

Abstract: Tobacco Use in College Students

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A new generation of smokeless tobacco products has entered the U.S. market, and grown in popularity, over the past several years. Snus—a moist snuff which originated in Sweden and Norway—was the first such product to enter the U.S. market. More recently, starting in 2009, dissolvable tobacco products in the form of strips, orbs, and sticks containing finely milled tobacco have been introduced into test markets.

Very little is known about individuals' exposure to, and perceptions and use of, the new generation of dissolvable tobacco products. The existing test markets for these products provide a unique laboratory for understanding the extent and correlates of exposure, perceptions, and use of these products in a real-world setting.

We aim to expand the scope of our parent grant, *Smokeless Tobacco Use among College Students* (R01CA141643). Currently, we focus on assessing trajectories and correlates of smokeless tobacco use among college students, including environmental correlates such as retail outlet density and product availability. In order to accomplish these aims, we recruited a cohort of SLT users and non-users and are following this cohort through 7 consecutive semesters, using web surveys, in order to assess SLT initiation, increased use, decreased use, and cessation. Students were recruited from 10 colleges and universities in NC.

We are using data on individual-level correlates collected through a web-based survey of the longitudinal cohort of students. We are conducting Environmental Assessments of the campuses and community surrounding each school. These include assessment of campus and community policies and assessment of point-of-purchase product availability, price, and promotion in a sample of local tobacco retailers in the area surrounding each school. Finally, we are using data from the cohort survey to examine whether the change in prevalence in SLT use during the college career is specific to the use of particular SLT products, and whether use of different products varies across subgroups.

In the proposed study, we will assess perceptions and use of dissolvable tobacco products in parts of the three major test markets in which they are currently available (the Charlotte, Denver, and Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Areas). Specifically, we will measure exposure to advertising, perceptions, likelihood of trying, and use of the new generation of dissolvable tobacco products in a survey of a sample of young adults, aged 18- 35, in each of three test markets. In addition, we will identify individual, interpersonal, and environmental correlates of exposure, perceptions, likelihood of trying, and use of these products. To assess individual and interpersonal correlates, we will use data from the survey of young adults. To assess environmental-level correlates, we will conduct an assessment of point-of-purchase dissolvable product availability and promotion in a sample of tobacco retailers in each of three test markets.