

# Preventing smoking—evidence from urban emergency department patients

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A new study from the Prevention Research Center of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation offers a more in-depth understanding of smoking among patients in an urban emergency

department.

Studying patients in urban emergency departments matters because these patients smoke cigarettes and use other substances at higher rates than the [general population](#).

The data are from a survey with 1037 patients in California. Key results include the following:

- Smoking prevalence was higher among men than women (35.5% vs. 18.9%). These [smoking rates](#) are more than double those seen among adult men and women in California.
- Smoking rates were higher among users of other substances such as alcohol, marijuana, amphetamines, and cocaine and among those who misused prescription opioids;
- There were no racial/[ethnic differences](#) in the likelihood of current smoking among men, but Hispanic/Latino and African American men were less likely to be heavier smokers than white men;
- Among women, Hispanics/Latinas were less likely to be current smokers, and Hispanics/Latinas and African Americans were less likely to be light smokers compared to [white women](#);
- Being unemployed was associated with current and moderate/heavier smoking among women;
- Food insufficiency was related to current and light smoking among men;
- Among women, past-year intimate partner violence was related to current smoking, light and moderate/heavier smoking;
- Having a spouse/partner who smoked was related to smoking behavior among the sample's men and women.

These findings indicate that, among urban emergency department patients, those who are faced with socioeconomic stressors, such as

unemployment and food insufficiency, may be particularly vulnerable to smoking-related health disparities.

Says lead author Dr. Carol Cunradi: "Clinicians should consider factors such as polysubstance use and socioeconomic stressors as they screen underserved patients who smoke and formulate cessation treatment plans.

**More information:** Carol B Cunradi et al, Gender Differences in Smoking Among an Urban Emergency Department Sample, *Tobacco Use Insights* (2019). [DOI: 10.1177/1179173X19879136](https://doi.org/10.1177/1179173X19879136)

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