

A Profile of Smokers in Ohio in 2008

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of smoking continues to decline in the United States, with an estimated 18.4% of adults identifying as current smokers in 2008¹. There is still, however, a divide between the advantaged and disadvantaged, with smoking being a more prevalent behavior among less advantaged adults. The dramatic decline in smoking that has occurred since 1965, when 42.4% of the population smoked, can be attributed to a number of factors, including taxation on tobacco products, policies that restrict smoking in public places, and public health informational campaigns^{2,3}.

Ohioans (2004 OFHS). The prevalence was higher among males compared to females (26.2% versus 23.2%) and blacks compared to other race/ethnicity groups (29.7% among blacks versus 24.4% among whites, 21.1% among Hispanics, and 6.3% among Asians). Compared to other regions in the state, the prevalence was highest in Appalachian counties (30.4%). Finally, the prevalence of smoking varies by age, with a peak prevalence of 32.6% among adults in the 25-34 year age category.

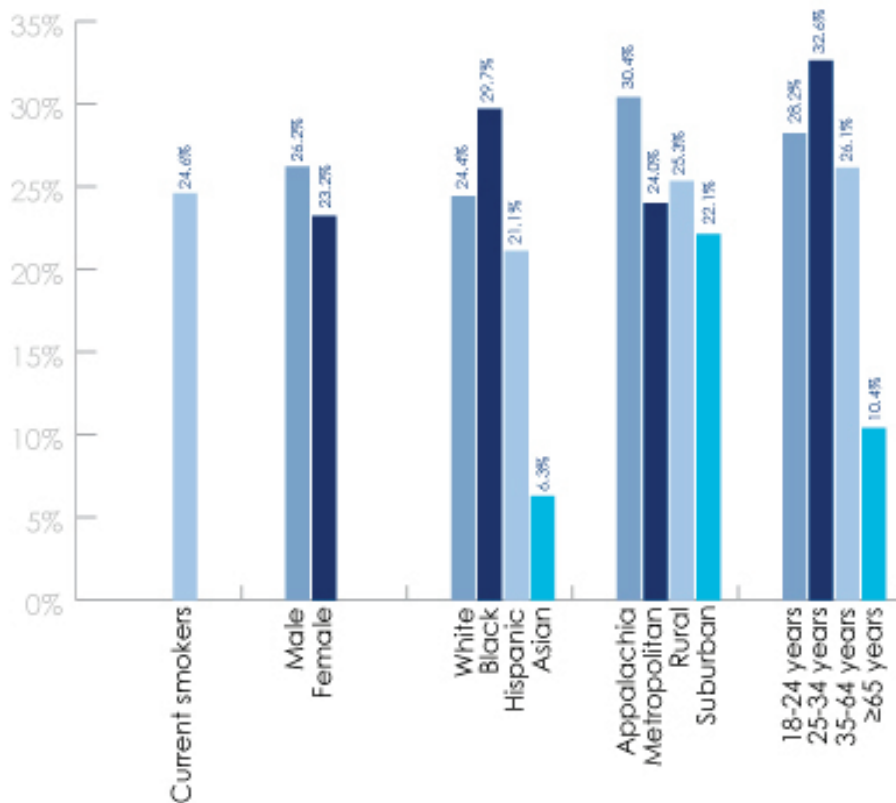
Ohio has historically experienced higher smoking rates compared to the rest of the nation. In this report, we present a profile of smokers in Ohio for the year 2008. Current smokers are compared to former smokers and never smokers with respect to demographic factors, socioeconomic status, and health status. The data are obtained from the 2008 Ohio Family Health Survey (OFHS), a random digit dial telephone survey conducted on 50,944 adults in Ohio.

RESULTS

Among all adults (18 years and older), the 2008 prevalence of current smoking was estimated at 24.6% or about 2.1 million Ohioans, down from 27.9% of all adults in 2004 or 2.4 million

Percentage of Smoking in Ohio

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Region and Age



A Profile of Smokers in Ohio in 2008

Table 1.

Prevalence (Distribution) and 95% Confidence Intervals for Select Demographic Characteristics

	Never Smokers	Former Smokers	Current Smokers
Age			
18-24 years	15.6 (14.8-16.65)	3.8 (3.1-4.4)	14.2 (13.0-15.3)
25-34 years	16.7 (16.0-17.4)	10.9 (10.0-11.8)	21.9 (20.7-23.1)
35-44 years	19.5 (18.8-20.2)	13.3 (12.4-14.2)	20.6 (19.6-21.7)
45-54 years	17.1 (16.5-17.7)	18.2 (17.3-19.2)	21.7 (20.6-22.7)
55-64 years	14.6 (14.0-15.1)	23.0 (21.9-24.0)	14.1 (13.3-14.9)
65+ years	16.6 (16.0-17.1)	30.8 (29.7-31.9)	7.5 (6.9-8.1)
Gender			
Female	56.6 (55.7-57.5)	45.3 (44.1-46.6)	49.0 (47.7-50.4)
Male	43.4 (42.5-44.3)	54.7 (53.4-55.9)	51.0 (49.6-52.3)
Race/Ethnicity			
White/Other	83.8 (83.2-84.4)	90.3 (89.7-90.9)	84.8 (83.9-85.7)
Black	11.2 (10.7-11.8)	7.5 (6.9-8.1)	13.0 (12.2-13.9)
Hispanic	2.5 (2.3-2.7)	1.4 (1.3-1.6)	1.8 (1.5-2.0)
Asian	2.4 (2.2-2.6)	1.8 (1.5-2.0)	0.4 (0.3-0.5)
Marital Status			
Married	58.3 (24.5-59.2)	65.1 (63.9-66.3)	43.1 (41.8-44.4)
Divorced/Separated	8.6 (8.2-9.0)	13.4 (12.6-14.2)	20.4 (19.4-21.4)
Widowed	7.0 (6.6-7.3)	10.0 (9.4-10.7)	5.0 (4.5-5.4)
Never married	23.4 (22.6-24.3)	8.7 (8.0-9.5)	23.9 (22.7-25.2)
Unmarried couple	2.4 (2.1-2.7)	2.5 (2.1-2.9)	7.3 (6.5-8.0)
County Type			
Appalachia	11.9 (11.5-12.4)	12.0 (11.3-12.6)	15.9 (15.1-16.8)
Metropolitan	55.6 (54.8-56.4)	54.5 (53.3-55.6)	53.2 (51.9-54.5)
Rural	14.0 (13.5-14.5)	14.0 (13.3-14.7)	15.5 (13.7-15.4)
Suburban	18.5 (17.9-19.2)	19.5 (15.8-20.5)	16.4 (15.3-17.4)

How do current smokers differ from others with respect to socioeconomic status in Ohio? Table 2 contains the distribution of insurance status, poverty to income ratio, and educational level among the three smoking status groups. Compared to former and never smokers, current smokers are much more likely to be uninsured, be below the poverty level, and have a lower level of education.

Table 2.

Prevalence (Distribution) and 95% Confidence Intervals of Select Socioeconomic Characteristics

	Never Smokers	Former Smokers	Current Smokers
Insurance status			
Yes	88.8 (88.2-89.5)	91.7 (90.9-92.4)	74.1 (72.9-75.4)
No	11.2 (10.5-11.8)	8.3 (7.6-9.1)	25.9 (24.6-27.1)
Poverty to Income Ratio (PIR)			
≤ 1.0	13.4 (12.8-14.0)	11.8 (11.0-12.6)	25.1 (23.9-26.2)
1.01-1.5	9.9 (9.4-10.5)	10.0 (9.2-10.7)	14.6 (13.6-15.6)
1.51-2.0	8.1 (7.6-8.6)	9.4 (8.7-10.1)	10.1 (9.3-10.9)
2.01-3.0	18.3 (17.6-19.0)	19.9 (18.9-20.9)	19.5 (18.5-20.6)
≥ 3.01	50.3 (49.4-51.2)	48.9 (47.7-50.2)	30.6 (29.4-31.9)
Educational Level			
Less than HS	9.1 (8.5-9.6)	14.6 (13.6-15.5)	20.0 (18.8-21.1)
HS graduate/GED	33.3 (32.5-34.2)	36.4 (35.2-37.6)	44.9 (43.5-46.2)
Some college	13.4 (12.7-14.0)	13.5 (12.6-14.3)	14.8 (13.9-15.8)
Associate degree	10.2 (9.7-10.7)	10.1 (9.4-10.9)	9.9 (9.1-10.7)
Four-year degree	18.0 (17.3-18.7)	14.3 (13.4-15.2)	6.8 (6.1-7.4)
Advanced degree	16.1 (15.4-16.7)	11.1 (10.3-11.9)	3.7 (3.2-4.1)

A Profile of Smokers in Ohio in 2008

How do current smokers differ from others with respect to health status in Ohio? Table 3 contains the distribution of body mass index (BMI) category and history of hypertension, diabetes, myocardial infarction, coronary heart disease, stroke and congestive heart failure among the three smoking status groups. Compared to former and never smokers, current smokers are more likely to be in the normal weight group and less likely to be in the overweight or obese category. Current smokers are fairly similar to never smokers with respect to the health conditions listed in the table, and both groups have a lower prevalence of these conditions compared to former smokers. This is likely due to the fact that former smokers are much older than never and current smokers, which puts them at much greater risk for these chronic conditions.

Table 3.
Prevalence and 95% Confidence Intervals of Select Health

	Never Smokers	Former Smokers	Current Smokers
Body Mass Index (BMI) Category			
Underweight	1.7 (1.5-2.0)	1.2 (0.9-1.5)	2.4 (2.0-2.8)
Normal weight	34.4 (33.5-35.3)	26.7 (25.5-27.8)	37.0 (35.7-38.3)
Overweight	35.6 (34.7-36.4)	38.7 (37.5-40.0)	33.9 (32.6-35.1)
Obese	28.3 (27.5-29.1)	33.4 (32.2-34.6)	26.8 (25.6-28.0)
Hypertension	30.5 (29.7-31.3)	44.5 (43.3-45.7)	28.0 (19.8-36.1)
Diabetes	10.0 (9.5-10.5)	16.4 (15.5-17.3)	9.6 (8.9-10.3)
History of Myocardial Infarction	3.1 (2.8-3.4)	9.6 (8.9-10.3)	5.3 (2.2-8.5)
History of Coronary Heart Disease	4.0 (3.7-4.3)	11.9 (11.1-12.7)	5.8 (5.3-6.3)
History of Stroke	2.2 (2.0-2.5)	5.2 (4.7-5.7)	4.3 (3.8-4.8)
History of Congestive Heart Failure	2.0 (1.8-2.3)	5.5 (5.0-6.0)	2.6 (2.2-3.0)

SUMMARY

Ohio's tobacco use prevalence is higher than the national average, with approximately 2.1 million Ohioans smoking. Tobacco users in Ohio tend to be male, less educated, and more impoverished compared to those who do not smoke. While smoking is somewhat evenly distributed among non-senior age categories, the smoking rate peaks for younger adults, with 32.6% of 25-34 year olds being current smokers – 64.2% (1.4 million) of all smokers are between 25 and 54 years of age. Given that smoking remains a leading cause of preventable death in Ohio, with approximately 22,000 deaths per year (2000 through 2004) being attributed primarily to tobacco use⁴, policy makers should continue efforts to curb smoking and smoking-related diseases in the state.

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