

BRFSS Brief

Number 1603

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual statewide telephone survey of adults developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and administered by the New York State Department of Health. The BRFSS is designed to provide information on behaviors, risk factors, and utilization of preventive services related to the leading causes of chronic and infectious diseases, disability, injury, and death among the noninstitutionalized, civilian population aged 18 years and older.

Cigarette Smoking

New York State Adults, 2014

Introduction and Key Findings

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in New York State. Tobacco use claims between 26,000 and 28,200 lives annually, and results in more deaths than alcohol consumption, microbial agents, toxic agents, motor vehicle crashes, firearms, and unsafe sexual behaviors combined.^{1, 2}

According to the Surgeon General's report, "The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress", there is sufficient evidence of a causal relationship between smoking and lung cancer, liver cancer, and colorectal cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), exacerbation of asthma, cardiovascular disease, increased risk of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* disease, diabetes, age-related macular degeneration, rheumatoid arthritis, erectile dysfunction, and impaired immune function. Mothers who smoke during pregnancy are at risk for ectopic pregnancy and smoking places the child at risk for low birth weight and defects such as orofacial clefts. In addition, there is sufficient evidence of a causal relationship between exposure to secondhand smoke and lung cancer, stroke and heart disease, and, in children, respiratory symptoms such as impaired lung functioning and lower respiratory illness, middle ear disease and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).³

Key Findings

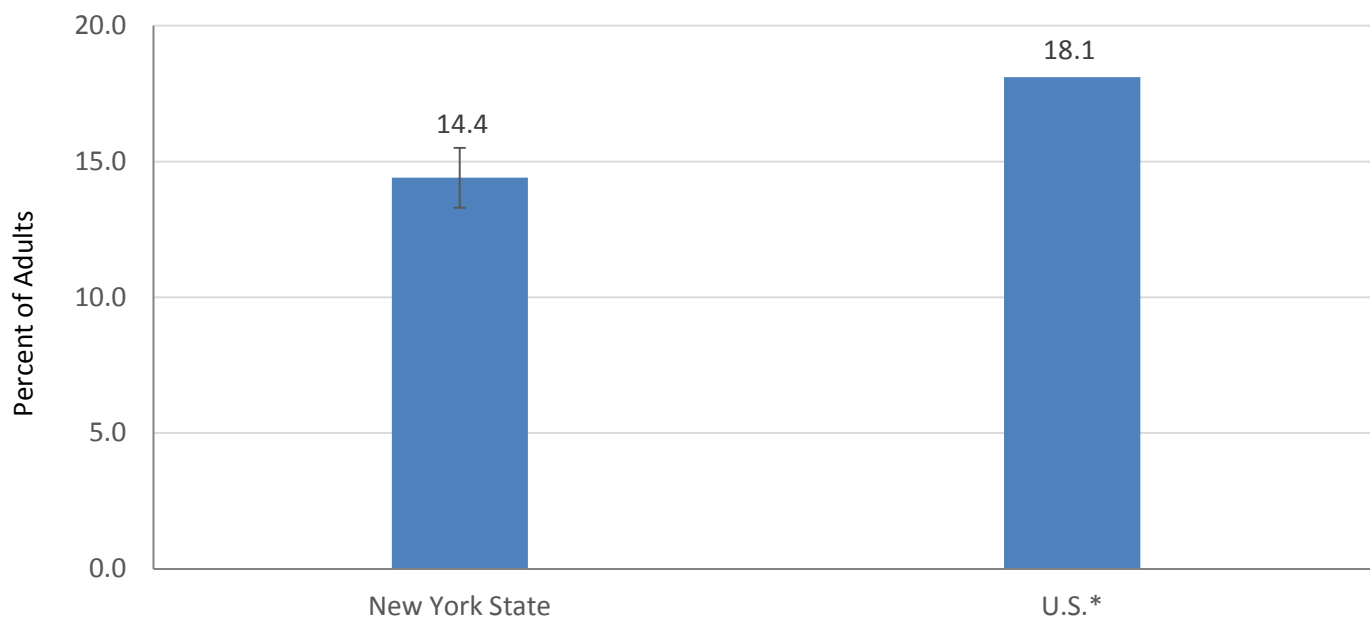
In New York State, adult cigarette smoking prevalence is currently 14.4% (Table 1). Between 2011 and 2014 the statewide smoking rate decreased by 20%. Smoking rates have dropped across all demographic categories in this four year time period, notably among some disparate populations. Among individuals with less than a high school education the smoking rate decreased 13%, from 27.5% in 2011 to 22.4% in 2014; among those with household incomes below \$25,000 the smoking rate decreased 28%, from 27.8% in 2011 to 19.9% in 2014; and among individuals with poor mental health, defined as reported problems with stress, depression, or emotions on at least 14 of the previous 30 days, the smoking rate decreased 17%, from 32.6% in 2011 to 27.2% in 2014 (Figure 2). Other notable declines in smoking rates between 2011 and 2014 include the smoking rate among young adults age 18-24 years old, which dropped 31%, and the smoking rate among females, which dropped 29%. Despite these successes, individuals with low socioeconomic status, poor mental health status, unemployed individuals, and individuals lacking health care coverage continue to be priority populations of focus for the NYS Tobacco Control Program.

BRFSS Questions

- Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?
- Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?

Note: BRFSS defines "current smoker" as an adult over the age of 18 who has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and currently smokes on at least some days.

Figure 1. Comparison of Current Smoking Prevalence: NYS and US Adults⁴, BRFSS 2014



*U.S. data point is the median value for all states and D.C. combined. Confidence interval is not used with the median value.

Figure 2. Prevalence of Current Smokers by Socioeconomic Status Indicators and Mental Health Status in NYS, BRFSS 2011-2014

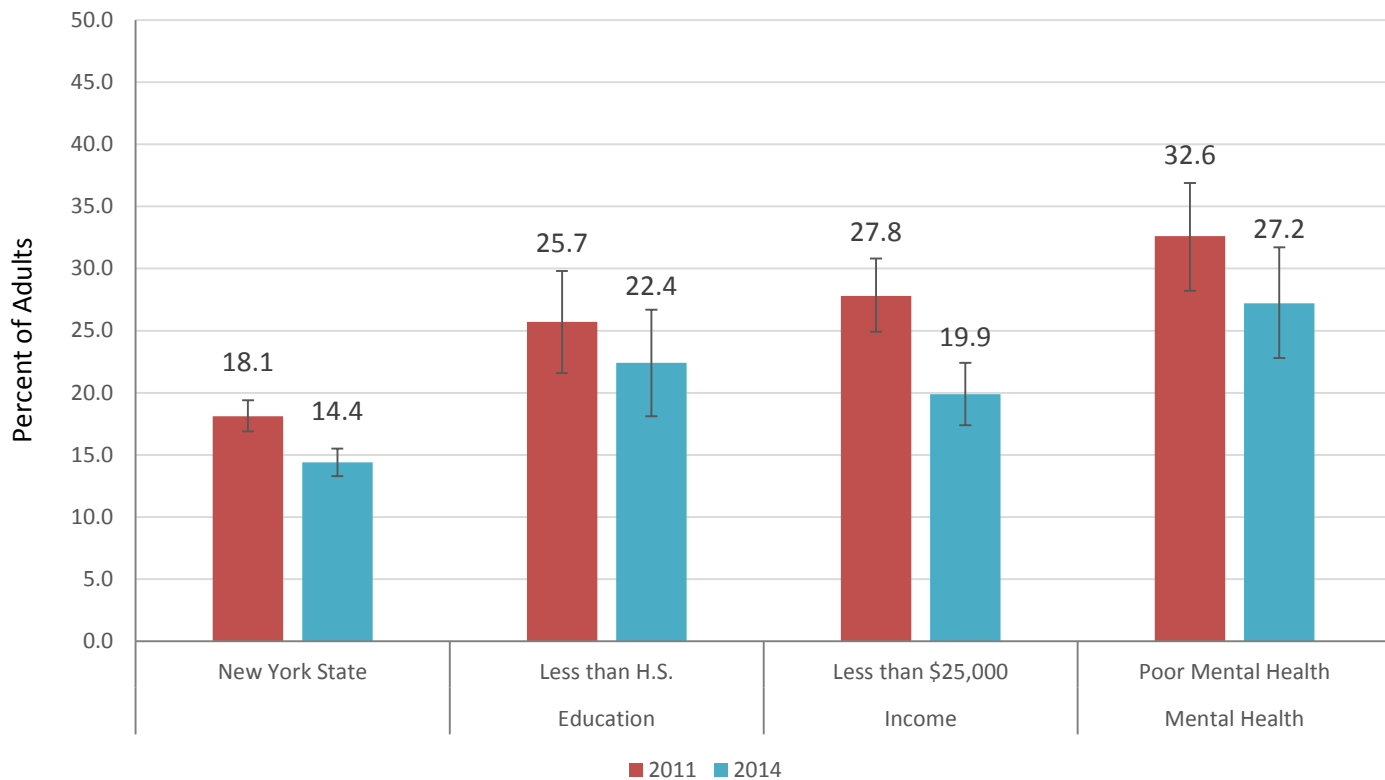


Table 1. Prevalence of Current Smokers by Demographic Groups in NYS with Relative Percent Decline, BRFSS 2014 and 2011

	2011			2014			2011-2014	
	Percentage	95% Conf. Int.	Estimated Weighted N	Percentage	95% Conf. Int.	Estimated Weighted N	Percent Decrease	P value
New York State	18.1	(16.9, 19.4)	2,701,000	14.4	(13.3, 15.5)	2,084,000	20%	‡
Rest of State (NYS excluding NYC)	19.6	(17.8, 21.4)	1,663,000	15.4	(13.9, 17.0)	1,291,000	21%	‡
New York City	16.2	(14.4, 17.7)	1,037,000	13.0	(11.3, 14.6)	793,000	20%	†
Male	19.5	(17.5, 21.5)	1,393,000	17.0	(15.1, 18.9)	1,180,000	13%	ns
Female	16.8	(15.3, 18.4)	1,307,000	12.0	(10.7, 13.3)	904,000	29%	‡
White/Non-Hispanic	17.9	(16.4, 19.5)	1,592,000	15.0	(13.6, 16.5)	1,239,000	16%	†
Black/Non-Hispanic	21.3	(17.5, 25.0)	427,000	16.1	(12.7, 19.5)	315,000	24%	*
Other Race or Multiracial/Non-Hispanic	17.2	(12.8, 21.6)	246,000	8.6	(5.8, 11.4)	123,000	50%	†
Hispanic	17.4	(14.0, 20.7)	398,000	14.1	(11.0, 17.2)	344,000	19%	ns
18-24 Years Old	21.6	(16.4, 26.7)	400,000	14.8	(10.8, 18.9)	268,000	31%	*
25+ Years Old	17.6	(16.4, 18.9)	2,301,000	14.3	(13.2, 15.5)	1,815,000	19%	†
Less than H.S.	25.7	(21.6, 29.8)	592,000	22.4	(18.1, 26.7)	470,000	13%	ns
H.S. or GED	24.0	(21.2, 26.8)	1,001,000	17.0	(14.6, 19.4)	660,000	29%	†
Some Post H.S.	17.7	(15.3, 20.1)	692,000	16.3	(14.1, 18.5)	644,000	8%	ns
College Graduate	9.2	(8.0, 10.4)	407,000	6.8	(5.6, 7.9)	301,000	26%	†
Less than \$25,000	27.8	(24.9, 30.8)	1,150,000	19.9	(17.4, 22.4)	746,000	28%	‡
\$25,000 - 34,999	17.7	(13.9, 21.5)	221,000	17.5	(13.1, 21.9)	221,000	1%	ns
\$35,000 - 49,999	19.0	(15.4, 22.6)	310,000	15.6	(12.3, 18.8)	262,000	18%	ns
\$50,000 - 74,999	14.1	(11.2, 16.9)	248,000	11.3	(8.3, 14.3)	199,000	20%	ns
More than \$75,000	10.1	(8.4, 11.7)	391,000	9.4	(7.7, 11.1)	382,000	7%	ns
Limitation ^a	24.1	(21.3, 26.9)	800,000	19.1	(16.6, 21.6)	579,000	21%	†
No Limitation	15.7	(14.3, 17.1)	1,621,000	13.2	(11.9, 14.5)	1,496,000	16%	*
Employed/Self-Employed	16.6	(15.0, 18.2)	1,311,000	13.8	(12.3, 15.4)	1,102,000	17%	*
Unemployed	27.7	(22.5, 33.0)	403,000	24.8	(19.4, 30.1)	280,000	10%	ns
Not in Labor Force	17.8	(15.7, 20.0)	970,000	12.9	(11.2, 14.6)	680,000	28%	†
Poor Mental Health	32.6	(28.2, 36.9)	525,000	27.2	(22.8, 31.7)	443,000	17%	ns
Good Mental Health	16.1	(14.8, 17.5)	2,068,000	12.5	(11.4, 13.7)	1,563,000	22%	‡
Have Health Care Coverage	16.8	(15.5, 18.0)	2,114,000	13.4	(12.3, 14.6)	1,705,000	20%	‡
Do Not Have Health Care Coverage	26.5	(22.2, 30.8)	577,000	21.0	(16.7, 25.4)	362,000	21%	ns

^a Limitation status is defined as all respondents who report activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems OR have health problems that require the use of special equipment. This indicator was previously referred to as disability status.

* p value < .05

† p value < .01

‡ p value < .001

ns= not significant

References

1. Estimates were extrapolated using the results published in Mokdad, AH, Marks, JS, Stroup, DF, Gerberding, JL (2004). Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000, *JAMA*, 291(10): 1238-1245. Doi:10.1001/jama.291.10.1238. and NYS 2012 Vital Statistics data
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs — 2014. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). The health consequences of smoking – 50 years of progress: A report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. Printed with corrections, January 2014.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Nationwide- 2014 Tobacco Use. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

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