

Anti-tobacco TV ads help adults stop smoking, study finds

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Anti-tobacco television advertising helps reduce adult smoking, according to a study by researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Health Research and Policy -- but some ads may be more effective than others.

Adults and youth are exposed to a variety of anti-smoking messages on television. However, no research had been done on whether the [ads](#), produced by various sponsors, impact adult [smoking](#) behaviors, or on how the ads differ, says Sherry Emery, a senior scientist at the UIC institute and lead author of the study.

The new study, in the April issue of the [American Journal of Public Health](#), looked at the relationship between adults' smoking behaviors and their exposure to ads sponsored by states; by private foundations; by [tobacco companies](#) themselves; or by pharmaceutical companies marketing smoking-cessation products.

The researchers measured exposure to smoking-related advertisements using Nielsen ratings data for the top 75 U.S. media markets from 1999 to 2007. They combined this data with individual smoking data and state tobacco-control-policy data.

The researchers analyzed variables such as smoking status, intentions to quit smoking, attempts to quit in the past year, and average daily cigarette consumption.

They found that in markets with higher exposure to state-sponsored media campaigns, "smoking is less, and intentions to quit are higher," Emery said.

Higher exposure to state-sponsored, private (American Legacy Foundation), and pharmaceutical advertisements was associated with less smoking. Higher exposure to [tobacco industry](#) advertisements was associated with more smoking.

"On the surface, the tobacco-industry ads were mostly anti-smoking and a little corporate promotion, but they weren't promoting the act of smoking," Emery said. "But the effect of the ads is that they are associated with more smoking."

An unexpected finding of the study was that adults who were in areas with more ads for pharmaceutical cessation products were less likely to make an attempt to quit.

"Since we looked at the total amount of exposure to anti-smoking campaigns -- and the campaigns are very different -- our data suggests that it may not matter what you say to people, just that you're saying it a lot," she said.

Most of the recent state-sponsored media campaigns were supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The researchers suggest that the recent increased funding for anti-tobacco campaigns may contribute to meaningful reductions in smoking among U.S. adults.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

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