

2011 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Data Brief, June 2013: Tobacco Use, Student Assets and Socioeconomic Status

Tobacco Use

Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of death in Vermont and nationwide, despite important advances in tobacco control and prevention.¹ According to the U.S. Surgeon General, nearly nine out of ten smokers start smoking before age 18.¹ Addressing youth tobacco use and factors that contribute to youth initiation are critical to reducing tobacco's impact on society.¹ The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asks students in high school and middle school about risk behaviors. This data brief focuses on tobacco use, youth assets, and socioeconomic status. In 2011, **13 percent** of high school students and **3 percent** of middle school students reported past 30 day cigarette use.

Assets^a

Figure 1 shows the downward trend of past 30 day cigarette use among high school students, and the recent upward trend of students reporting feeling valued by their communities.

Figure 1. Percent of 9-12 graders who reported past 30 day cigarette use and percent who reported feeling valued by their community by year.

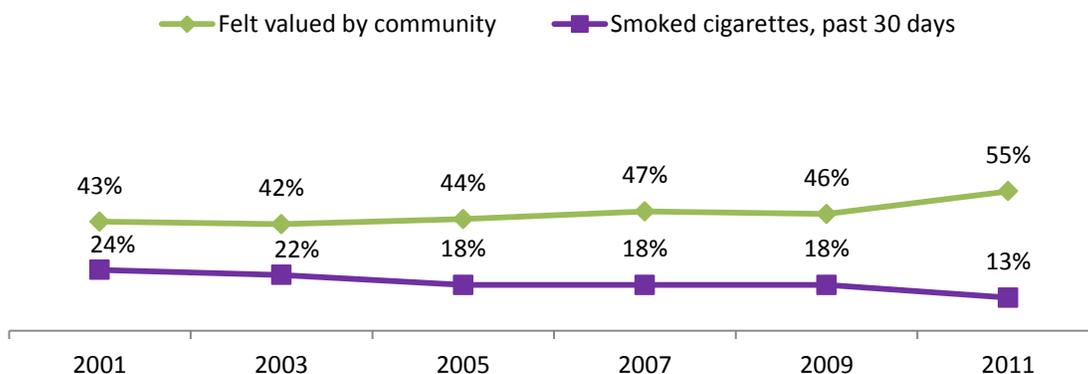
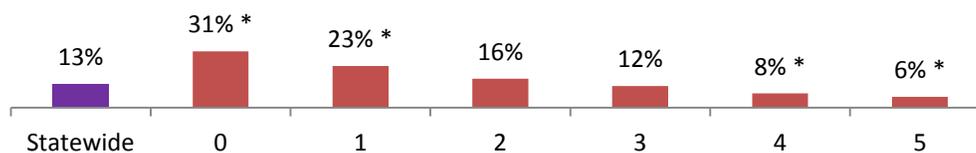


Figure 2 shows the percent of high school students reporting past 30 day cigarette use by the number of assets they report. Assets included in this analysis were: feeling valued by your community, feeling that teachers care about you, volunteering at least an hour a week, talking with parents about school at least weekly, and feeling that students help decide what happens at school. Students with a higher number of assets are less likely to report past 30 day cigarette use.

Figure 2. Percent of 9-12 graders who reported smoking in the past 30 days by number of assets, 2011.



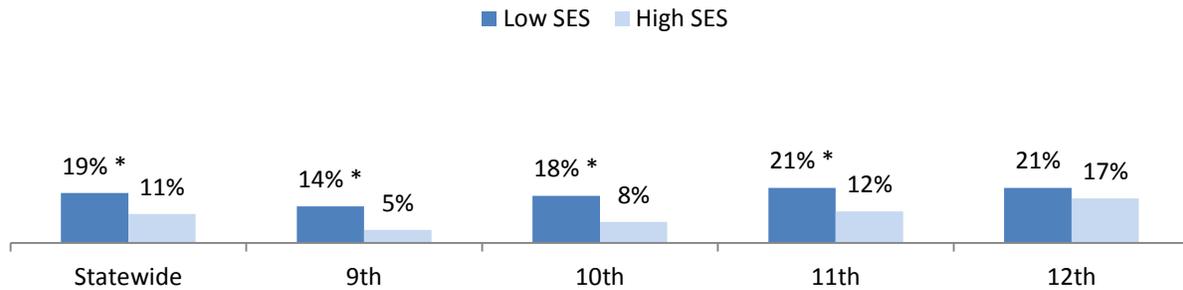
* Indicates that the category is statistically different from the statewide measure.

¹ <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/preventing-youth-tobacco-use/full-report.pdf>

Socioeconomic Status

As a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES), the YRBS asks students about their mother's education level. Figure 3 shows that students who reported that their mothers had a high school degree or less (low SES) have a higher prevalence of past 30 day cigarette use than whose mothers had more than a high school degree (high SES).

Figure 3. Percent of 9-12 graders who reported past 30 day cigarette use by socioeconomic status, 2011.

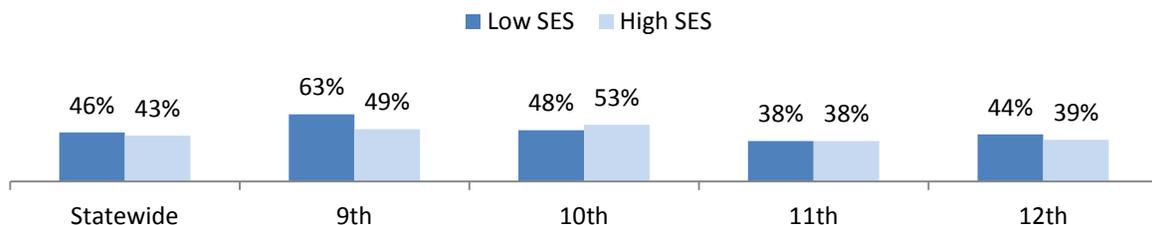


* Indicates that low SES students had a significantly higher prevalence than high SES students.

Quit Attempts

In Figure 4 below, 44 percent of high school students who reported past 30 day cigarette use also reported attempting to quit in the past year. In contrast to smoking prevalence, quit attempts do not statistically differ by grade and SES. There were also no differences in quit attempts by gender (data not shown). The quit attempt patterns among youth mirror those seen in adults.²

Figure 4. Percent of 9-12 graders who reported past 30 day cigarette use and attempted to quit in the past year, by socioeconomic status, 2011.



Overall 41 percent of high school students reported that a health care provider spoke to them about smoking. Among those who reported past 30 day cigarette use, a higher percentage (52 percent) said that a health care provider spoke to them about smoking. Of those smokers who reported attempting to quit in the past 12 months, 53 percent said that a health care provider spoke with them about smoking.

^a For additional information on student assets see:

<http://www.search-institute.org/research/developmental-assets>

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For the YRBS Data Brief Archive, visit: http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx

² Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011