

National Attitudes About FDA's Potential Regulatory Actions In The Family Smoking Prevention And Tobacco Control Act Of 2009

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Abstract

Background: The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009 grants FDA authority to regulate tobacco. However, public support for future regulatory measures is unknown.

Objective: To assess levels of public support for provisions of the Family Smoking Prevention and the Tobacco Control Act of 2009.

Design/Methods: Data were collected by a national random digit dial telephone survey in November 2009. The sample is weighted by race and gender based upon 2008 U.S. Census estimates to be representative of the U.S. population. Questions assessed level of agreement on a four-point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) with statements about potential FDA regulatory actions on tobacco.

Results: Of the 2,560 eligible respondents contacted, 1,514 (59.1%) completed the survey; 85% were non-smokers and 15% were smokers. Support for the following regulatory actions was higher among non-smokers than smokers: government should reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes so that kids do not become addicted (77% vs 63%); government should reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes to help smokers quit (75% vs 60%); government should put larger warning labels covering half of the front of a pack of cigarettes to discourage people from smoking (56% vs 37%); cigarette advertising increases the chance that a child starts smoking (79% vs 58%); cigarette advertising that increases the chance that children will start smoking should be prohibited (85% vs 74%); and cigarettes with added flavorings like cherry, chocolate, lime, and mint should be prohibited (76% vs 43%). Support for regulatory actions was higher among non-smokers than smokers P<.05 for each, although large numbers of smokers themselves endorsed the potential regulatory actions. Overall, a majority of Americans say they would support these potential FDA actions.

Conclusions: There is a high level of support for regulatory provisions of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act by both smokers and non-smokers. Variability in support by different demographic groups may provide insight into how FDA regulatory actions may be received by different subpopulations. Support from a majority of Americans empowers the FDA to move forward in implementing its mandate to protect the public health of all citizens.

Detailed Methods

Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control: The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control (SCS-TC) is an annual cross-sectional survey designed to operationalize the concept of social climate into a comprehensive set of quantifiable social and environmental indicators across the social institutions that characterize society.

Respondents: The 2009 SCS-TC was administered to a representative sample of U.S. adults in September-November 2009. Households were selected using random digit dialing procedures. Once a household was reached, an adult to be interviewed was selected by asking for the person in the household 18 years of age or older who has the next birthday. The sample was weighted by age, race, and gender within each census region, based on current U.S. Census estimates.

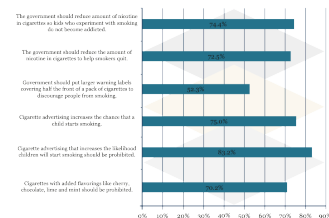
Measures: Six items assessed support for potential FDA regulatory actions on tobacco. Two questions from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) were used to assess current smoking status. Respondents were asked, "Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?" and if yes, were then asked, "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?" Respondents who reported that they smoke every day or some days were categorized as current smokers. Respondents who reported that they did not smoke at all (but who had smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime) were categorized as former smokers.

Results

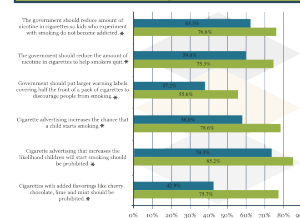
Weighted Sample Characteristics

Demographics	Statistics (%)	Demographics	Statistics (%)
Gender		Education	
Male	45.9	Not a high school graduate	31.3
Female	54.1	High school graduate	68.7
Age		Some college	
18-24	11.1	College degree	35.9
25-44	36.5	Rural/Urban Status	
45-64	34.6	Rural	
65 and older	17.8	Urban	88.6
Race		Region	
White	84.4	Northwest	17.4
African-American	11.3	Midwest	20.9
Other	4.3	South	40.3
		West	21.4
Smoking Status			
Never smoker	55.5		
Former smoker	27.1		
Current smoker	17.4		

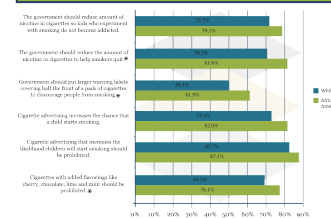
Percentage of the Public who Agree with the Following Statements



Percentage of Smokers and Non-smokers who Agree with the Following Statements



Percentage of African-Americans and White Adults who Agree with the Following Statements



Note: Less than 5% of sample was a race other than African-American or White

Limitations

Limitations include response bias related to a co-operation rate of 59%, telephone coverage issues in random digit dial surveys generally, and subgroup comparisons that, while significant, should be confirmed in larger studies.

Discussion

- There is a high level of support for regulatory provisions of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act by both smokers and non-smokers
- Variability in support by different demographic groups may provide insight into how FDA regulatory actions may be received by different subpopulations.
- Support from a majority of Americans empowers the FDA to move forward in implementing its mandate to protect the public health of all citizens.



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