

The NSDUH Report

September 20, 2007

Cigarette Use among Blacks: 2005 and 2006

Cigarette smoking has been called the number one cause of death in the United States,¹ and despite declines in the prevalence of smoking in recent years,² cigarette use remains a major threat to public

health in the Nation. Rates of smoking have been found to vary across and within racial/ethnic groups.³ In some instances, the magnitude of these differences varies with age. For example, in 2005, white youths aged 12 to 17 were more likely than their black counterparts to be current smokers (12.8 vs. 6.5 percent), but among adults aged 18 or older, the same percentage of whites and blacks used cigarettes in the past month (27.3 percent).⁴

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) provides detailed information about tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use among persons in different racial/ethnic groups. NSDUH asks persons aged 12 or older in the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population about their past month use of cigarettes (i.e., current smoking). Respondents who reported smoking part or all of a cigarette in the past 30 days also are asked whether the cigarette was menthol. In addition, persons aged 12 or older who had ever smoked a cigarette are asked how old they were when they first began smoking cigarettes.⁵ Responses are used to identify those at risk for cigarette

In Brief

- Combined data from 2005 and 2006 indicate that nearly one fourth of blacks aged 12 or older were current smokers (i.e., used cigarettes in the past month)
- Among blacks who were current smokers, 80.4 percent used menthol cigarettes in the past month in 2005 and 2006
- Overall and for most age groups, black males and females had similar rates of past year cigarette use initiation; the one exception was that females aged 16 or 17 were more likely to have initiated cigarette use during the past year than same-aged males (9.6 vs. 5.9 percent)

use initiation (i.e., persons who had not ever used cigarettes prior to the 12 months preceding the survey) and to identify recent initiates (i.e., persons who used cigarettes for the first time in the 12 months prior to the survey).

NSDUH also asks a series of questions about race/ethnicity. First, respondents are asked about their Hispanic origin; then they are asked to identify which racial grouping best describes them: white, black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, or other. Respondents may select more than one race. For this report, “black” refers to persons identifying themselves as only non-Hispanic black or African American. Persons identifying with Hispanic ethnicity or more than one racial group were not included in these analyses.

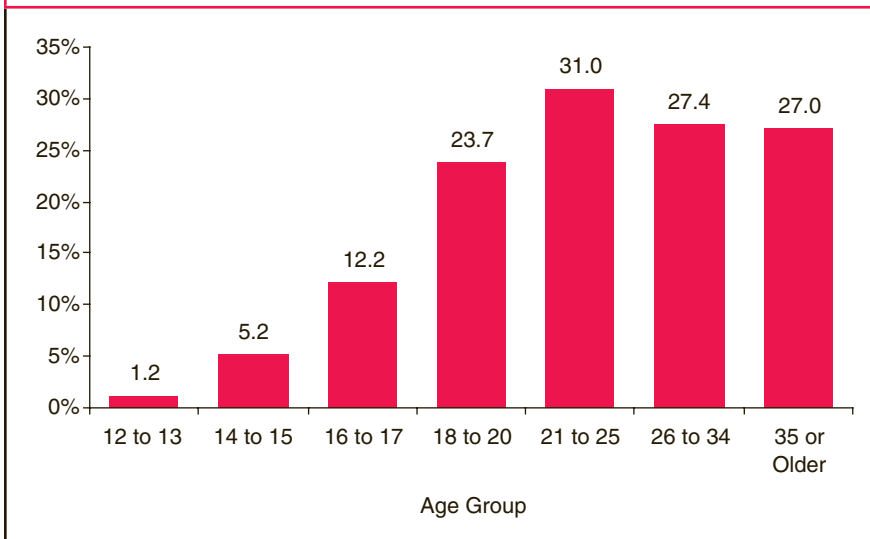
This issue of *The NSDUH Report* focuses on variations in past month cigarette use and age at initiation of cigarette use among blacks aged 12 or older. All findings presented are annual averages based on combined 2005 and 2006 NSDUH data.

Past Month Cigarette Smoking among Blacks

Combined data from 2005 and 2006 indicate that nearly one fourth (24.4 percent) of blacks aged 12 or older were current smokers (i.e., used cigarettes in the past month). The rate of current smoking among blacks varied by age group, with the lowest rate among youths aged 12 or 13 (1.2 percent) and the highest among adults aged 21 to 25 (31.0 percent) (Figure 1).

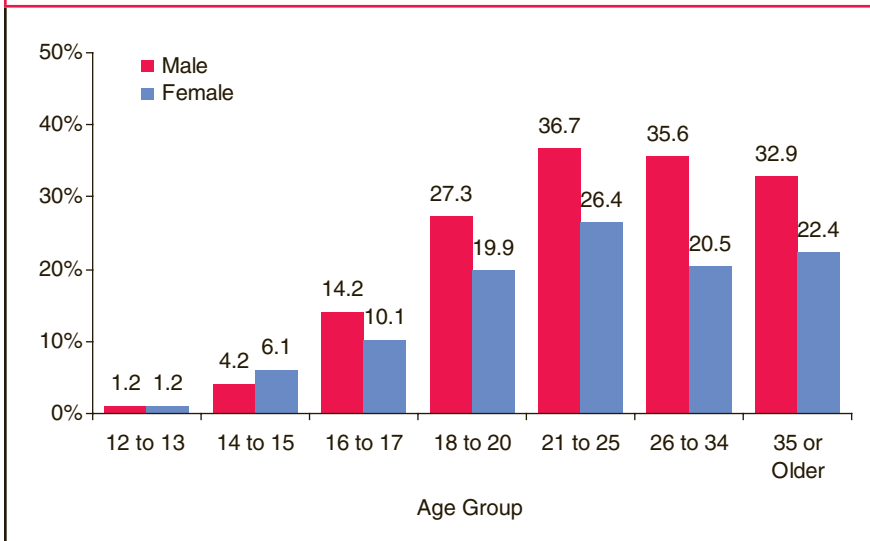
Overall, black males were more likely to have smoked cigarettes in the past month than black females (29.3 vs. 20.4 percent); however, there were some exceptions to this pattern within particular age groups. Among blacks in the youngest age

Figure 1. Percentages Reporting Past Month Cigarette Use among Blacks Aged 12 or Older, by Age Group: 2005 and 2006



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 and 2006 NSDUHs.

Figure 2. Percentages Reporting Past Month Cigarette Use among Blacks Aged 12 or Older, by Gender and Age Group: 2005 and 2006



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 and 2006 NSDUHs.

groups (i.e., those aged 12 or 13 and those aged 14 or 15), rates of past month cigarette use were similar for males and females (Figure 2). Among older youths aged 16 or 17 and adults aged 18 or older, black males were more likely to be current smokers than were black females.

Menthol Cigarette Smoking among Black Smokers

Among blacks who were current smokers, 80.4 percent used menthol cigarettes in the past month in 2005 and 2006. The percentage of current

smokers using menthol cigarettes varied somewhat by gender and age. Overall, black female smokers were more likely than their male counterparts to use menthol cigarettes (84.3 vs. 77.1 percent). Among blacks who currently smoked, the highest rate of menthol cigarette use was among adults aged 26 to 34 (89.6 percent) and the lowest was among youths aged 12 to 17 (70.4 percent) (Figure 3).

Past Year Initiation of Cigarette Smoking among Blacks

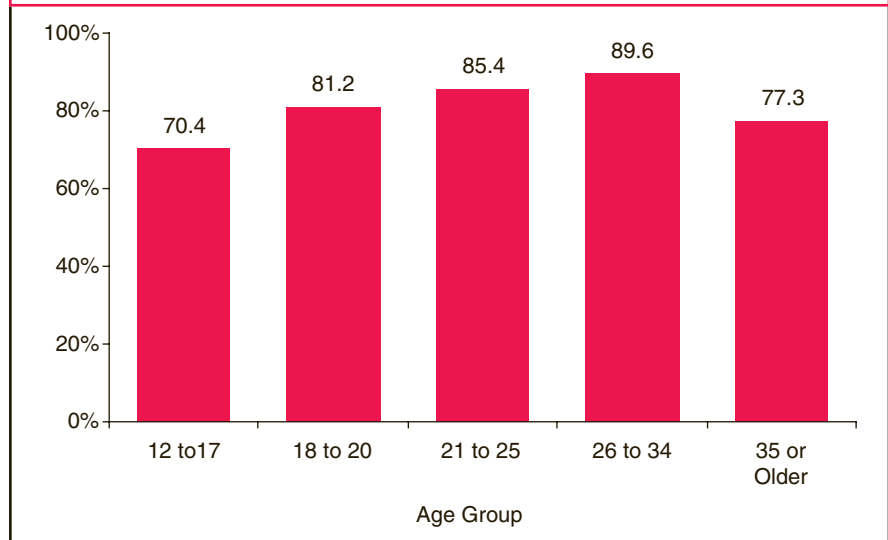
Combined data from 2005 and 2006 indicate that an annual average of 263,000 blacks smoked cigarettes for the first time in the 12 months before the survey. This represents 2.0 percent of blacks aged 12 or older who were at risk for initiation (i.e., those who had not previously smoked cigarettes) (Table 1). Among those at risk for initiation, the rates of past year initiation varied by age group, with the highest rate among black youths aged 16 or 17 (7.7 percent) and the lowest among black adults aged 35 or older (0.1 percent).

Overall and for most age groups, black males and females had similar rates of past year cigarette use initiation. The one exception was that among youths aged 16 or 17 who had not previously used cigarettes, black females were more likely to have initiated cigarette use during the past year than black males (9.6 vs. 5.9 percent).

End Notes

- ¹ Mokdad, A. H., Marks, J. S., Stroup, D. F., & Gerberding, J. L. (2004). Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 291, 1238-1245.
- ² National Center for Health Statistics. (2004). *Health, United States, 2004 with chartbook on trends in the health of Americans* (DHHS Publication No. PHS 2004-1232). Hyattsville, MD: Author. [Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hus/2010/2010.htm#hus04>]
- ³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (2006). *The NSDUH Report: Past Month Cigarette Use among Racial and Ethnic Groups* (Issue 30). Rockville, MD.

Figure 3. Percentages Reporting Past Month Menthol Cigarette Use among Blacks Aged 12 or Older Who Were Current Smokers, by Age Group: 2005 and 2006



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 and 2006 NSDUHs.

Table 1. Past Year Cigarette Use Initiation among Blacks Aged 12 or Older at Risk for Initiation, by Gender and Age Group*: Percentages, 2005 and 2006

Age Group	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total	2.3	1.8	2.0
12 to 13	2.0	2.2	2.1
14 to 15	4.5	4.4	4.5
16 to 17	5.9	9.6	7.7
18 to 20	8.1	6.8	7.4
21 to 25	1.4	2.3	1.9
26 to 34	0.9	*	0.7
35 or Older	0.2	0.1	0.1

Source: SAMHSA, 2005 and 2006 NSDUHs.

⁴ Office of Applied Studies. (2006). Tables G.25 and G.26. In *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 06-4194, NSDUH Series H-30, pp. 248-249). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

⁵ Respondents whose age at first cigarette use was equal to or 1 year less than their current age were asked to indicate the month in which they initiated their use of cigarettes.

Table Note

* Estimates for black females aged 26 to 34 are not displayed because of low precision.

Suggested Citation

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (September 20, 2007). *The NSDUH Report: Cigarette Use among Blacks: 2005 and 2006*. Rockville, MD.

For change of address, corrections, or to be removed from this list, please e-mail: shortreports@samhsa.hhs.gov.

Research findings from the SAMHSA 2005 and 2006 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs)

Cigarette Use among Blacks: 2005 and 2006

- Combined data from 2005 and 2006 indicate that nearly one fourth of blacks aged 12 or older were current smokers (i.e., used cigarettes in the past month)
- Among blacks who were current smokers, 80.4 percent used menthol cigarettes in the past month in 2005 and 2006
- Overall and for most age groups, black males and females had similar rates of past year cigarette use initiation; the one exception was that females aged 16 or 17 were more likely to have initiated cigarette use during the past year than same-aged males (9.6 vs. 5.9 percent)

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 and 2006 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 136,110 persons aged 12 or older, including 16,347 blacks. 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 NSDUH used in compiling data for this report is available in the following publications:

Office of Applied Studies. (2007). *Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4293, NSDUH Series H-32). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2006). *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 06-4194, NSDUH Series H-30). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>.

Because of improvements and modifications to the 2002 NSDUH, estimates from the 2002 through the 2006 surveys should not be compared with estimates from the 2001 or earlier versions of the survey to examine changes over time.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
Office of Applied Studies
www.samhsa.gov