

Perceptions of Tobacco Control Media Campaigns among Smokers with Lower Socioeconomic Status

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Outline

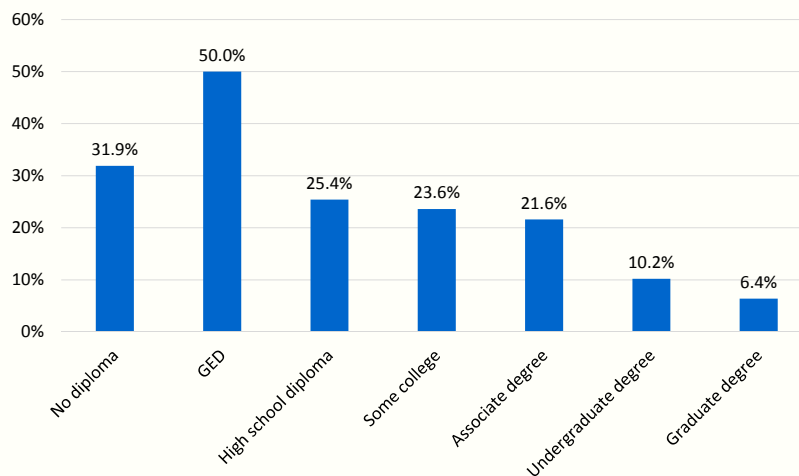
- Background
 - Tobacco use by socioeconomic status (SES)
 - Tobacco control mass media campaigns
 - Impact on low SES tobacco use
- Focus Group Objectives & Methods
- Findings & Conclusions



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3

Tobacco Use by Education

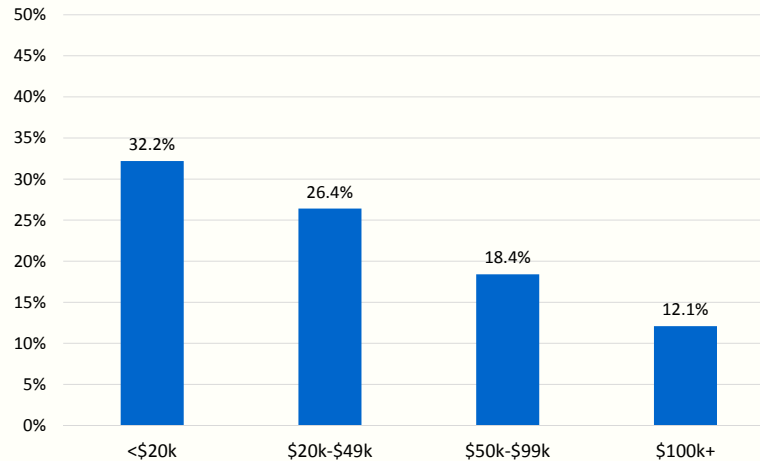


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Hu et al., 2016

4

Tobacco Use by Annual Household Income



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Hu et al., 2016

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Mass Media Campaigns and Tobacco Use

- Effective strategy for reducing tobacco use prevalence



- Evidence mixed about impact and use of mass media to promote cessation in tobacco users with low SES
 - Systematic review of cessation media campaigns often *less* effective for low SES populations (Niederdeppe et al., 2008)
 - Some evidence that ads focusing on negative health consequences, using testimonials, graphic imagery and/or negative emotion can be effective among low SES tobacco users (Niederdeppe et al., 2012)



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Goal of Study

- Independent evaluation of the CT Tobacco Control Program mass media campaign to inform future mass communication strategies
- Focus groups among low SES smokers designed to assess:
 - How low SES smokers receive & evaluate tobacco cessation media messages
 - Barriers to quitting among low SES smokers and influence on reception to cessation messages



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Methods

8

- Adults 18 years+ who were current smokers
- Recruitment via flyers, radio ads, and in-person



9

- Bus stops, public parks, libraries, courthouses



10

Focus Group Format

- 8 groups at public libraries, 10-16 participants/group
- Semi-structured with question guide to lead discussion



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Ad Testing to Inform Future Messaging

2009 North Carolina Campaign



2009 Washington Campaign



2012 New York City Campaign



2009 North Carolina Quitline Promo



2013 National Tips Campaign



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Analysis

- Inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)
- 4 team members involved in iterative review of data
- Multiple rounds of reviewing transcripts to generate codes, identify and refine themes



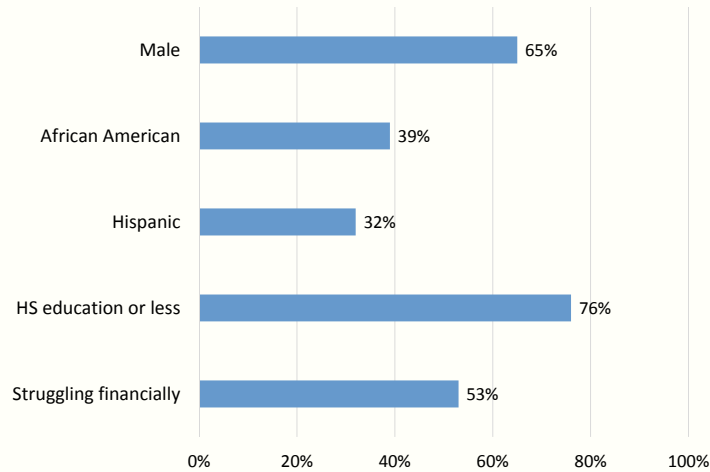
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Results

14

Results: Participant Characteristics (N=98)



15

Themes

Skepticism about media cessation messages

- Content of ads
- Tobacco industry & government
- Safety & efficacy of cessation supports

Barriers to quitting not appreciated by media cessation campaigns

- Stress
- Social environment
- Addiction



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16

Themes

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Skepticism about Content of Ads

- Expressed doubt about ads depicting serious health consequences of smoking
- Stories perceived as being:
 - rare cases
 - overly extreme
 - not only caused by smoking
- Contributed to evaluation of ads with self-exempting lens, linked to lower motivation and intentions to quit



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Skepticism about Content of Ads

*"They could be just using people that are saying like what their illness is, **but it's not really caused from smoking.**"*

*"Even if we do get somebody real, we don't really know that because **everything is fantasized on TV.**"*



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19

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Skepticism about Tobacco Industry & Government

- Tobacco control efforts may be sponsored by tobacco industry, making ads untrustworthy
- Government too invested in maintaining revenue from tobacco sales



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Skepticism about Tobacco Industry & Government

*"Tobacco is a big business, big money, they got too much power...**anytime there's big money in stuff, cigarettes are going to be around forever.**"*

*"**The government makes too much money on cigarettes** for them to stop selling cigarettes."*



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Themes

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Skepticism about Cessation Supports

- Lack of knowledge about the quitline and services it offers
- Skepticism that such services would be helpful or judgement-free
- Doubt that supports provided for free would be sufficient to aid in quitting



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24

Themes

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Barriers to Quitting: Stress

- Live in highly stressful environments
- Lack of societal support and resources for cessation leads to more stress
- Smoking an important source of coping with stressors
 - Used as substitute for medicine or other treatment



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Barriers to Quitting: Stress

"Smoking is anger management. It's medicinal in my mind. Helping my anger management when I'm stressed, I'm angry."

"The stress builds up so much to the point I'm not even thinking about calling the quitline. I probably will be thinking about cigarettes."



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Themes

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Barriers to Quitting: Social Environment

- Motivation to quit smoking quickly undermined by support networks and social environments
- Ease of getting cigarettes from others



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Themes

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Barriers to Quitting: Addiction

- Insurmountable barrier no matter what reasons tobacco control messages may give them to quit smoking
- Disconnect between tobacco control messages they hear and their everyday struggle with nicotine addiction



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Conclusions

- Findings expand upon previous research
 - Suggest media campaigns may be *less* effective in motivating cessation among lower SES populations
 - Skepticism about message content, message sponsorship, and cessation resources
 - Barriers to quitting not appreciated by messages
 - All may contribute to dismissal of and/or resistance to cessation messages



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Potential Campaign Strategies

- Incorporate hopeful tone with attention-getting graphic aspects of ads
- Correct misperceptions about relationship between tobacco industry and government
- Include brief description in ads about how quitlines work, debunk myths about nicotine replacement therapy
- Acknowledge barriers related to low SES environments and experiences to reflect challenges with quitting



Limitations

- Convenience sample
- Results may not be generalizable to lower SES smokers across the U.S.



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35

Thank you!

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36