

Blunt products more popular in states where marijuana is legal

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A study by researchers at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health finds that cigars commonly used to roll blunts—hollowed out cigars that are filled with marijuana and smoked—dominate the cigar marketplace in states where recreational marijuana is legal compared to nationally. The findings, which could help direct tobacco prevention efforts, are published online in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.

"Cigars with fruit flavors, the brand Swisher Sweets, and inexpensive, small pack sizes are valued among blunt users," said Daniel Giovenco, PhD, assistant professor of Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, and first author. "Our study demonstrates that these tobacco products hold a larger percent of the market share in states with [recreational marijuana](#) laws."

Using 2016 tobacco sales data obtained from the Nielsen Research Company, the authors compared cigarillo sales in regions with legalized recreational [marijuana](#) (i.e., Denver, CO; Seattle, WA; Portland, OR) to the overall U.S. marketplace. Nielsen collects electronic point-of-sale data for [tobacco products](#) in U.S. convenience stores, gas stations, drug stores, grocery stores, mass merchandisers, dollar stores, and other tobacco retailers.

Although Black & Mild, not traditionally used as blunts, was the top brand nationally, Swisher, more commonly used for blunt making, was the most popular brand in all three market regions where recreational

marijuana has been legalized. In Colorado, the first state that legalized marijuana and which has experienced a boom in "weed tourism," cigarillo wraps constituted a sizable portion of overall sales (12 percent vs. 3 percent nationally). The wraps eliminate the need to remove the tobacco filler, facilitating easy blunt-making. Notably, however, per capita sales of cigarillos were lower in markets where marijuana is legal, possibly a reflection of the states' stronger tobacco control laws, cultural attitudes toward [tobacco](#) use, or consumer preferences for alternative forms of [marijuana consumption](#).

"Irrespective of the legal status of marijuana, local policymakers should employ strategies that reduce the appeal of cigarillos," he says. "Many of the features that are popular for blunt use, such as flavors and small pack sizes, have been banned for cigarettes. Cigarillos should face similar restrictions to improve [public health](#). Knowing where these products are most popular can help direct prevention efforts."

Provided by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health

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