

The impact of local U.S. tobacco policies on youth tobacco use: a critical review

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KEYWORDS

Tobacco; Youth; Environmental Strategies; Local Policies

ABSTRACT

Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of premature death in the United States, killing over 430,000 people annually. To-bacco initiation and use among youth remains a significant public health concern. Despite declines in U.S. youth tobacco use in recent years, state and national survey results are still cause for alarm. Although traditional school-based curricular programs are the most common strategy to prevent or reduce youth tobacco use, their effectiveness may be limited because young people are immersed in a broader social context in which tobacco is readily available. Environmental strategies change this social context by focusing on policy, enforcement, and media. A compelling body of evidence suggests that interventions at the state and federal levels can, when implemented in combination, reduce youth tobacco use. The impact of policies implemented at the local levels is less well understood and effects of environmental strategies on smokeless tobacco consumption have been largely ignored. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on environmental strategies implemented at the local level on youth use of both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. We highlight results of the extant *-literature, hypothesize possible effects where research is lacking, and suggest where future studies might be warranted.

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