

Contraband cigarettes account for 17 percent of all brands consumed by adolescent smokers

September 8 2009

Consumption of contraband cigarettes amongst adolescent daily smokers in Canada accounts for 17% of all cigarettes smoked by this age group, and rises to more than 25% in Ontario and Quebec. This behaviour may be undermining tobacco-prevention strategies, as they focus on taxation and minimum age restrictions to curb and prevent smoking, states an article in CMAJ (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

The study looked at data from 41 886 high school students in grades 9 to 12 from public and private elementary and secondary schools in all 10 provinces who participated in Canada's 2006/2007 Youth Smoking Survey. From the selected schools, 61% of eligible students participated.

Among the students in grades 9 to 12, 5.2% were daily [smokers](#) and 13.1% of these reported cigarettes from First Nations reserves as their usual brand. Smokers of these cigarettes reported significantly higher smoking levels compared with other smokers - 16.8 vs. 11.9 cigarettes per day.

"Although the use of illicit substances by adolescents is well known, the use of contraband cigarettes in this age group is striking," write Dr. Russell Callaghan from the Centre for [Addiction](#) and Mental Health in Toronto (CAMH) and coauthors.

"The widespread use of First Nations/Native brand [cigarettes](#), especially

in Ontario and Quebec, presents a serious challenge to tobacco-control strategies, which attempt to use accessibility and price mechanisms to influence adolescents' [smoking](#) behaviour. Although the complex issues of First Nations jurisdiction would have to be recognized in any policy changes, Canadian tobacco-control strategies will need to address this issue."

More information: <http://www.cmaj.ca/press/cmaj090665.pdf>

Source: [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#) (news : [web](#))

Citation: Contraband cigarettes account for 17 percent of all brands consumed by adolescent smokers (2009, September 8) retrieved 8 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-09-contraband-cigarettes-account-percent-brands.html>

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