4%
Some College**	679	4.9%
College Graduate**	572	7.3%
Income, Less Than \$20,000	290	2.4%
Income, \$20,000 to \$49,999	691	3.4%
Income, \$50,000 to \$74,999	484	5.2%
Income, \$75,000 or More	741	6.4%
Government Assistance: Yes***	298	2.6%
Government Assistance: No***	1,908	4.6%

* Estimates for marital status are shown only for persons aged 15 or older.

** Estimates for educational status are shown only for persons aged 18 or older.

*** Government assistance is defined as one or more household family members having received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; TANF), noncash assistance, or food stamps.

Source: 2005 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

Smoking cessation rates increased with increasing levels of education and income. The rate of smoking cessation among persons in households receiving government assistance was about half of that for persons living in households not receiving government assistance.³

Smoking Cessation, by State

Figure 1 shows State differences in the rate of smoking cessation. States with the highest estimates fall into the top fifth (quintile) and are shown in blue; States with the lowest estimates are in the bottom quintile and are shown in red.⁴ The rate of past year smoking cessation varied by State, ranging from a high of 6.8 percent in Vermont to a low of 1.8 percent in South Carolina.

Figure 1. Past Year Cigarette Smoking Cessation among Year-Before-Last Smokers Aged 12 or Older, by State: 2005 to 2008

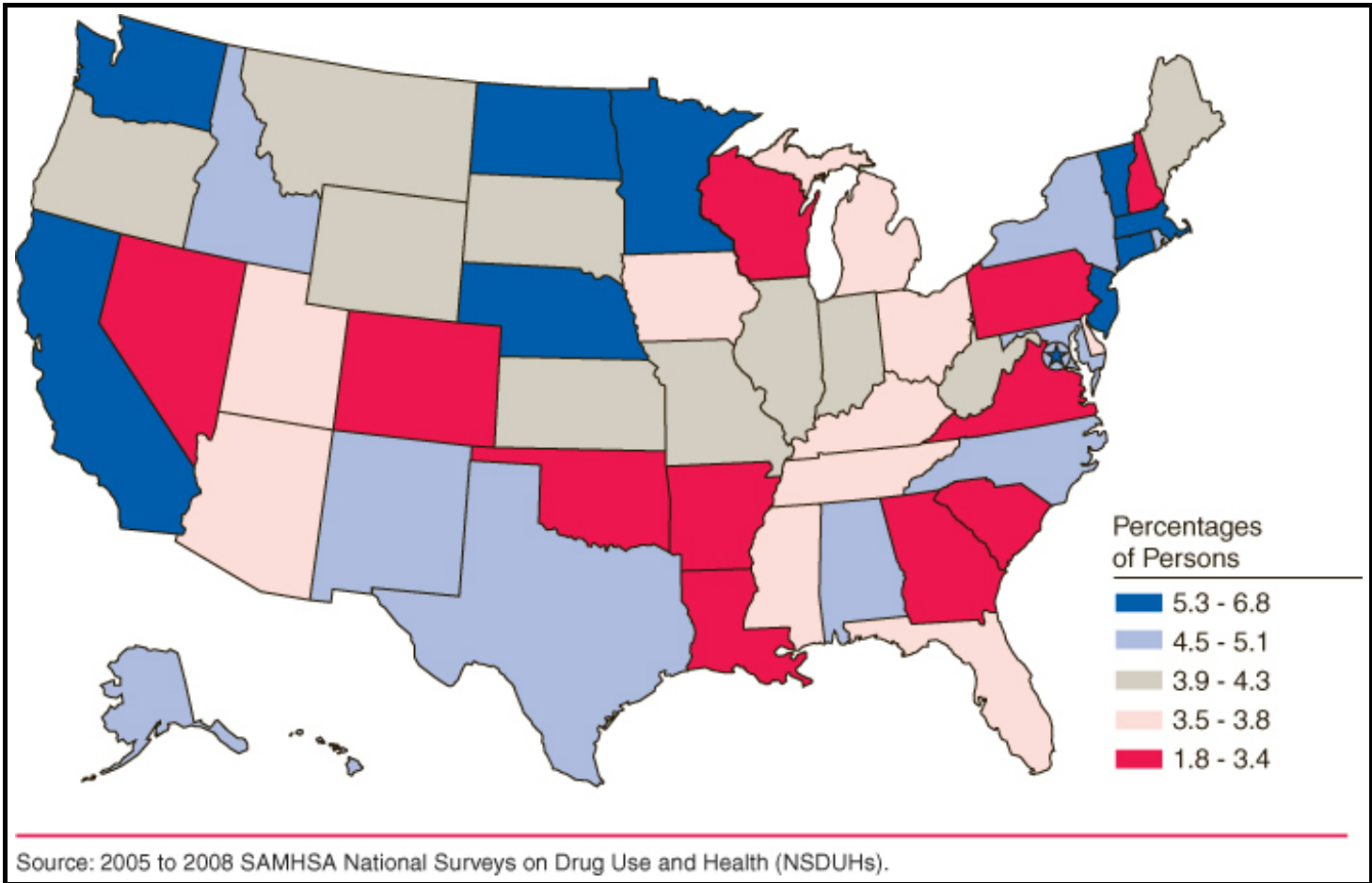


Figure 1 Table. Past Year Cigarette Smoking Cessation among Year-Before-Last Smokers Aged 12 or Older, by State: 2005 to 2008

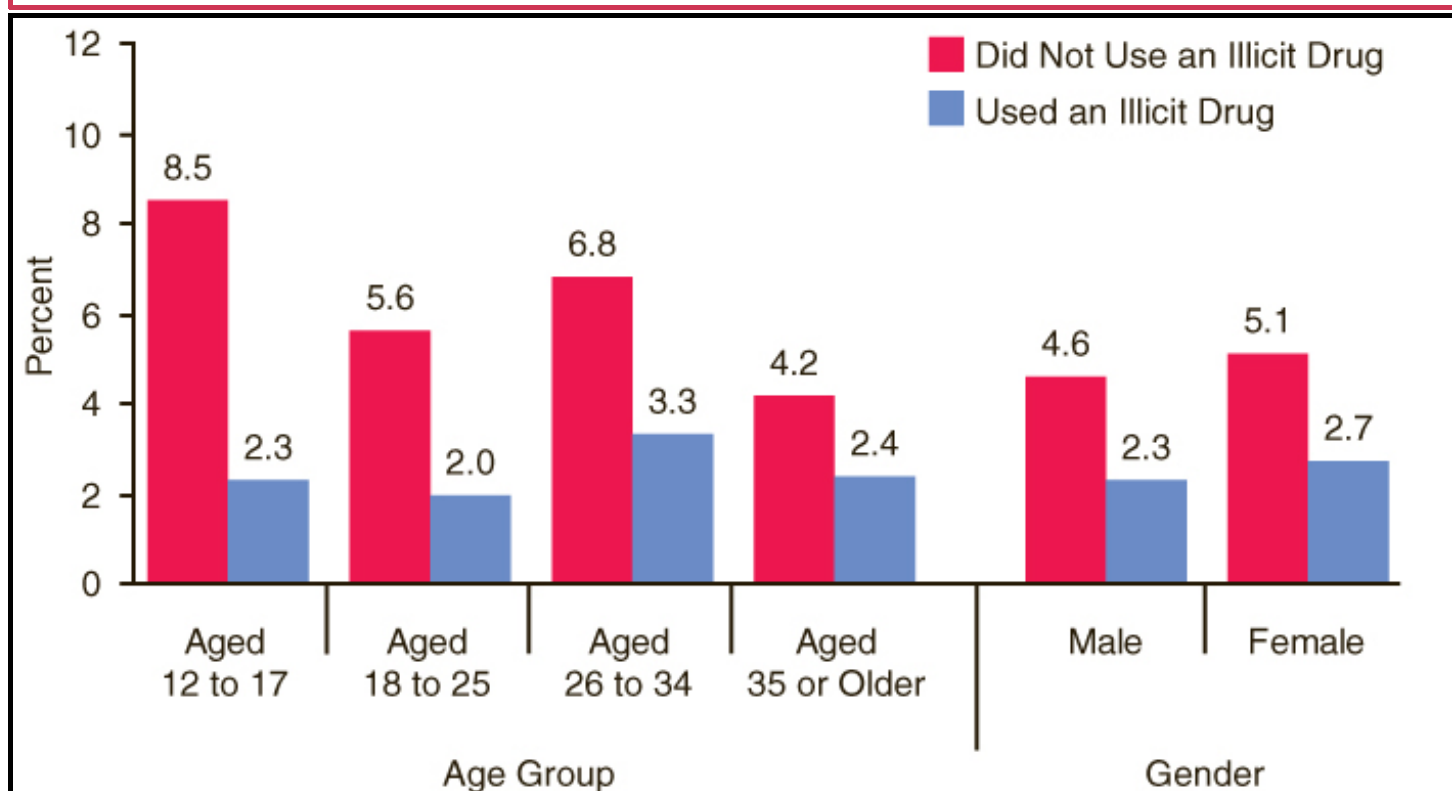
Percentages of Persons				
5.3% to 6.8%	4.5% to 5.1%	3.9% to 4.3%	3.5% to 3.8%	1.8% to 3.4%
California	Alabama	Illinois	Arizona	Arkansas
Connecticut	Alaska	Indiana	Delaware	Colorado
Massachusetts	District of Columbia	Kansas	Florida	Georgia
Minnesota	Hawaii	Maine	Iowa	Louisiana
Nebraska	Idaho	Missouri	Kentucky	Nevada
New Jersey	Maryland	Montana	Michigan	New Hampshire
North Dakota	New Mexico	Oregon	Mississippi	Oklahoma
Vermont	New York	South Dakota	Ohio	Pennsylvania
Washington	North Carolina	West Virginia	Tennessee	South Carolina

Source: 2005 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

Smoking Cessation, by Illicit Drug Use

Rates of past year smoking cessation were higher among persons who had not used an illicit drug in the past year than among those who had used an illicit drug (4.8 vs. 2.5 percent).⁵ This finding held across age groups and gender (Figure 2). For example, 6.8 percent of year-before-last smokers aged 26 to 34 who did not use an illicit drug in the past year had stopped smoking in the past year compared with 3.3 percent of their counterparts who did use an illicit drug.

Figure 2. Past Year Cigarette Smoking Cessation among Year-Before-Last Smokers Aged 12 or Older, by Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year: 2005 to 2008



Source: 2005 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

Figure 2 Table. Past Year Cigarette Smoking Cessation among Year-Before-Last Smokers Aged 12 or Older, by Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year: 2005 to 2008

Demographic Characteristics	Did Not Use an Illicit Drug, Percent	Used an Illicit Drug, Percent
Aged 12 to 17	8.5%	2.3%
Aged 18 to 25	5.6%	2.0%
Aged 26 to 34	6.8%	3.3%
Aged 35 or Older	4.2%	2.4%
Male	4.6%	2.3%
Female	5.1%	2.7%

Source: 2005 to 2008 SAMHSA National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs).

Discussion

Smoking is associated with multiple health problems, and stopping smoking has been identified as the single most important action a smoker can take to improve his or her health. Nevertheless, despite the well-known health risks of cigarettes and the availability of smoking cessation services, many people continue to smoke. In this study, 1 in 25 people who had been smokers during the year before last were found to have stopped in the next 12 months. Smoking cessation rates were lower among certain populations, such as illicit drug users and those who had low incomes or less education. These findings suggest the need for targeted efforts to inform subgroups of smokers about the availability and effectiveness of smoking cessation services.

This report also shows that there is variation in smoking cessation rates across States. These findings might be expected because of variation in State policies on smoking, such as smoke-free ordinances and taxation of tobacco products and the level of coverage of smoking cessation treatment in their Medicaid programs, State employee health plans, and private insurance regulations.⁶

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). Smoking-attributable mortality, years of potential life lost, and productivity losses—United States, 2000-2004. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 57(45), 1226-1228.

² This analysis attempts to examine the incidence of smoking cessation to the extent permitted in NSDUH cross-sectional data. No data were available on individuals' attempts to or desire to stop smoking. Nonsmoking throughout the 12 months prior to the survey interview among persons who had smoked at any time in the previous 12 months (i.e., 13 to 24 months prior to the survey interview, the baseline period) was selected as the criterion of cessation. No information was available on the frequency and quantity of smoking or on nicotine dependence during the baseline period; hence, baseline smokers varied in their level of cigarette involvement prior to the more recent 12-month period of complete nonuse and may have reduced or discontinued their cigarette use at any point after the beginning of the baseline period. Thus, the exact timing of smoking cessation cannot be determined although it is clear that cessation meeting our criteria had occurred. The analysis was restricted to persons who had smoked daily at some time in their lives in order to eliminate, to the extent possible, persons who had never taken up the smoking habit. From 2005 to 2008, an average of 53.3 million persons were year-before-last smokers. Excluded from this group are 13.1 million persons who had used cigarettes in the period 13 to 24 months ago, but had never smoked daily in their lifetimes, and 397,000 persons who had used cigarettes daily in their lifetime but had unknown data for whether they smoked in the year before last. It is also important to recognize that this analysis does not cover the large number of lifetime daily smokers who had stopped smoking prior to 24 months ago. There were an estimated 93.8 million persons who had smoked daily at some time in their lives, and 43.2 percent of them (40.6 million) were not smoking in the period 13 to 24 months prior to the interview; however, 3.8 million of these persons (9.3 percent) were smoking cigarettes in the 12 months prior to the interview date.

³ Government assistance is defined as one or more household family members having received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; TANF), noncash assistance, or food stamps.

⁴ Estimates were divided into quintiles for ease of presentation and discussion, but differences between States and quintiles were not tested for statistical significance. In some instances, more than 10 or fewer than 10 States were assigned to each quintile because of ties in the estimated prevalence rates.

⁵ Use of illicit drugs includes use of marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.

⁶ American Lung Association. (2009). *State cessation coverage 2009: Helping smokers quit*. Retrieved on January 12, 2010, from <http://www.lungusa.org/assets/documents/publications/other-reports/smoking-cessation-report-2009.pdf>

Suggested Citation

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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2005 to 2008 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 54,392 persons aged 12 or older who smoked cigarettes daily at some time in their lives and smoked during the 13 to 24 months prior to the survey. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NSDUH Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on the most recent NSDUH is available in the following publication:

Office of Applied Studies. (2009). *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 09-4434, NSDUH Series H-36). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Also available online: <http://oas.samhsa.gov>.

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