Abstract:

Preventing the initiation of tobacco or nicotine products is critical to comprehensive tobacco and cancer control. This Revision Application Relevant to the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act provides the opportunity to conduct novel research that increases our understanding on how to prevent tobacco and nicotine use among the most vulnerable populations: youths, young adults, and racial/ethnic groups at high risk for tobacco-caused cancers. The three proposed projects identify how consumer perceptions, product design characteristics, and/or individual traits influence willingness to smoke and susceptibility to menthol cigarette or e-cigarette use. Project 1 examines the perceptions of the sensory characteristics of menthol cigarettes and the contributions of taste sensitivity to susceptibility to menthol cigarette use among never smokers, experimenters, and new smokers aged 18-26. Studies show that menthol increases the likelihood of experimentation, but have not assessed how menthol influences smoking initiation among racial/ethnic groups at high risk for menthol cigarette smoking and lung cancer. This study can provide evidence to the FDA on the potential harm of menthol in cigarettes to vulnerable groups. Project 2 employs an experimental design to examine how e-cigarette advertisements influence implicit and explicit attitudes toward e-cigarettes as healthier alternatives to cigarettes and how the advertisements are associated with susceptibility to e-cigarette use among current smokers aged 18-35. Little is known about the influence of e-cigarette marketing on public perceptions of e-cigarettes. This study can provide the FDA with new knowledge that will inform future e-cigarette regulations and facilitate marketing restrictions on misleading health claims. Project 3 employs an experimental design to investigate how colors, models, and health labeling influence adolescent (aged 12-14) reactions to cigarette advertising and examine gender and racial/ethnic differences in implicit and explicit measures, smoking expectancies, identification with smokers, and willingness to smoke. Studies show that tobacco industry advertising and packaging influence smoking initiation, but little is known about the mechanisms by which they influence initiation. This study can inform the FDA’s regulation of specific advertising components that influence positive reactions to advertising.