

BRIEFING POINTS

Highlights of the 2006 MSCTC-Moorhead Secondhand Smoke Study of Students and Faculty/Staff, February 2007

STUDY DESIGN AND PURPOSE

- Two web surveys were conducted in October and November 2006, at the Moorhead campus of Minnesota State Community and Technical College (MSCTC-Moorhead) using a complete census of students and of faculty/staff. A total of 265 students participated and a total of 92 faculty/staff participated; because the survey design constituted a “census” and not a “sample,” typical discussions of standard error and confidence levels are not applicable.
- This study was commissioned by Clay County Public Health on attitudes and behaviors toward tobacco use and issues pertaining to smoking and secondhand smoke policies at MSCTC-Moorhead and Minnesota State University Moorhead. The two surveys conducted of students and faculty/staff covered opinions and perceptions of tobacco and secondhand smoke issues, exposure to secondhand smoke, smoke-free policies, education and cessation information, smoking status and follow-up questions of smokers, and general demographics.

KEY FINDINGS OF STUDENTS

Students' Opinions and Perceptions of Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke Issues

- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), students:
 - Disagree*: light cigarettes are less harmful than regular cigarettes (mean=1.52), smoking is an effective way to keep weight down (mean=1.98), they are not worried about the health effects of secondhand smoke (mean=2.03), smoking helps people feel more comfortable in social situations (mean=2.43), smoking makes people feel more relaxed (mean=2.85), smoking helps relieve stress (mean=2.86), and they are tired of people telling them about secondhand smoke (mean=2.89).
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), students:
 - Agree*: smoking can lead to long-term physical illnesses (mean=4.66), smoking causes physical effects such as reduced endurance (mean=4.44), secondhand smoke is a health issue (mean=4.35), people who smoke can quit if they want to (mean=3.52), and they don't like being around people who smoke (mean=3.35).

Students' Experiences with Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

- The vast majority of students are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke (88%). The most common places of exposure for students are: bars/cocktail lounges (56%), the homes of friends or family members (45%), and entrances into campus buildings (43%).
- 56% of all students do not use tobacco products (38% never used tobacco products and 17% used to smoke but quit). 43% of all students are smokers (26% are regular smokers and 17% are occasional smokers).
- Among students who are smokers*:
 - 61% are regular smokers (on average, 15.08 cigarettes a day).
 - 19% smoke cigarettes occasionally (not every day), 27% smoke only when drinking alcohol, 17% smoke only when around others who smoke/use tobacco, and 16% smoke or use tobacco products other than cigarettes.
 - The average age at which students started smoking is 15.51 years and ranges from ages 8 to 27.
 - 64% cite peers as an influence to begin smoking.
 - 68% indicate some interest in quitting smoking. 38% have tried to quit smoking within the last 12 months; the average number of attempts within the last 12 months is 2.14.
 - On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), students who smoke:
 - Agree*: they are worried about the impacts of smoking on their health (mean=3.92), they are concerned about the effect of secondhand smoke from their smoking on their friends or family (mean=3.44), they are worried about the impact of their smoking on their appearance (mean=3.43), and they are concerned about how to handle stress if they quit smoking (mean=3.39). *Disagree*: they are concerned that their smoking negatively impacts their relationships with others (mean=2.58). *Neutral*: they are concerned about gaining weight if they quit smoking (mean=2.95).

Students' Preferences and Opinions Regarding Campus Smoking Policies

- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), students:
 - *Agree*: litter caused by smoking detracts from the appearance of the campus (mean=3.51) and it is the responsibility of campus administration to enact policies and regulations that protect members of the campus community from exposure to secondhand smoke (mean=3.47). *Disagree*: they are concerned about the health consequences of secondhand smoke on campus (mean=2.81).
- 55% of students at MSCTC-Moorhead think Policy B: “The campus buildings are smoke-free; smoking on the premises is prohibited except in designated outdoor areas. Smoking is prohibited in college or state-owned vehicles,” is the current campus smoking policy, which is correct. On average (5-point scale where 1 is “not at all well” and 5 is “very well”), students rate the enforcement of the campus smoking policy outdoors as poor (mean=2.84); 21% say it is enforced not at all well.
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “not at all likely” and 5 is “very likely”), students are somewhat likely to support a policy requiring a smoke-free campus (mean=3.11); 35% say it is very likely they would support a smoke-free campus policy.
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “negative” and 5 is “positive”), students believe a smoke-free campus policy would have a positive effect on student quality of life (mean=3.33) and student learning (mean=3.18). Students believe a smoke-free campus policy would have a negative effect on student enrollments (mean=2.87).
- 65% of students indicate a smoke-free campus policy would not influence their decision to attend MSCTC-Moorhead, 17% would be more likely to attend, and 13% would be less likely to attend.

Students' Awareness of and Interest in Education/Cessation

- 25% of students say that health information about tobacco use has been made available on their campus and 68% are not sure. 51% of students say they are not sure if smoking cessation counseling or quit programs are offered on their campus and 44% say no, they are not aware of programs offered on their campus.
- *Among students who are smokers*: Regarding cessation counseling or quit programs, 23% are interested in medications, 5% are interested in one-on-one counseling, 4% are interested in support groups, 3% are interested in a phone hotline, 49% say it does not apply to them/they are not interested, and 20% declined to answer.

Students' Impact of Smoking Preferences on Visits to Locations in the Community

- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free restaurants that DO NOT serve liquor: 34% of students would want to go more often, 45% indicate it would not make a difference, and 12% would want to go less often.
- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free restaurants that DO serve liquor: 29% of students would want to go more often, 42% indicate it would not make a difference, and 17% would want to go less often.
- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free bars/cocktail lounges: 27% of students would want to go more often, 32% indicate it would not make a difference, and 20% would want to go less often.

KEY FINDINGS OF FACULTY/STAFF

Faculty/Staff's Opinions and Perceptions of Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke Issues

- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), faculty/staff:
 - *Disagree*: light cigarettes are less harmful than regular cigarettes (mean=1.77), they are not worried about the health effects of secondhand smoke (mean=2.00), smoking is an effective way to keep weight down (mean=2.01), they are tired of people telling them about secondhand smoke (mean=2.47), smoking helps relieve stress (mean=2.62), smoking makes people feel more relaxed (mean=2.76), and smoking helps people feel more comfortable in social situations (mean=2.80).
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”), faculty/staff:
 - *Agree*: smoking can lead to long-term physical illnesses (mean=4.54), smoking causes physical effects such as reduced endurance (mean=4.47), secondhand smoke is a health issue (mean=4.34), they don't like being around people who smoke (mean=3.87), and people who smoke can quit if they want to (mean=3.51).

Faculty/Staff's Experiences with Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

- The vast majority of faculty/staff are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke (84%). The most common places of exposure for faculty/staff are: entrances into campus buildings (55%) and bars/cocktail lounges (54%).
- 73% of all faculty/staff do not use tobacco products (45% never used tobacco products and 28% used to smoke but quit). 24% of all faculty/staff are smokers (12% are regular smokers and 12% are occasional smokers).
- *Among faculty/staff who are smokers:*
 - 50% are regular smokers (on average, 16.40 cigarettes a day).
 - 23% smoke cigarettes occasionally (not every day), 32% smoke only when drinking alcohol, 27% smoke only when around others who smoke/use tobacco, and 23% smoke or use tobacco products other than cigarettes.
 - The average age at which faculty/staff who smoke started smoking is 16.12 years and ranges from 10 to 21.
 - 64% cite peers as an influence to begin smoking.
 - 52% indicate some interest in quitting smoking. 29% have tried to quit smoking within the last 12 months; the average number of attempts within the last 12 months is 2.17.
 - On average (5-point scale where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree"), faculty/staff:
 - *Agree:* they are worried about the impacts of smoking on their health (mean=3.65), they are worried about the impact of their smoking on their appearance (mean=3.30), and they are concerned about the effect of secondhand smoke from their smoking on their friends or family (mean=3.25). *Disagree:* they are concerned about gaining weight if they quit smoking (mean=2.75), they are concerned about how to handle stress if they quit smoking (mean=2.84), and they are concerned that their smoking negatively impacts their relationship with others (mean=2.85).

Faculty/Staff's Opinions and Preferences Regarding Campus Smoking Policies

- On average (5-point scale where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 5 is "strongly agree"), faculty/staff:
 - *Agree:* litter caused by smoking detracts from the appearance of the campus (mean=4.47), it is the responsibility of campus administration to enact policies and regulations that protect members of the campus community from exposure to secondhand smoke (mean=4.01), and they are concerned about the health consequences of secondhand smoke on campus (mean=3.55).
- 72% of faculty/staff think Policy B: "The campus buildings are smoke-free; smoking on the premises is prohibited except in designated outdoor areas. Smoking is prohibited in college or state-owned vehicles," is the current campus smoking policy, which is correct. On average (5-point scale where 1 is "not at all well" and 5 is "very well"), faculty/staff say the campus smoking policy outdoors is not enforced well (mean=2.29); 32% say it is enforced not at all well.
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is "not at all likely" and 5 is "very likely"), faculty/staff are likely to support a policy requiring a smoke-free campus (mean=3.84); 56% say it is very likely they would support a smoke-free campus policy.
- On average (5-point scale where 1 is "negative" and 5 is "positive"), faculty/staff believe a smoke-free campus policy would have a positive effect on student quality of life (mean=3.97) and student learning (mean=3.74). Faculty/staff believe a smoke-free campus policy would have a positive effect on student enrollments (mean=3.38).
- 63% of faculty/staff indicate a smoke-free campus policy would not influence their decision to work at MSCTC-Moorhead, 31% would be more likely to work at MSCTC-Moorhead, and 5% would be less likely to work at MSCTC-Moorhead.

Faculty/Staff's Awareness of and Interest in Education/Cessation

- 38% of faculty/staff say that health information about tobacco use has been made available on their campus and 53% are not sure. 46% of faculty/staff say they are not sure if smoking cessation counseling or quit programs are offered on their campus and 46% say no, they are not aware of programs offered on their campus.
- *Among faculty/staff who are smokers:* Regarding cessation counseling or quit programs, 9% are interested in medications, 36% say it does not apply to them/they are not interested, and 36% declined to answer.

Faculty/Staff's Impact of Smoking Preferences on Visits to Locations in the Community

- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free restaurants that DO NOT serve: 55% of faculty/staff would want to go more often, 31% indicate it would not make a difference, and 9% would want to go less often.
- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free restaurants that DO serve liquor: 57% of faculty/staff would want to go more often, 29% indicate it would not make a difference, and 8% would want to go less often.
- Regarding visits to off campus smoke-free bars/cocktail lounges: 45% of faculty/staff would want to go more often, 24% indicate it would not make a difference, and 17% would want to go less often.

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STUDENT AND FACULTY/STAFF RESPONSES

Differences in Experiences with Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

- Bars/cocktail lounges are a regular place of exposure to secondhand smoke for the majority of students and faculty/staff. Larger proportions of faculty/staff than students cite entrances into campus buildings as a place of regular exposure to secondhand smoke and on their way to classes/work on campus. In contrast, a much larger proportion of students than faculty/staff cite the homes of friends or family members as a place of regular exposure.
- A larger proportion of students than faculty/staff are smokers (43% and 24%, respectively).
- *Among respondents who are smokers:*
 - A larger proportion of students than faculty/staff are regular smokers. On average, faculty/staff who are regular smokers smoke slightly more cigarettes a day than students smoke.
 - The average age at which faculty/staff started smoking is slightly older than the average age at which students started smoking (mean=16.12 and mean=15.51, respectively).
 - Peers stand out as the most influential factor influencing both students and faculty/staff to begin smoking.
 - A smaller proportion of faculty/staff than students indicate they have some interest in quitting smoking.
 - A larger proportion of students than faculty/staff indicate they have tried to quit smoking within the last 12 months.
 - On average, students and faculty/staff have similar views regarding worries and concerns associated with smoking. However, while students agree that they are concerned about how to handle stress if they quit smoking, faculty/staff disagree.

Differences in Opinions and Preferences Regarding Campus Smoking Policies

- On average, faculty/staff agree much more strongly than students that litter caused by smoking detracts from the appearance of the campus. Faculty/staff agree more strongly than students that it is the responsibility of campus administration to enact policies and regulations that protect members of the campus community from exposure to secondhand smoke. Faculty/staff agree while students disagree that they are concerned about the health consequences of secondhand smoke on campus.
- Faculty/staff are much more confident than students that Policy B: "The campus buildings are smoke-free; smoking on the premises is prohibited except in designated outdoor areas. Smoking is prohibited in college or state-owned vehicles," represents the current smoking policy at MSCTC-Moorhead. On average, faculty/staff rate the enforcement of the campus smoking policy outdoors more poorly than students.
- On average, faculty/staff show stronger support for a smoke-free campus policy than students.
- On average, faculty/staff anticipate that a smoke-free campus policy would have a more positive effect on student quality of life and student learning than students anticipate. Faculty/staff also indicate a smoke-free campus policy would have a positive effect on student enrollments while students indicate a smoke-free campus policy would have a negative effect on student enrollments.
- Nearly equal proportions of faculty/staff and students indicate a smoke-free campus policy would not influence their decision to attend/work at MSCTC-Moorhead. However, a larger proportion of faculty/staff than students say they would be more likely to attend/work at MSCTC-Moorhead if the campus was smoke-free.