



UNTOLD STORIES: AMERICAN INDIAN ADOLESCENTS/YOUNG ADULTS AND COMMERCIAL TOBACCO AND CANNABIS USE

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AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE POPULATIONS

- In the United States, 9.7 million people identify as American Indian (AI) or Alaska Native (AN)
- 570+ different AIAN Tribes in the US
- Alaska
 - 229 federally recognized Tribes
- Navajo Nation Tribe
 - Largest Indian Reservation
- Over 200 indigenous languages

Source: U.S. Census 2020



AIAN POPULATIONS IN CALIFORNIA

- In California 630,000 identify as AI/AN*
- 109 federally recognized tribes
- 85 reservations or “Rancherias”
- More AIs reside in CA than in any other state
- Largest ‘Urban AI’ population

*U.S. Census, 2020





AI/AN TRIBES & COMMUNITIES

Community-based research with AI/ANs in CA

DATA ON AIAN ADULT TOBACCO USE

- More than **1 in 5 AIAN** adults currently smoke cigarettes.
- 22.6% adult American Indians and Alaska Natives currently smoke cigarettes compared to 13.7% of adults overall.
- **Lung cancer**, which can be caused by cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, is the leading cause of cancer deaths among AI/AN people.
- 9.3% AIAN use smokeless tobacco compared with 5.0% non-Hispanic Whites.



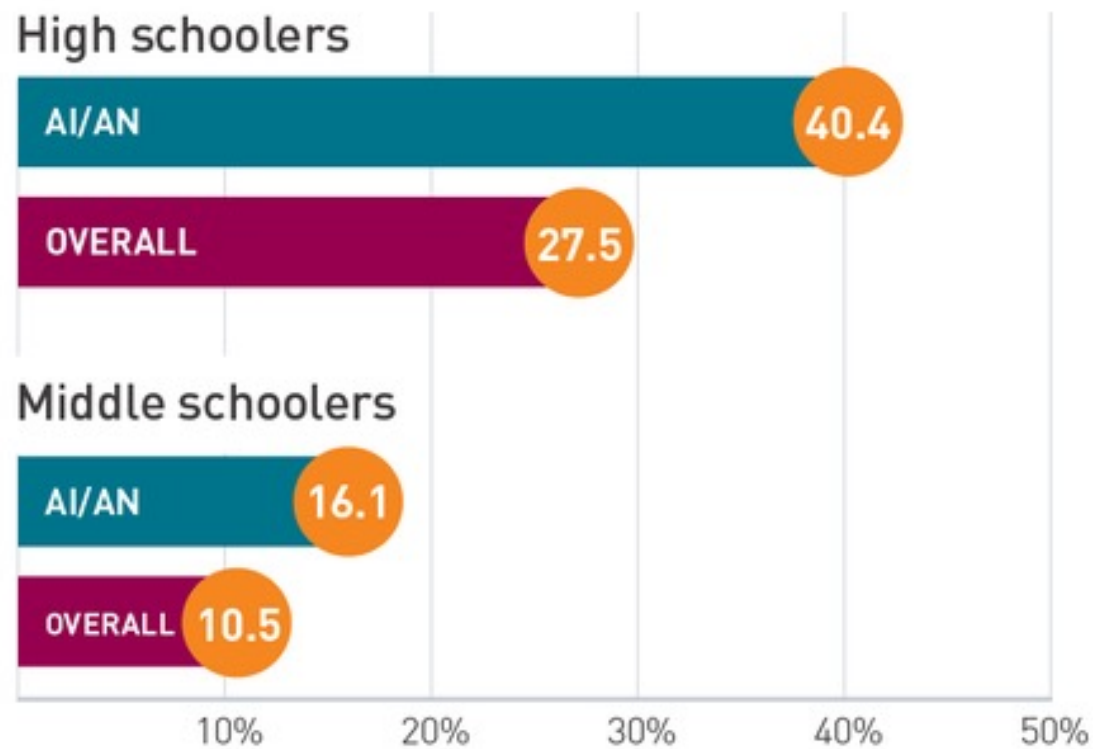
DATA ON AIAN YOUTH TOBACCO USE



- AIAN high schoolers have the highest current cigarette smoking rate of any other race or ethnicity at **16.2%**, compared to **5.8%** overall.
- AIAN middle schoolers, **3.7%** currently smoke cigarettes compared to **2.3%** of middle schoolers overall.



E-cigarette use among middle and high schoolers



*2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey data





MARKETING

- Fruity and appealing flavors
- The same big tobacco brands that have sold traditional cigarettes for decades are behind some of the new vape products in the market
- 52% of youth who used Juul got their vape pods from a friend or family member (Truth Initiative, 2018).



HOW MANY CIGARETTES IS 5000 PUFFS OF A VAPE?

- It is estimated that around 400 to 500 traditional cigarettes are roughly equivalent to the 5000 puffs you'd get from a 5000-puff disposable vape. (Truth Initiative, 2024)
- Also, over 41 milligrams of nicotine per pod, which is the amount in Juul, the product most youth are using. Roughly equivalent to 1 ½ - 2 packs cigarettes. (Stanford Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, 2024)



TOBACCO: SACRED USE, NOT ABUSE

- Tobacco has played an important role in traditional Native American Indian cultures for thousands of years.
- Tobacco is a medicine.
- The public health problem is recreational, habitual use of commercial tobacco.






TOBACCO AS A SACRED OFFERING

- Ceremonial Use of Tobacco
- Sweat Lodges
- Drum Groups
- Offering of Prayers
- Tobacco as a spiritual gift



Difference Between Traditional Use versus Commercial Tobacco Abuse	
Traditional Tobacco Use	Commercial Tobacco Abuse
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Intentional2. Relatively natural & unprocessed3. Not inhaled4. Viewed as medicine & sacred ancestor5. Seen as a spirit (I-Thou relationship)6. Used for ceremony or prayer7. Gathered and cultivated as a plant ancestor	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Habitual/unmindful2. Processed & laced with additives & chemicals3. Inhaled or used repeatedly4. Viewed as unhealthful, shameful addiction5. Seen as a drug (I-it relationship)6. Smoke/Vape/Dip/Chew casually7. Produced by corporations for profit & distributed as a commodity



A vibrant photograph of a group of Native American teenagers in traditional regalia, including feathered headdresses and colorful beaded clothing, performing a dance. They are surrounded by a crowd of spectators. The scene is lively and cultural.

INTERVENTIONS FOR NATIVE TEENS



SMOKING CESSATION EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENTS FOR AIAN YOUTH

- Few culturally tailored evidence-based treatments (EBT) unique to American Indian & Alaska Native (AIAN) youth exist.
- One strategy for developing effective and culturally relevant smoking cessation programs is to adapt existing evidence-based programs for varying cultural contexts.
- Project EX (Dr. Steve Sussman, PhD)
 - An empirically validated teen commercial tobacco use cessation program
 - Adapted to meet the needs of culturally diverse populations
 - Implemented and evaluated in Thailand, Spain, Russia, Israel, the United States, China, Korea, and China



CULTURAL TAILORING

- Tailored to AIAN teens: talking circle format, games, role play, “talk shows.”
- Alternative activities to motivate teens to attempt to quit nicotine use, cope with withdrawal and negative moods, and seek other non-tobacco using activities:
 - Deep Breathing
 - Relaxation
 - Meditation
 - Yoga
- Successful adaptations for smoking cessation programs for AIAN should incorporate:
 - Cultural and historical characteristics, values and traditions, cultural activities for behavioral modification, as well as cultural stories to help participants distinguish between the use of ceremonial from commercial tobacco



ORIGINAL PLAN

Use a randomized block design to assign the centers to one of three conditions:

1. The standard Project EX
2. The culturally adapted Project Stop the Use of Nicotine (Project SUN)
3. A wait-list control.

*The Institutional Review Board of the University of Southern California approved the study and all modifications.

BARRIERS LEAD TO CHANGE IN DESIGN

- AIECs and Urban Centers did not want to participate in the study due to potentially being randomized into the standard EX program.
- Changed the three-arm design to a two-arm design*.
 - Project SUN vs. wait-list control
- After randomization, agencies randomized to the control condition became reluctant.
- Changed the two-arm to a single-arm trial*.
 - Project SUN only



PROJECT SUN



STOP THE USE OF NICOTINE: CESSATION PROGRAM

PROJECT SUN ELIGIBILITY

- Required parental/guardian consent and youth assent
- Between the ages of 13-19 years
- Self-identified as AIAN (any Tribe, regardless of federal recognition)
- Reported using commercial tobacco in the last 30 days
- Interested in quitting, agreed to attend the eight sessions
- Agreed to provide follow-up data at 3 months



COMMERCIAL TOBACCO USE AT 3-MONTH FOLLOW-UP

92% completed
3-month follow-
up (34 of 37)

24 of the 34
subjects reported
quitting

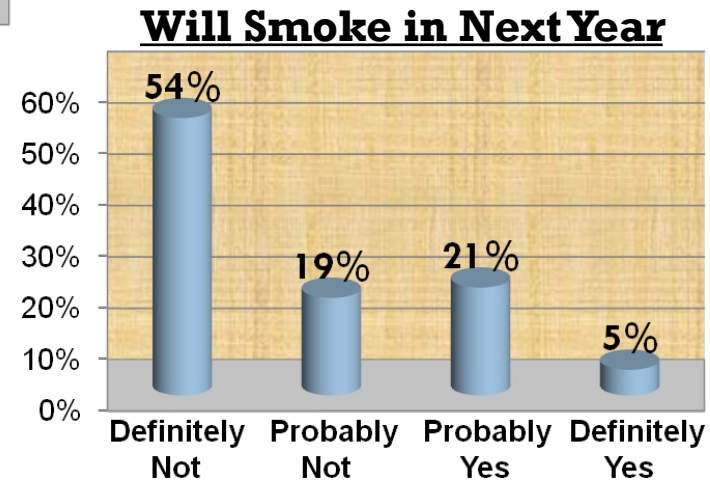
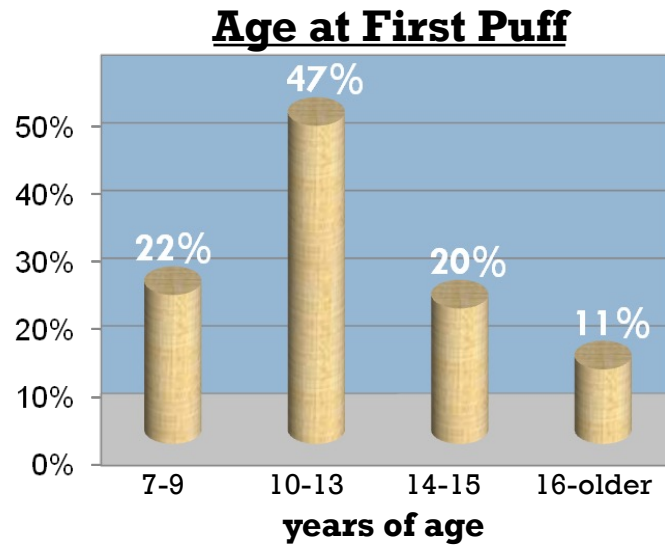
**The overall adjusted cessation rate among those at follow-up then
= $24/34$ or $.71 \times .92$ (to control for ITT) $\times .5$ (to control for over-reporting
of quitting) = $.32$ or 32%*



PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS



WHY EDUCATION IS NEEDED!





SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

- Pilot grant to train 15 Native American teens ages 16-24 years of age to create;
 - PSA – public service announcement
 - Digital Storytelling
 - Photovoice
- Northern CA Tribes
- Peer Educators
 - Middle/High School
 - Tribal Council

YOUTH MEDIA MESSAGES

American Indian Youth Video

It Looks Like Candy



The tobacco companies are manipulating their products' colors and designs to look more like candy. Every age needs to know the similarity between the candy and tobacco products. Kids are being targeted and society needs to be aware of the manipulation. If more people were aware of this attack on children, they would be very angry!

Haskola, age 16

Don't Pass It On!



Kids are influenced by their family and friends. Everyone should understand that kids look up to us and want to follow in our footsteps. Smoking shouldn't be passed on through generations when they weren't born smoking. Kids are like sponges, we need to guide them into the traditional use of tobacco and not commercial abuse.

Izayah, age 16

Don't litter!
Keep our ocean clean for the critters.

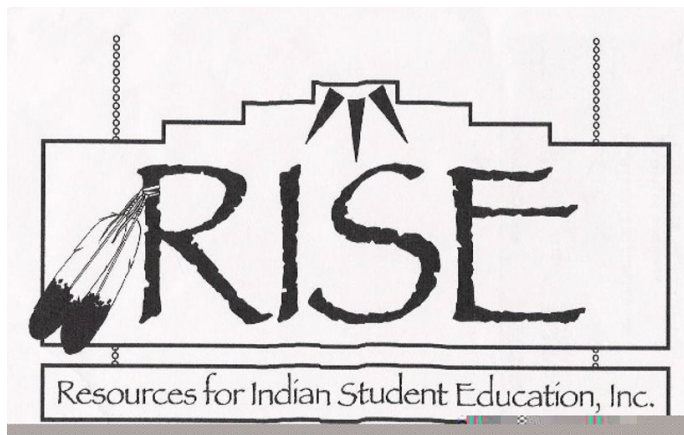


Once a single cigarette is littered near the ocean it pollutes 5 gallons of water. Do you really want to be the cause of the death of some harmless sea life? It takes a decade or more to decompose in the ocean.

And cigarette butts have long been the single most collected item on the world's beaches. In the past 32 years, 60 million cigarette butts have been collected total.

The most littered item in the world is cigarette butts.

Arcelli, age 16



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VAPING ENDGAME

CURRENT STUDY 1

- Address the zero-tolerance tobacco policy resulting in suspension in Modoc County, CA
- Youth-led approach to developing a vaping intervention by and for AI youth to implement in schools
- Develop a community vaping educational presentation
- Pilot program to expand to other Tribal communities.
- Funded by TRDRP



PAID OPPORTUNITY FOR CANNABIS AND NICOTINE USERS

EARN UP TO \$225

ELIGIBILITY

- Identify as American Indian or Alaska Native
- 21-29 years old and live in CA
- Use cannabis **and** commercial tobacco (nicotine) products

Your involvement would entail a confidential survey and interview

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NATIVE HEALTH: CANNABIS & NICOTINE CURRENT STUDY 2

- Reach 60 AIAN dual users who use both cannabis and nicotine throughout CA.
- Interview for 60-90 mins
- Collect biomarker sample
- Follow-up in 1-year
- Data will support the development of intervention and education programs to support prevention and cessation.
- Funded by TRDRP





THANK YOU!!

Questions??

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