



Stark contrasts in U.S. tobacco use

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There is wide variation in smoking practices across the United States and a clear relationship between smoking and mortality rate, researchers said.

Principal investigator Gary G. Giovino of the University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions said the report points out that even after four decades of tobacco control efforts, one-fifth of American adults still smoke and prevalence is especially high among populations with lower levels of education and income, Native Americans and those with psychiatric and substance abuse problems.

Among those ages 18-29 smoking prevalence was 2.5 times higher in Kentucky at 36.2 percent than in California at 14.4 percent. In 2006-07, 66 percent of adults age 30 or older in New Hampshire who had ever smoked said they had quit, while in West Virginia for the same age group, 45 percent of smokers said they had quit, the study found.

The report presents state-level analyses showing that in states with the lowest prevalence of smoking, the remaining smokers are less likely to show indicators of dependence and more likely to want to quit, compared to smokers in high prevalence states.

In 2006, approximately 27 percent of adult Medicaid recipients were smokers, significantly higher than the 17 percent rate among adults with private insurance, Giovino said.

The findings were presented at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health meeting in Phoenix.

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