

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Youth Tobacco Survey 2000

A survey of Wisconsin American Indian middle school students

Traditional Use of Tobacco

Prepared by

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Tobacco Project
and
Great Lakes EpiCenter
Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc.



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Background and Methodology

Purpose

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Youth Tobacco Survey (GLITC YTS) is a measure of youth tobacco use among Wisconsin American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN) middle school students. The GLITC YTS tracks tobacco use, attitudes and related behaviors among middle school students, as does the Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey (WI YTS). In addition, the GLITC YTS also examines AI/AN Tribal affiliation, geographic location, knowledge of traditional and ceremonial use of tobacco, and age initiated smoking. This report addresses the knowledge of traditional use of tobacco among Wisconsin AI/AN youth and is the second in a series of reports that will summarize GLITC YTS findings. This report provides baseline data on knowledge of traditional use of tobacco among Wisconsin AI/AN youth.

Why GLITC conducted a youth tobacco survey-

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) electronically randomly selected middle and high schools in Wisconsin, and then they randomly selected 2 classes per school to participate in the WI YTS. Because the representative sample process would not have a large enough American Indian/ Alaska Native representation due to sample size, the GLITC Tobacco Project thought it important to conduct a similar survey of AI/AN youth.

Methods

Tribal schools with all AI/AN enrollment and public schools with large AI/AN student populations were selected to participate in the GLITC YTS. GLITC tobacco project staff contacted tribal offices and asked which schools their children attended. Then GLITC contacted schools and requested the number of American Indian/ Alaska Native students enrolled and total student enrollment. There were no set guidelines for which schools were included. For the most part, neighborhood schools for AI/AN communities on or near reservations were the schools contacted. In cases where a few number of students were enrolled in many schools, the school or schools with the highest number of AI/AN students were selected.

The GLITC Tobacco Project knew ahead of time how many AI/AN students there were at each school, and who the students were, from a list maintained at each tribe by the Indian home school coordinators or the Tribal Education department directors. The Tribes maintain records of all of their students enrolled in the public schools. In most cases, all 6th through 8th grade students in a particular school were asked to complete the survey. In schools with 55% or less AI/AN enrollment, the AI/AN students were asked to meet outside of the classrooms and only the AI/AN students were requested to complete the survey.

A total of 962 (906 American Indian/Alaska Native) 6th through 8th grade students from 15 schools were surveyed. Students had the choice whether or not to complete the

survey. A passive permission was used for parental approval, meaning that the parents could choose to not allow their child(ren) to not complete the survey.

Surveys were administered by trained school staff or by GLITC Tobacco Project staff depending on school choice. Students responded on a scannable answer sheet. Students were included in the AI/AN population if they identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native or identified themselves as belonging to a particular Tribe (on at least one of 5 questions).

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council Youth Tobacco Project

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council is a consortium of ten of the eleven tribal governments of Wisconsin and one tribe from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The chairpersons from those federally recognized tribes form the board of directors of GLITC. GLITC is a non-profit corporation that administers both state and federally funded programs in many areas.

GLITC has two tobacco focused programs. The primary focus is to educate tribal people and their leadership about the health ramifications of tobacco abuse, the distinction between spiritual tobacco use and addictive habitual use, and the need for the development of tobacco control policies. GLITC receives funds from the CDC and the Wisconsin Division of Public Health to fulfill these activities.

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Key Findings

- * 70% of AI/AN middle school students reported knowledge of traditional use of tobacco.
- * 69% of AI/AN middle school students reported that they use tobacco for ceremonial or traditional reasons.
- * 47% of AI/AN middle school students reported that someone living in their home uses tobacco traditionally.
- * 27% of AI/AN middle school students reported using the native tobacco plant for ceremonial purposes or prayer.
- * 26% of AI/AN middle school students reported using commercial tobacco products for ceremonial purposes and prayer.

Tobacco use for ceremonial or traditional purposes

Knowledge of traditional use of tobacco and Use of tobacco for ceremonial or traditional purposes

Middle school students were asked:

*“How much do you know about the traditional uses of tobacco?”

Response options were: (a) Nothing, (b) Very little, (c) A little, (d) A lot, (e) Not sure
A response of (b) or (c) was a positive response (see Figure 1)

*“Do you use tobacco for ceremonial uses or traditional reasons?”

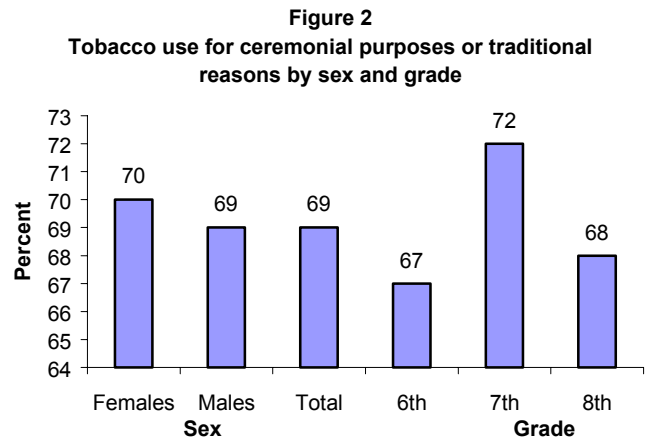
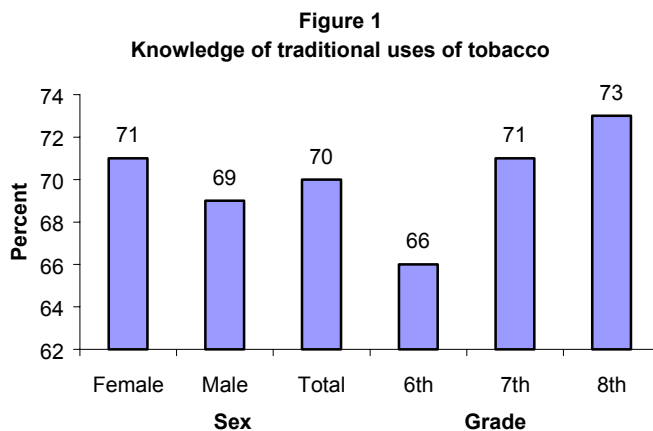
Response options were: (a) Yes, (b) No

A response of (a) was a positive response (see Figure 2).

Those students who never smoked were defined as those responding “no” to the question “Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?”

Current cigarette smokers were defined as those students that reported smoking cigarettes on at least one of the previous 30 days.

Frequent cigarette smokers were those who said they smoked a cigarette on 20 or more of the past 30 days.



Results

Overall, 70% of middle school students reported knowledge of traditional uses of tobacco (see Figure 1). There was little difference between males and females, however, reported knowledge level increased with increasing grade level. 69% of AI/AN middle school students reported using tobacco for ceremonial or traditional purposes and there was little difference between the genders in use of tobacco for ceremonial purposes. Reported use of tobacco for ceremonial purposes or traditional reasons peaked in the 7th grade at 72% (see Figure 2).

Figure 3
Ceremonial and Traditional Knowledge and Use of Tobacco by Smoking Status

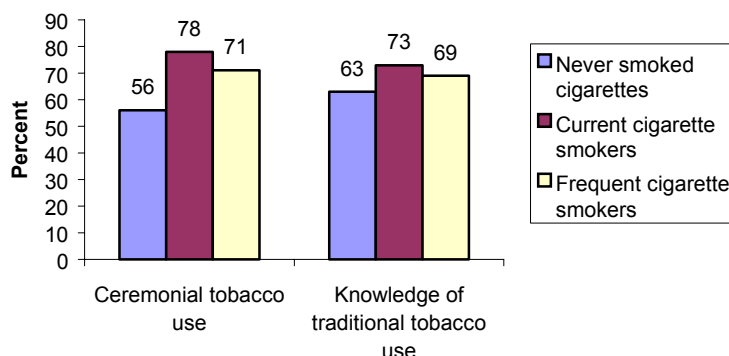


Figure 3 illustrates the difference between students who have never smoked cigarettes, current smokers, and frequent smokers in knowledge level and use of tobacco for traditional or ceremonial purposes. 73% of current cigarette smokers and 69% of frequent cigarette smokers reported knowledge of traditional tobacco uses. Those students who had never smoked cigarettes were least likely to report knowledge of traditional use of tobacco, however, over half, (63%) of these students reported some knowledge of traditional tobacco use.

Figure 3 also displays actual use of tobacco for ceremonial purposes by smoking status and similar to the knowledge responses, current cigarette smokers reported the most usage of tobacco for ceremonial purposes (78%) and those who never smoked reported the least (56%).

Others in home using tobacco traditionally

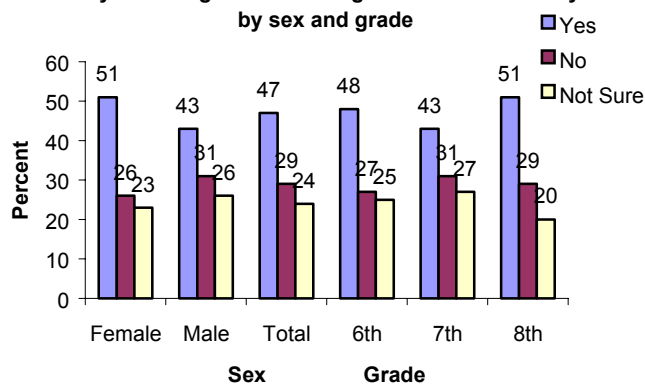
Middle school students were asked:

“Other than you, does anyone who lives in your home use tobacco traditionally now?”

Response options were: (a) Yes, (b) No, (c) Not sure

A response of (a) was a positive response (see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Anyone living in home using tobacco traditionally by sex and grade



Results

Most students (47%) reported knowledge of someone in their home using tobacco traditionally (see Figure 4). More females reported (51%) someone living in their home using tobacco traditionally than males (43%). Eighth grade students reported (51%) more often than other grade levels that someone in their home used tobacco traditionally. About one quarter of students reported that they were “not sure” of someone in their home using tobacco traditionally. Some of the “not sure” responses may include homes where someone uses tobacco traditionally.

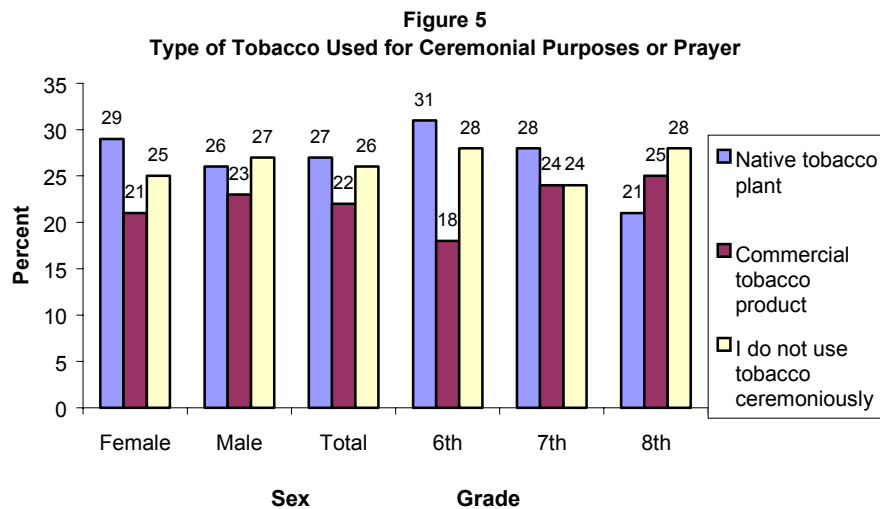
Type of tobacco used for ceremonial prayer or traditional reasons

Middle school students were asked:

*“What type of tobacco do you use for ceremonial prayer or traditional reasons?”

Response options were: (a) Native tobacco plant, (b) Commercial tobacco product, (c) Mixture, (d) Other, (e) I do not use tobacco ceremoniously

A response of (a), (b), (c), or (d) were positive responses (see Figure 5).



Results

Figure 5 shows that students who reported using tobacco for ceremonial prayer or traditional reasons most often reported using the native tobacco plant (27% overall). 29% of females compared to 26% of males reported using the native tobacco plant, while more males, 23%, than females, 21% reported using commercial tobacco products for ceremonial prayer and traditional reasons. Use of the native tobacco plant for prayer and traditional reasons decreased with increasing grade level (31% 6th grade, 28% 7th grade, 21% 8th grade), while use of commercial tobacco products for these purposes increased with increasing grade (18% 6th grade, 24% 7th grade, 25% 8th grade).

Discussion

Overall, the majority of students, whether tobacco users themselves or not, have knowledge of traditional tobacco uses and use tobacco for ceremonial purposes. 70% of participants reported knowledge of traditional uses of tobacco and 69% reported using tobacco for ceremonial purposes or traditional reasons. It is possible that some of the students designated as current smokers (smoking cigarettes at least one day of the previous 30 days) are not regular smokers or addicted to cigarettes but rather, they used tobacco from cigarettes for ceremonial purposes.

Additionally, the responses to the question of whether or not anyone else in the home uses tobacco traditionally were inconclusive in that about one quarter of students responded that they were “not sure”. It is not clear if people in these homes use tobacco traditionally or not.

The main limitation of the traditional use and knowledge of tobacco questions on the GLITC YTS is that they are vague. The terms “ceremonial use”, “traditional use”, “traditional reasons”, and “using tobacco traditionally” do not specify ceremony or define traditional use. Therefore, students could interpret these terms very broadly and possibly inappropriately, or be confused by them.

Conclusion

With 78% of current cigarette smokers and 71% of frequent cigarette smokers reporting using tobacco for ceremonial purposes there is a need for appropriate and culturally sensitive prevention messages. Prevention efforts to stop the abuse of tobacco products must do so in conjunction with respectful messages about the sacredness of the tobacco plant and how to continue to use tobacco for cultural purposes.

Table 1. Traditional Uses of Tobacco by Sex and Grade Level

906 AI/AN Middle School Students	Number of students	Sex			Grade Level		
		Total % (CI)*	Female % (CI)*	Male % (CI)*	6 th % (CI)*	7 th % (CI)*	8 th % (CI)*
Students who know a lot or a little about the traditional uses of tobacco	891	70.0 (±3.1)	70.5 (±4.4)	68.7 (±4.3)	65.6 (±5.3)	70.6 (±5.1)	72.6 (±5.6)
Students who use tobacco for ceremonial or traditional reasons	878	69.4 (±3.2)	70.4 (±4.4)	68.5 (±4.4)	66.9 (±5.4)	72.2 (±5.1)	68.4 (±6.0)
Someone other than the student, who lives in their home uses tobacco traditionally	883	46.9 (±3.3)	51.1 (±4.8)	43.2 (±4.6)	47.5 (±5.6)	42.7 (±5.6)	51.0 (±6.3)
Students who use the native tobacco plant, commercial tobacco, or a mixture for ceremonial prayer or traditional reasons	885	60.9 (±3.2)	61.4 (±4.7)	60.6 (±4.5)	59.1 (±5.6)	64.6 (±5.4)	57.7 (±6.2)
<i>Native Tobacco Plant</i>	241	27.2 (±3.0)	29.2 (±4.4)	25.5 (±4.1)	31.0 (±5.2)	27.7 (±5.1)	20.9 (±5.2)
<i>Commercial Tobacco Product</i>	195	22.0 (±2.7)	21.2 (±3.9)	22.9 (±3.9)	17.6 (±4.3)	23.8 (±4.8)	25.3 (±5.5)
<i>Mixture</i>	103	11.6 (±2.2)	11.1 (±3.1)	12.2 (±3.1)	10.5 (±3.5)	13.2 (±3.9)	**
<i>Other</i>	112	12.7 (±2.2)	13.2 (±3.3)	12.2 (±3.1)	**	**	**

*95% Confidence Interval which is the range of values in which we can be 95% confident that the true value falls within.

Table 2. Traditional Uses of Tobacco by Smoking Status

906 AI/AN Middle School Students	Number of Students	Total % (CI)*	Smoking Status		
			Never Smoked Cigarettes % (CI)*	Current Cigarette Smoker % (CI)*	Frequent Cigarette Smoker % (CI)*
Students who know a lot or a little about the traditional uses of tobacco	891	69.4 (±3.2)	63.0 (±7.1)	72.6 (±6.1)	68.8 (±9.5)
Students who use tobacco for ceremonial or traditional reasons	878	70.0 (±3.1)	56.4 (±7.3)	78.3 (±5.8)	71.1 (±9.4)
Someone other than the student, who lives in their home uses tobacco traditionally	883	46.9 (±3.3)	41.5 (±7.3)	54.3 (±6.8)	56.7 (±10.2)
Students who use the native tobacco plant, commercial tobacco, or a mixture for ceremonial prayer or traditional reasons	885	60.9 (±3.2)	51.3 (±7.3)	65.5 (±5.3)	63.6 (±9.8)
<i>Native Tobacco Plant</i>	241	27.2 (±3.0)	31.0 (±6.8)	28.4 (±6.2)	22.4 (±8.7)
<i>Commercial Tobacco Product</i>	195	22.0 (±2.7)	13.4 (±5.1)	28.4 (±6.2)	21.4 (±8.5)
<i>Mixture</i>	103	11.6 (±2.2)	5.9 (±3.6)	8.8 (±4.0)	19.4 (±8.2)
<i>Other</i>	112	12.7 (±2.2)	11.8 (±4.9)	14.9 (±5.0)	13.3 (±7.1)

*95% Confidence Interval which is the range of values in which we can be 95% confident that the true value falls within.