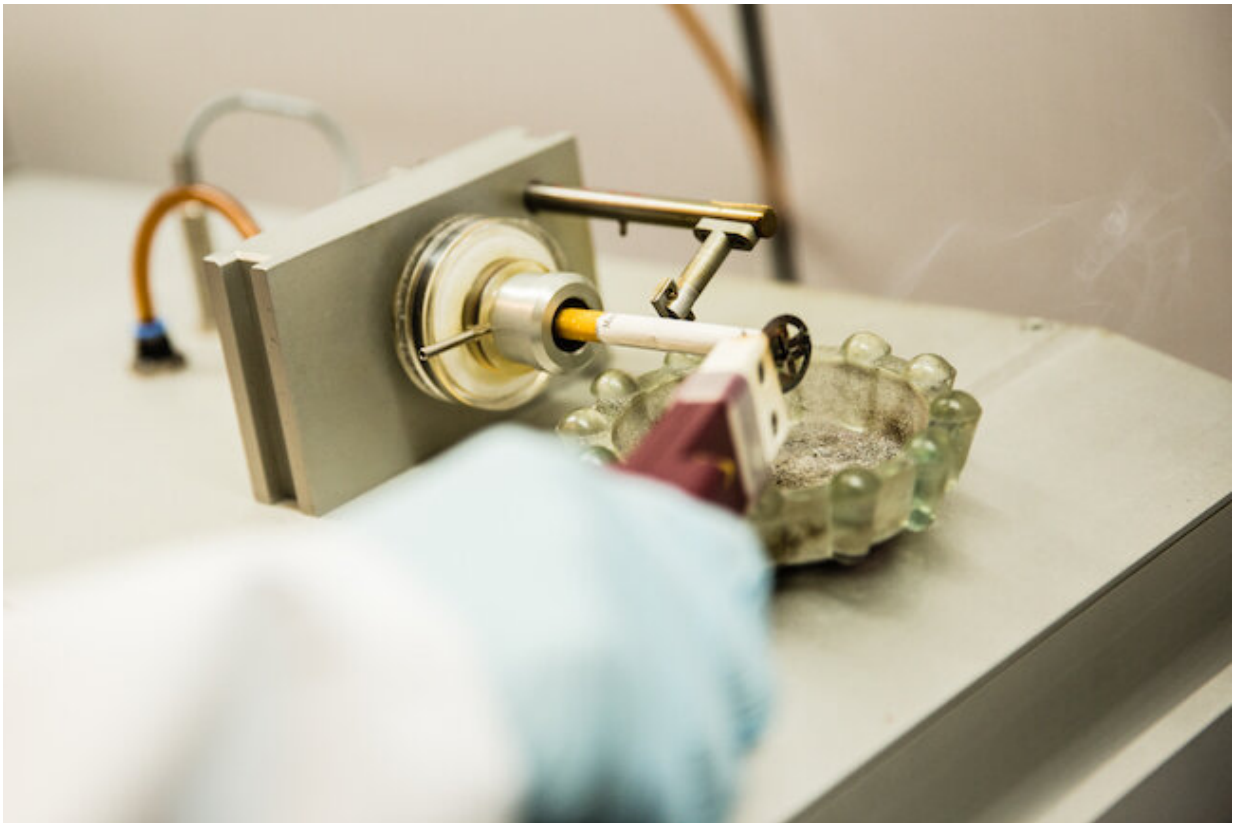


'Natural' and 'organic' cigarettes are just like other cigarettes

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Credit: University of Minnesota

Descriptors such as "natural" and "made from organic tobacco" in the marketing of Natural American Spirit cigarettes imply reduced risk of toxic exposures. Studies show that smokers perceive these cigarettes as

being less harmful than other brands, which is why they choose them.

There is very limited data on the levels of key harmful chemicals in Natural American Spirit [cigarettes](#). To learn more, University of Minnesota researchers carried out a comprehensive [chemical](#) analysis of 13 different varieties of Natural American Spirit cigarettes. The study, which was led by School of Public Health Associate Professor and Masonic Cancer Center member Irina Stepanov, was recently published in the journal *Tobacco Regulatory Science*.

The researchers investigated both the [tobacco](#) used in Natural American Spirit cigarettes and the smoke they produce. The smoke was analyzed using a [smoking](#) machine, a device that simulates puffing on a cigarette and measures the chemicals emitted.

The study found:

- levels of toxic and cancer-causing chemicals in Natural American Spirit cigarettes are generally similar to those found in other commercial cigarette brands;
- tobacco and smoke of Natural American Spirit cigarettes contain higher levels of nicotine than those typically present in other brands, which suggests they may be more addictive.

"The similarities between the cancer-causing chemicals in various Natural American Spirit cigarettes are consistent with the knowledge that harmful chemicals in [cigarette smoke](#) come from the tobacco plant itself or from the combustion process, and do not depend on tobacco being 'organic' or 'natural,'" said Aleksandra Alcheva, a School of Public Health graduate student and study co-author. "We also learned that there is more tobacco per cigarette and it takes more puffs to finish Natural American Spirit cigarettes than other king-size brands, which means a smoker can inhale more smoke from each cigarette."

Stepanov emphasized that this study only compared machine-generated laboratory data for Natural American Spirit and other brands.

"Smokers smoke cigarettes differently from the laboratory machines," said Stepanov. "However, this study clearly demonstrates that there are no major differences between Natural American Spirit and other brands that could be attributed to 'natural' or 'organic' qualities."

"While some of the misleading descriptors that have been used in advertisements of Natural American Spirit cigarettes are no longer permitted, the use of words such as 'organic' and 'tobacco and water,' along with the 'Natural' in the name of the [brand](#) is still misleading," said Stepanov. "I hope the results of this study can reach at least some smokers of Natural American Spirit cigarettes and help in correcting the misperception that these cigarettes are somehow healthier than other brands."

More information: Vipin Jain et al. Comprehensive Chemical Characterization of Natural American Spirit Cigarettes, *Tobacco Regulatory Science* (2019). [DOI: 10.18001/TRS.5.4.8](https://doi.org/10.18001/TRS.5.4.8)

Provided by University of Minnesota

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