

NCI TOBACCO CONTROL MONOGRAPH SERIES

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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING AND REDUCING TOBACCO USE

MONOGRAPH NINETEEN

19

About this Monograph


A major public health challenge of this century is finding a way to harness the powerful influence of the media to control tobacco use. This monograph begins the important process of understanding the full extent of this influence, especially among youth—one of our most vulnerable populations.

Despite a decline of roughly 50% in smoking prevalence over the past 40 years, about one in five Americans continues to smoke, and more than 4,000 young people smoke their first cigarette each day. Tobacco use still accounts for nearly one-third of cancer deaths worldwide, and deaths are predicted to increase by 2015. If these trends are to be reversed, an understanding of the media's power for both tobacco control and tobacco promotion must guide the way.

The challenge has never been more urgent. Tobacco industry and tobacco control efforts are successfully using the media to influence the attitudes and behavior of the American public. In addition, as tobacco advertising in traditional print media becomes more scarce, new or nontraditional media are being used by the tobacco industry to reach potential and established smokers. These media include the movies, the Internet, and video games.

The National Cancer Institute presents this 19th monograph, *The Role of the Media in Promoting and Reducing Tobacco Use*, in the Tobacco Control Monograph Series. The monograph provides a critical, scientific review and synthesis of current evidence regarding the power of the media to encourage and to discourage tobacco use. As such, it is the most current and comprehensive summary of the scientific literature on media communications in tobacco promotion and tobacco control. Research included in the review comes from the disciplines of marketing, psychology, communications, statistics, epidemiology, and public health. All are vital to understanding how exposure to the media influences tobacco use. Armed with that understanding, it is possible to explore effective ways to leverage the media to improve public health.

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This monograph provides a comprehensive examination of different channels of media currently used, the strategies and themes that either encourage or discourage tobacco use, and their effects on attitudes and behavior. The monograph is organized into six parts:

- Part 1, a general overview and framework, lays the groundwork for understanding the theory and methods underlying the media research examined in this monograph.
- Part 2 explores how the tobacco industry uses advertising and promotion to create demand for its products, especially among adolescents. Tobacco advertising and promotion expenditures in the United States totaled more than \$13.5 billion in 2005 (in 2006 dollars). Research shows that tobacco advertising and promotion cause tobacco use to increase and even a brief exposure to tobacco advertising can influence adolescents.
- Part 3 describes the role of the news and entertainment media in affecting tobacco use. Children and adolescents are exposed to these media up to 5.5 hours a day. A key finding is that depictions of tobacco in movies are causally related to youth smoking initiation.
- Part 4 describes how the media have been used as part of tobacco control efforts and the media messages and channels that have worked best. The good news is that televised media campaigns can reduce tobacco use.
- Part 5 shows how the tobacco industry and its supporters have used various media strategies to counter tobacco control measures and messages. For example, they have worked against antitobacco media campaigns in California and have defeated some state tobacco tax increases on the ballot.
- Part 6 examines the future of the media in relation to both tobacco promotion and tobacco control. The conclusions reached can help provide direction for future research efforts and media interventions.

About the NCI Tobacco Control Monograph Series

The National Cancer Institute established the Tobacco Control Monograph series in 1991 to provide ongoing and timely information about emerging issues in smoking and tobacco prevention and control. Monographs are available at no cost in print and online.

For More Information

For more information or to order this monograph, go to <http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/19/index.html>. To order a free copy, call the NCI Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237) and ask for NIH Publication No. 07-6242.