Menthol cigarettes are a public health problem
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Key points

• Tobacco use remains a **major** public health problem in the U.S. and globally.

• Menthol cigarettes are **slowing progress** in tobacco control.

• There is a **strong evidence** base to support legal and policy efforts to restrict or ban sales and marketing of menthol cigarettes.
Tobacco use remains a major public health problem in the U.S. and globally.
Prevalence of current smoking among adults in the US, 1965-2015

Current smoking prevalence among all U.S. Adults, 2015: 15.1%
Prevalence of past 30-day smoking among 12\textsuperscript{th} graders in the US, 1975-2015

Current smoking prevalence among all U.S. 12\textsuperscript{th} Graders, 2015: 11.4%
Cigarette smoking is still a major problem

The burden of death and disease from tobacco use in the United States is overwhelmingly caused by cigarettes and other combusted tobacco products.

- Smoking accounts for 480,000 deaths annually in the U.S.
  - ~1,300 smoking-related deaths per day
- 5.6 million of today’s youth expected to die prematurely from smoking
Cigarette smoking is still a major problem

Cigarettes have become more lethal over time.

- More death and disease, despite lower per capita consumption and lower smoking prevalence.
Menthol cigarettes are slowing progress in tobacco control
Central questions re: menthol

What is the association between menthol cigarette use and youth initiation?

What is the association between menthol cigarette use and adult cessation?

What is the *likelihood* that prohibiting menthol would reduce the number of smokers and thereby provide benefit to our nation’s public health?
What are menthol cigarettes?

- Nearly all cigarettes contain menthol as a flavoring additive.
- Focus is on products that are marketed as “menthol” cigarettes.
  - Menthol as a characterizing flavor.

Why menthol cigarettes?

Anesthetic and cooling properties
  • Mask harshness of smoke
  • Reduce irritation from nicotine

Makes products more palatable

Allows users to inhale more deeply or greater amounts of smoke

**May make cigarettes more addictive**
Why menthol cigarettes?
Why menthol cigarettes?

1. “Adding menthol to cigarettes appears to sweeten the poison”

2. Targeted marketing to young adults and African Americans

Facilitate youth smoking initiation
Reduce adult smoking cessation
Menthol cigarettes and initiation

1. Youth and young adult smokers are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than older adult smokers.

2. Youth and young adult menthol cigarette use has remained constant or increased over time, compared to declines in non-menthol cigarette use.

3. Youth and young adults who smoke menthol cigarettes are more likely to escalate their smoking behavior over time.
Adjusted prevalence of use of menthol cigarettes among past 30-day smokers – United States, 2008-2010

Menthol cigarette use is high in Black smokers across all ages.

Non-menthol cigarette use declined in all age groups from 2004-2010.

Menthol cigarette use remained constant in adolescents and adults ages 26+ from 2004-2010.

Menthol cigarette use increased in young adults ages 18-25 during this time.
Cigarette consumption in the U.S.

Prevalence of past 30-day smoking among 12th graders in the US, 2005-2015

Prevalence of menthol cigarette use has NOT decreased in youth smokers

Top five cigarette brands in young adults (2011-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marlboro</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camel</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Also, brands most popular in 1992 among adolescent smokers, in same order as Cummings et al, 1997

Secondary analyses of the American Legacy Longitudinal Tobacco Use Reduction Study (ALLTURS), a longitudinal school-based survey of 47,237 middle school and high school students conducted in three waves from 2000 to 2003.

Exposure: Initiation with menthol cigarettes

Outcomes:

1. Progression

Initiating smoking with menthol cigarettes was associated with:

- 80% increased odds of escalating to established smoking
- Higher levels of nicotine dependence
Menthol cigarettes and smoking escalation in young adults: Delnevo (2015)

2011 National Young Adult Health Survey (NYAHS), the first national cell-phone survey of young adults. N = 909 young adults aged 18-34 who indicated that they had smoked 100 cigarettes in their lifetime at the time of the survey. Questions included current smoking, smoking status 12 months prior, menthol use and OTP

Exposure: Current menthol cigarette use

Outcomes:

Menthol cigarette use nearly doubled the odds of increased smoking behavior in a national sample of young adults.

Menthol cigarettes and cessation

Menthol smokers have lower quit rates than non-menthol smokers, particularly African Americans.
Menthol and cessation

Menthol smokers are more likely to make quit attempts, but less likely to quit successfully.

Quit success in the past 5 years was further eroded among menthol-smoking Blacks and young adults.

Effect of menthol cigarettes on smoking cessation

- Adult menthol smokers were:
  - Less likely to quit successfully (short-term or long-term)
  - This was more pronounced among Black and Puerto Rican smokers
# Menthol cigarettes and population health

Table 1. Smoking-attributable deaths and deaths averted if menthol is banned under three scenarios (10%, 20% and 30% change in initiation and cessation), projected from 2010-2050: Total population and African American population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2050</th>
<th>TOTAL SADs</th>
<th>TOTAL DEATHS AVERTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>386,732</td>
<td>410,900</td>
<td>399,028</td>
<td>342,472</td>
<td>272,424</td>
<td>1,811,465</td>
<td>323,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% change</td>
<td>386,732</td>
<td>406,046</td>
<td>388,347</td>
<td>331,117</td>
<td>262,574</td>
<td>1,488,358</td>
<td>323,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% change</td>
<td>386,732</td>
<td>402,568</td>
<td>382,621</td>
<td>326,799</td>
<td>259,002</td>
<td>1,333,311</td>
<td>478,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% change</td>
<td>386,732</td>
<td>399,091</td>
<td>376,893</td>
<td>322,478</td>
<td>255,424</td>
<td>1,178,214</td>
<td>633,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African Americans</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>53,836</td>
<td>57,056</td>
<td>53,382</td>
<td>45,022</td>
<td>37,475</td>
<td>246,771</td>
<td>91,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% change</td>
<td>53,836</td>
<td>55,234</td>
<td>50,086</td>
<td>42,175</td>
<td>35,320</td>
<td>155,027</td>
<td>164,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% change</td>
<td>53,836</td>
<td>53,706</td>
<td>47,562</td>
<td>40,044</td>
<td>33,340</td>
<td>82,306</td>
<td>237,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% change</td>
<td>53,836</td>
<td>52,177</td>
<td>45,036</td>
<td>37,908</td>
<td>31,347</td>
<td>9,454</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a strong evidence base to support legal and policy efforts to restrict or ban sales and marketing of menthol cigarettes.
Scientific reviews support action on menthol in cigarettes

• TPSAC Report on menthol (March 2011)
• FDA Preliminary Scientific Evaluation (August 2011)
• FDA Reference Addendum (July 2013)
• Truth Initiative reviews (2010, 2013)

“Removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health in the United States.”

- TPSAC Report, 2011
The evidence is sufficient to conclude that there is a higher proportion of menthol cigarette use among younger smokers compared to older smokers (except in African Americans among whom high rates were observed in both adolescents and adults).

Within the population of youth, the evidence is sufficient to conclude that the rate of menthol cigarette use is highest among the youngest users and then decreases with age.

Although cigarette smoking is becoming less prevalent, the evidence is sufficient to conclude that menthol cigarette smoking is declining at slower rate than is non-menthol cigarette smoking.

The evidence shows, based on concordant findings of the studies of internal tobacco industry documents, that tobacco companies were aware of the appeal of menthol cigarettes to younger, novice smokers because these cigarettes are easier to smoke.

TPSAC conclusions re: cessation

There is sufficient evidence based on national surveys to show that the non–white smokers, particularly African American, of menthol cigarettes compared to non–menthol cigarettes experience more difficulty with cessation.

No studies on cessation have been conducted with adolescent smokers.

Menthol cigarettes are marketed (see Chapter 5) toward African Americans and the young. Both groups are at high risk for poor cessation outcomes.

Public opinion on a menthol ban

20% of Americans support a menthol ban

52% of Americans lack an opinion (“swing votes”)

28% of Americans oppose a menthol ban

- Support for a menthol ban is highest among racial/ethnic minorities and those with less than a high school diploma
- Nearly 40% of adult menthol smokers say they would quit if menthol cigarettes were no longer available
  - 66% of young adult menthol smokers

Chicago’s ban on flavored tobacco sales

• Implemented July 2014
• Ban on sales of flavored tobacco products (including menthol cigarettes) within 500 feet of schools
Why action on menthol now?

1. If trends continue, menthol cigarette prevalence will increase despite dramatic decreases in smoking prevalence.
   • Could facilitate a greater number of youths initiating smoking, reduce the number of smokers able to quit

2. Changes in the marketplace will add to growing menthol problem
   • Aggressive distribution and marketing of menthol by Reynolds American, Philip Morris
Cigarette consumption in the U.S.

Menthol gaining market share

Why action on menthol now?

Reynolds American Sales Surge on Lorillard Acquisition

Company says addition of Newport brand has driven gains in market share

Reynolds continues to ride sharp uptick in Newport sales

Reynolds American Inc. on Tuesday reported a 42% increase in first-quarter sales, driven by last year's $25 billion acquisition of Lorillard Inc. and its Newport cigarette brand.

By Richard Craver

Reynolds American Inc. continued to outperform its chief rivals since its acquisition of top-selling menthol brand Newport, according to Nielsen data as of March 26.

Bonnie Herzog, an analyst with Wells Fargo Securities, said Wednesday that Reynolds overall had a 3.7 percent increase in traditional cigarette sales, as compared with 1.7 percent for the industry.
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2. **Changes in the marketplace will add to growing menthol problem**
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3. **There is urgency to protect the health of youth and young adults.**
   - Precedent set by local policies
   - Strong science base
Why the AGs?

Strong leadership in tobacco
- Extension of the MSA to protect youth from the harms of smoking

Focus on consumer protection
- Predatory marketing

State level efforts push federal action
Cigarette smoking is still a major problem

The burden of death and disease from tobacco use in the United States is overwhelmingly caused by cigarettes and other combusted tobacco products.

- Smoking accounts for 480,000 deaths annually in the U.S.
- 5.6 million of today’s youth expected to die prematurely from smoking

Cigarettes have become more lethal over time.

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Menthol cigarettes threaten our progress in reducing the death and disease from smoking.
thank you

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