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UVM Tobacco Use and Attitudes After Implementation of a Tobacco-Free Policy

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UVM Tobacco Use and Attitudes After Implementation of a Tobacco-Free Policy



Cahill C, Carson E, Day E, Rafferty M, Reddy S, Sassi A, Schmidt E, Delaney T, Wilcke B, Carney JK
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INTRODUCTION

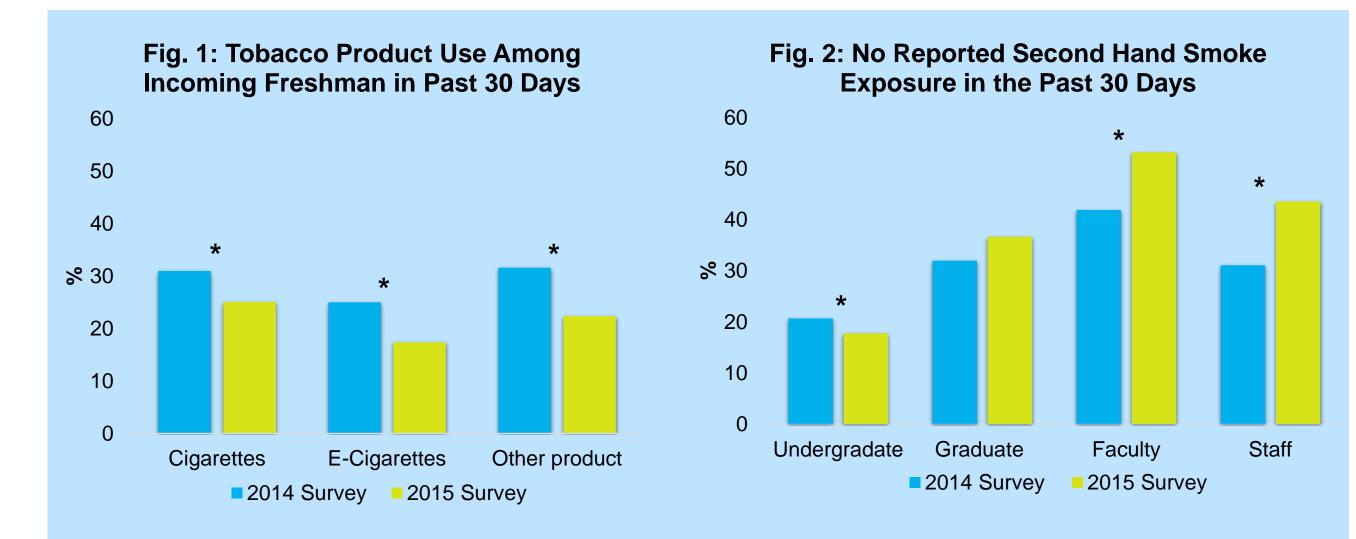
Widespread public health initiatives have led to falling smoking rates.¹ Currently, 1,620 U.S. colleges have adopted smoke-free policies.² In August 2015, the University of Vermont (UVM) adopted a tobacco-free policy that bans all forms of tobacco use on university property. The purpose of this study was to compare tobacco use and attitudes before and after policy implementation.

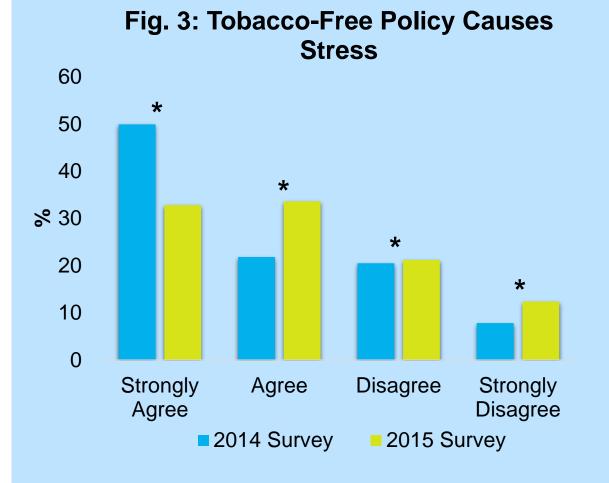
METHODS

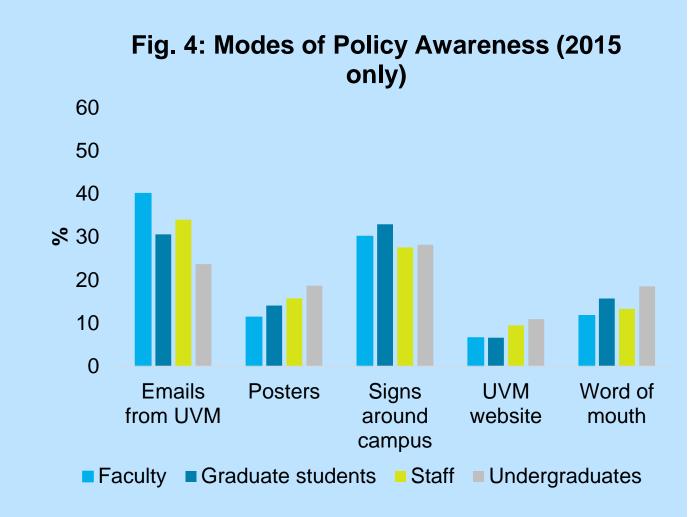
- An electronic survey was administered to 19,605 UVM students, faculty, and staff, using validated questions about tobacco use and attitudes.
- Data were analyzed using three smoking status variables determined by CDC definitions: current smokers, former smokers, and never smokers.
- Survey responses were analyzed for smoking status, tobacco use, smoking cessation attempts, awareness of campus quitting resources, exposure to secondhand smoke on campus, and attitudes about the tobacco-free policy.
- Results were compared to analogous findings from a 2014 pre-policy survey.
- X^2 tests were conducted with $\alpha < 0.05$.

DEMOGRAPHICS

DEMOGRAPHICS									
Affiliation to UVM	2014 Survey, N (%)	2015 Survey, N (%)							
Undergraduate	1565 (50.6)	1775 (50.1)							
2015	338 (21.8)	0 (0.0)							
2016	365 (23.6)	364 (20.9)							
2017	404 (26.1)	384 (22.0)							
2018	440 (28.4)	485 (27.8)							
2019	0 (0.0)	510 (29.2)							
Graduate	373 (12.1)	774 (11.7)							
Faculty	365 (11.8)	790 (11.9)							
Staff	788 (25.5)	1729 (26.1)							
Total	3091	3542							







Cigarette, E-cigarette, and Other Tobacco Use by UVM Affiliate Groups

	Year	Cigarettes	% Change	P Value	E-Cigarettes	% Change	P Value	Other tobacco	% Change	P Value
Undergraduate	2014	34.6	-6.6	<0.0001	15.7	-2.0	0.9790	26.6	-6.0	<0.0001
	2015	28.0			13.7			20.8		
Graduate	2014	9.3	0.6	0.8026	1.9	-0.4	0.6818	6.7	-0.5	0.7949
	2015	10.5			1.5			6.2		
Faculty	2014	3.0	0.8	0.5619	1.4	0.0	0.9601	4.4	-2.3	0.0703
	2015	3.8			1.4			2.1		
Staff	2014	10.0	-0.5	0.6892	1.6	0.4	0.5687	5.3	-0.3	0.7566
	2015	9.5			2.0			5.0		

* p<0.05

RESULTS

- Response rates were 17.3% in 2014 and 18.3% in 2015.
- 97.0% of 2015 respondents were aware of the new policy.
- Respondents in 2015 were 12.4% less likely to "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that the policy reduces litter on campus.

SOME COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

• "[T]his is my strongest effort yet [at quitting smoking] but it's not always easy to stay away. I think the difference this time is that none of my coworkers or other people around campus are smoking . . . [E]ngineering a healthier environment has helped me quit when I'd failed so many times before."



- "I've been walking through clouds of second-hand smoke for years. Not having that cloud hang over the door now is amazing."
- "The lack of ash trays increases litter from cigarette butts."

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- There was a significant decrease in reported secondhand smoke exposure among faculty and staff following policy implementation.
- Policy implementation was associated with a statistically significant reduction in tobacco use among undergraduates.
- Survey should be repeated to assess long-term policy impact.

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