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## Retail Tobacco Marketing Leads to More Smoking Among Teens

May 7, 2007 - Chicago, Ill.

*Study finds that more advertising, lower cigarette prices and higher levels of promotions increase likelihood of teens smoking*

The more cigarette marketing that teens are exposed to in retail stores, the more likely they are to smoke, according to a new study published today in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. This is the first national study to examine the different ways that specific retail marketing strategies affect adolescent smoking behavior.

Researchers from Bridging the Gap, a policy research program based at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and the University of Michigan, examined several marketing strategies, including cigarette point-of-sale advertising; cigarette price; and other promotions, like multi-pack discounts and gifts with purchase.

They found that point-of-sale advertising is associated with youth trying smoking; that pricing strategies contribute to increases all along the smoking continuum, from initiation and experimentation to regular smoking; and that cigarette promotions increase the likelihood that youth will move from experimentation to regular smoking.

"Our study shows that the marketing of cigarettes in places where teens shop clearly increases their cigarette use," says Sandy Slater, the study's lead author. "Restricting these marketing practices would reduce youth smoking."

To arrive at their findings, Slater and her colleagues examined the influence cigarette retail marketing strategies had on the progression from non-smoking to experimentation to established smoking among a nationally representative sample of 8th, 10th and 12th graders. The data was collected from 1999 to 2003 and the final sample size for the study was 26, 301 students. The research was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Researchers observed that the higher the level of retail advertising in a community, the higher the odds that non-smoking adolescents experimented with tobacco. This was especially true for the 8th graders in the study. Projections suggested that removing point-of-sale advertising would significantly decrease the likelihood that adolescents would experiment with cigarettes. In communities with a moderate level of cigarette advertising in stores (2.5 on a 5 point scale) for example, one would expect to see an 11.25 percent decrease in experimenters if all point-of-sale advertising was removed. On the other hand, these same communities would likely see an almost 11 percent increase in experimenters if all stores had the maximum level of advertising.

Echoing earlier research, study authors also found young people to be particularly sensitive to price. For every dollar increase in the price of a pack of cigarettes, analysis indicated, the odds of an adolescent moving to the next level of smoking would decrease by 24 percent. Simulations also suggested that if price promotions went from being available in just under half of all stores to being available in all stores, the number of current established smokers would rise by almost 17 percent. Conversely, if all such promotions were eliminated from stores, one would expect to see about a 13 percent decrease in the number of established adolescent smokers.

Bridging the Gap, which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is a joint project of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Health Research and Policy and the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. It is intended to improve our understanding of the role of policy and environmental factors in youth alcohol, illicit drug, and tobacco use, as well as diet and physical activity, and to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and changes in environmental conditions in reducing substance use and obesity among youth. For more information, visit [www.impactteen.org](http://www.impactteen.org) and [www.yesresearch.org](http://www.yesresearch.org).

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### Related Links

[The Impact of Retail Cigarette Marketing Practices on Youth Smoking Uptake](#)

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