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Tobacco in the LGBTQ+ Communities

Tobacco Policy & Use Survey



Tobacco in the LGBTQ+ Communities Tobacco Policy & Use Survey

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Everyone deserves a long & healthy life in an environment that prioritizes wellness and mental health.

INTRODUCTION

This is the motivation behind OUT Against Big Tobacco (OABT) Los Angeles Coalition's Public Intercept Survey. For many years, Big Tobacco has specifically targeted our community through their marketing tactics, leading to addiction to their harmful products. This has resulted in significantly higher smoking rates among LGBTQ+ individuals, more than twice as much as non-LGBTQ+ people. The consequence of this is that tobacco-related illnesses claim the lives of almost 30,000 LGBTQ+ individuals each year.

By conducting this research, we can improve our understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals trying to quit smoking and control tobacco use. Additionally, we can work towards reducing health disparities by providing education, outreach, and strengthening local laws that prevent the sale of flavored tobacco products. This approach will also help to combat harmful exploitative tactics and protect LGBTQ+ youth.



Our Results

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METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this survey involved data collection at the following locations: Pride events in Los Angeles, West Hollywood and Long Beach from June 2022 - October 2022. The survey consisted of 18 questions, an example question was, “Policies that ban flavored tobacco products infringe on an individual’s right to choose” on a likert scale, a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative response to a statement. The initial goal sample size included at least 500 participants. Participants, consisting of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people and allies, were asked their perceptions about tobacco and health information related to the LGBTQ+ community and their demographic information. The survey protocol was developed in consultation with TCEC. Surveys were collected through paper and pencil survey methods.

LIMITATIONS

We recognize that there were limitations to the data presented. The convenience sample measured may not fully reflect the entire population of Los Angeles County. Respondents had the opportunity to not participate in this survey, which is why there are only 247 respondents measured. Another limitation to consider is that respondents may have had different resources available to them and/or not believe tobacco affects them thus impacting participation. Additionally, people at Pride events might have been interested in alternative and/or competing activities/priorities.



RESULTS

Furthermore, the results show that 94% of respondents agree or strongly agree that E-cigarettes containing nicotine can be addictive while 90% agree or strongly agree that tobacco use has a negative effect on the health of local communities. When asked if an individual's local area should restrict the distribution of free and low-cost tobacco products, 81% agreed or strongly agreed. However, when asked if a local area should restrict the sale of all vape/e-cigarettes, the percentage decreased to 71% agree or strongly agree. We found that respondents believe that policies that ban flavored tobacco products infringe on an individual's right to choose, as 52% agreed or strongly agreed while 78% agreed or strongly agreed that limiting the sale or distribution of dangerous or harmful products protects the public from harm. Lastly, 43% of respondents stated that they have used tobacco products in the past, with 22% of those in the past 30 days.

Therefore, a majority of individuals that were surveyed support the passing of tobacco-control related ordinances. Survey respondents say that individuals see tobacco usage as an act of individual freedom, but agree with the need to limit access and exposure in order to protect the community. A larger portion of survey respondents had not previously used tobacco products. Ultimately, most of the respondents are in favor of targeting flavors, discounts, and coupons when advocating for tobacco control policies in the local community.

VIEWS ABOUT TOBACCO USE, TOBACCO CONTROL, AND POLICIES

Check the options that best represent your response for each of the following statements.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree	NS/RA ^a
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Members of the LGBTQ community smoke at higher rates than the general population?	70 (26)	105 (39)	31 (12)	4 (2)	57 (21)
E-cigarettes that contain nicotine can be addictive?	201 (75)	51 (19)	3 (1)	2 (1)	10 (4)
Smokers using menthol (a substance from mint plant which provides a cooling sensation) cigarettes are less likely to successfully quit smoking than non-menthol smokers?	72 (27)	72 (27)	34 (13)	19 (7)	70 (26)
Tobacco use (including smoking, vaping, & smokeless tobacco use) affects your local community's health negatively?	162 (61)	76 (29)	9 (3)	3 (1)	17 (6)
My local area should...					
▶ Restrict the distribution of free and low-cost tobacco products.	134 (50)	82 (31)	17 (6)	10 (4)	24 (9)
▶ Restrict the sale of all vape/e-cigarettes.	113 (42)	78 (29)	34 (13)	19 (7)	23 (9)
▶ End the redemption of coupons, coupon offers, gift certificates, gift cards, and rebate offers for tobacco products including vape/e-cigarettes.	139 (52)	72 (27)	18 (7)	11 (4)	27 (10)
▶ Restrict the sale of all flavored products including menthol cigarettes.	122 (46)	73 (27)	30 (11)	16 (6)	26 (10)
▶ Restrict the sale and distribution of all flavored products including menthol cigarettes.	113 (42)	67 (25)	34 (13)	19 (7)	34 (13)
Check the options that best represent your response for each of the following questions below.					
▶ Policies that ban flavored tobacco products infringe on an individual's right to choose.	62 (23)	78 (29)	60 (23)	35 (13)	32 (12)
▶ Limiting the sale or distribution of dangerous or harmful products protects the public from harm.	115 (43)	92 (35)	26 (10)	5 (2)	29 (11)

Note: ^a NS/DA = not sure and declined to answer.

TOBACCO USE (SELF-REPORT)

Any smoking and/or tobacco use in the past	Yes	No	Unknown
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
	114 (43)	150 (56)	3 (1)

TIME SINCE LAST USE OF TOBACCO, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, OR NICOTINE PRODUCTS

Past 30 days (current)	Between 1-6 months ago	Between 7-12 months ago	Between 1-5 years ago	Over 5 years ago	Never smoked + unknown
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
59 (22)	10 (4)	9 (3)	24 (9)	48 (18)	117 (44)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER, & TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES:

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation is a person's emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to another person. There are many ways a person can describe their sexual orientation and many labels a person can use. Which of these options best describes your sexual orientation?

Gay/ Lesbian	Bi+ ^a	Queer	Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer	Strait/ Heterosexual	Questioning, Unsure	Another Orientation ^b	Unknown ^c
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
112 (42)	55 (21)	31 (12)	2 (1)	38 (14)	5 (2)	8 (3)	16 (6)

Note:

^aExamples on survey for this orientation included bisexual, pansexual, and fluid.

^bUnlisted orientations includes, "Ally", "Asexual", "Demisexual", "Pansexual", and "Transgender"

^cUnknown = preferred not to answer or skipped

GENDER

Gender identity is how someone feels about their own gender. There are many ways a person can describe their gender identity and many labels a person can use. Which of the following terms best describes your current gender identity?

Woman	Man	Nonbinary ^a	Questioning, Unsure	Another Gender	Unknown ^b
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
112 (42)	101 (38)	39 (15)	3 (1)	3 (1)	9 (3)

Note:

^aExamples on survey for this identity included gender queer, gender fluid, Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer

^bUnknown = preferred not to answer or skipped

TRANSGENDER

Some people describe themselves as transgender when the way they think or feel about their gender is different from their sex assigned at birth. Do you identify as transgender?

Yes	No	Questioning, Unsure	Unknown ^a
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
44 (17)	195 (73)	12 (5)	16 (6)

Note:

^aUnknown includes participants who answered "I don't know what this question is asking" or preferred not to answer.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Asian	Black/AA ^a	Indigenous Peoples ^b	Latinx ^c	ME/NA ^d	NH/PI ^e	White	Unknown ^f
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
50 (19)	21 (8)	14 (5)	82 (31)	5 (2)	2 (1)	125 (47)	8 (3)

Note: Participants were able to select multiple racial/ethnic identities. In sum, 267 participants reported their race and ethnicity.

^aAA = African American

^bSurvey also listed Native American and Alaskan Native

^cSurvey also listed Hispanic and Latino

^dME/NA = Middle Eastern or North African

^eNH/PI = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

^fUnknown = preferred not to answer or skipped

SPECIFIC ASIAN BACKGROUND

Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Malaysian	Mongolian	S Asian ^a	SE Asian ^b	Taiwanese	Unknown ^c
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
13 (26)	15 (30)	6 (12)	4 (8)	1 (2)	1 (2)	3 (6)	3 (6)	2 (4)	2 (4)

Note: Participants were able to select multiple Asian backgrounds. Denominator for percentage measure is based on 50 participants who identified as Asian.

^aS Asian = South Asian people, specifically Indian and Pakistani.

^bSE Asian = South East Asian people, specifically Hmong and Vietnamese

^cIncludes participants who answered they are another Asian identity not listed or preferred not to answer.

SPECIFIC HISPANIC, LATINO, OR LATINX BACKGROUNDS

Cuban	Dominican	Guatemalan	Chicano	Puerto Rican	Salvadoran	South American ^a	Spanish/ Spaniard	Unknown ^b
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (4)	54 (66)	3 (4)	5 (6)	7 (9)	3 (4)	9 (11)

Note: Participants were able to select multiple Latinx backgrounds. Denominator for percentage measure is based on 82 participants who identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx.

^aSelf-reported South American backgrounds included Brazilian, Peruvian, and Venezuelan.

^bIncludes participants who answered they are another Latinx identity not listed or preferred not to answer.

PACIFIC ISLANDER BACKGROUND

Native Hawaiian	Unknown ^a
n (%)	n (%)
1 (50)	1 (1)

Note: In sum, only two participants self-reported being Pacific Islander.

^aParticipant preferred not to answer.

AGE CATEGORIES

Under 18 y.o.	18-20 y.o.	21-24 y.o.	25-44 y.o.	45-64 y.o.	60 y.o. and older	Unknown ^a
n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
3 (1)	25 (9)	47 (18)	123 (46)	33 (12)	15 (5)	22

Note:

^aParticipants refused to answer.

SOCIOECONOMIC POSITION (SEP)

	N (%)
Currently experiencing homelessness (on the streets, in a shelter, in a short-term SRO, staying with a friend)	12 (4)
Homeowners	52 (21)
Enough savings to cover 3 months of expenses	118 (48)
Ability to save money every month	151 (61)

Note: In total, only 247 (93%) of the 267 participants responded to SEP related questions. Percentages are based on the 247 respondents.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to these findings, we recommend that Pride festivals and LGBTQ+ related community events take a proactive approach by removing tobacco related products, advertisement and restricting the use of tobacco products within such environments. We also encourage organizations, community groups and legislators to take the pledge by visiting www.eqca.org/kickbigtobaccoout. It is our belief that the task of addressing these health disparities is a collective duty, which is why we'll continue to lean on allies and partners in this fight to kick Big Tobacco OUT of our communities.

CONCLUSION

Moreover, this report is intended as a resource and a starting place for conversations about educating LGBTQ+ youth and adults about the dangers of tobacco and the implementation for public health ordinances and policy, but we need your help—advocates, community stakeholders, —to leverage the information compiled in this report to improve the health and wellness of LGBTQ+ people across California.



www.eqca.org/kickbigtobaccoout

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