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Changes in Cigarette Smoking and Current Smoking Practices Among Adults: United States, 1978¹

Since the 1950's, the prevalence of cigarette smoking among adult males in the U.S. noninstitutionalized population has steadily declined. In contrast, the proportion of female smokers rose from the mid-fifties to the mid-sixties and since then, the rates have only dropped slightly. Furthermore, the smoking rates for men and women are more similar now than in earlier years. The average number of cigarettes consumed daily per smoker has nevertheless increased. Over one-half of the persons who currently smoke cigarettes have made at least one serious attempt to stop. One in 5 smokers who tried to quit smoking in the past year were successful. Over one-fourth of cigarette smokers now use lower tar cigarettes.

Beginning in 1965, the National Center for Health Statistics has periodically included cigarette smoking questions in its household Health Interview Survey (HIS) conducted among the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population. The items selected for inclusion have identified the smoking status of the adult population and in some years have also elicited information on their smoking practices and attempts to quit smoking.

This report presents the latest available data on smoking for the 6-month period July 17, 1978, through January 14, 1979. These data were obtained in response to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office on Smoking and Health's request for current prevalence estimates on cigarette smokers. (Provisional smoking estimates based on 9 weeks of

these data appear in *Smoking and Health*, a report of the Surgeon General released earlier this year.) The 1978 HIS questionnaire contained items to identify current and former smokers. It included questions on approximate numbers of cigarettes presently smoked, numbers smoked during the period of heaviest consumption, and quitting attempts. Information needed to identify tar and nicotine levels of cigarettes most frequently smoked was also elicited.

Data presented in this report were obtained from self-respondents. The sample consisted of a one-third subsample of the usual HIS sample of persons 17 years of age and over and included approximately 12,000 persons. Tables 1-5 include data on both regular and occasional smokers; tables 6-11 include data on regular smokers only since these data were not obtained from persons classified as occasional smokers.

The 1978 smoking questions will remain on the HIS questionnaire throughout 1979. This data-collection period is somewhat longer than usual. It will (1) expand the smoking data base, enabling a more detailed breakdown of the estimates into smaller population subgroups, and (2) enable the observation of changes in smoking habits over time, particularly before and after the release of the Surgeon General's report *Smoking and Health* in January 1979.

In this report, summary statistics on smoking status and behavior are shown by sex, certain ages, and for white and black persons.² However, these estimates are preliminary since a

¹This report was prepared by Abigail Jean Moss, Division of Health Interview Statistics.

²Statistics are available for additional age groups, family income, and education of the individual. They will be provided upon request by the Division of Health Interview Statistics.

Table 1. Percent of persons 17 years and over, by cigarette smoking status, sex, and age: United States, 1970, 1974, and 1978
 [Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Sex and age	Present smoker			Never smoked			Former smoker		
	1978	1974	1970	1978	1974	1970	1978	1974	1970
Percent ¹									
Both sexes									
All ages 17 years and over.....	33.7	36.8	36.9	45.6	44.1	45.1	20.3	19.2	18.0
17-24 years.....	32.6	36.2	35.4	58.7	54.6	56.3	8.4	9.2	8.3
25-44 years.....	39.0	44.5	44.6	41.0	37.1	36.6	19.5	18.4	18.8
45-64 years.....	36.5	37.7	38.6	36.9	37.5	39.7	26.0	24.8	21.7
65 years and over.....	16.5	17.3	16.1	55.4	59.4	62.6	28.0	23.3	21.3
Male									
All ages 17 years and over.....	37.4	42.7	43.5	34.7	30.1	30.9	27.4	27.2	25.6
17-24 years.....	33.9	40.3	41.2	56.4	48.5	49.3	9.2	11.2	9.5
25-44 years.....	42.3	50.7	50.9	33.1	26.0	25.8	24.1	23.3	23.3
45-64 years.....	39.9	42.6	44.8	22.6	21.0	23.1	36.9	36.3	32.2
65 years and over.....	22.9	24.8	23.1	30.3	33.6	37.3	46.4	41.6	39.6
Female									
All ages 17 years and over.....	30.4	31.9	31.1	55.3	55.7	57.5	13.9	12.5	11.4
17-24 years.....	31.4	32.6	30.5	60.8	60.0	62.3	7.5	7.5	7.7
25-44 years.....	35.9	39.2	38.8	48.5	46.6	46.6	15.2	14.2	14.8
45-64 years.....	33.4	33.4	33.0	49.7	51.6	54.8	16.2	14.9	12.2
65 years and over.....	11.9	12.0	11.0	72.9	77.4	81.4	15.2	10.6	7.6

¹ Excludes persons with unknown smoking status.

more complete edit of the data, planned for later this year, may produce slight variations between these figures and final results. A more detailed report in Series 10 of *Vital and Health Statistics*, scheduled for release next year, will include the combined cigarette smoking results from the 1978 and 1979 surveys.

Data from this latest survey show that about 1 out of 3 adults (33.7 percent) in the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population are cigarette smokers—down slightly from 36.8 percent in 1974 and 36.9 percent in 1970 (tables 1-3). This latest estimate represents the lowest proportion of cigarette smokers, as a group, since the 1950's. The 1974 and 1978 results were obtained from self-respondents while in 1970 proxy respondents were also used. The recent decline in cigarette smokers has occurred primarily among males (from 43.5 percent in 1970 to 37.4 percent in 1978). In contrast, the proportion of female smokers 17 years of age and

over has remained about the same (31.1 percent in 1970 and 30.4 percent in 1978).

A person is classified as a present cigarette smoker if he reports that he has smoked at least 100 cigarettes (five packs) during his entire life and that he is presently smoking. Present cigarette smokers are further classified as regular smokers and occasional smokers. A present occasional smoker smokes cigarettes now but volunteers that he has never smoked regularly when asked: "About how old were you when you first started smoking cigarettes fairly regularly?" Present regular smokers are all other present smokers. A similar dichotomy is used to classify former cigarette smokers.

The differences which have occurred in the cigarette smoking habits of men and women from 1970 to 1978 are also apparent in estimates of persons who have never smoked. While the proportion of adult males who have never smoked is increasing—30.9 percent in

Table 2. Number of persons 17 years and over, by cigarette smoking status, race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Total population	All smokers ¹	Present smoker		Former smoker		Never smoked	All occasional smokers
			Regular and occasional smoker	Regular smoker only	Regular and occasional smoker	Regular smoker only		
Number in thousands								
<u>All races</u> ²								
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	155,452	84,524	52,348	51,685	31,547	29,237	70,854	3,165
17-24 years.....	31,817	13,139	10,386	10,224	2,658	2,372	18,664	488
25-44 years.....	57,251	33,772	22,337	21,992	11,165	10,306	23,479	1,282
45-64 years.....	43,463	27,391	15,854	15,723	11,301	10,520	16,025	985
65 years and over.....	22,921	10,222	3,772	3,746	6,423	6,039	12,687	410
Male 17 years and over.....	73,381	47,884	27,408	27,151	20,102	18,730	25,471	1,710
17-24 years.....	15,492	6,741	5,258	5,176	1,427	1,233	8,737	290
25-44 years.....	27,828	18,621	11,763	11,615	6,697	6,157	9,207	729
45-64 years.....	20,616	15,952	8,225	8,199	7,597	7,205	4,665	444
65 years and over.....	9,445	6,570	2,161	2,161	4,381	4,134	2,863	247
Female 17 years and over.....	82,070	36,641	24,940	24,535	11,445	10,507	45,383	1,455
17-24 years.....	16,325	6,399	5,127	5,048	1,232	1,139	9,927	198
25-44 years.....	29,423	15,150	10,573	10,377	4,468	4,148	14,273	553
45-64 years.....	22,846	11,440	7,629	7,524	3,704	3,315	11,360	541
65 years and over.....	13,475	3,652	1,610	1,585	2,042	1,905	9,823	163
<u>White</u>								
17 years and over.....	136,607	75,323	45,761	45,200	28,982	26,849	61,225	2,872
17-24 years.....	27,168	11,381	8,945	8,810	2,340	2,081	15,787	435
25-44 years.....	49,726	29,655	19,153	18,861	10,243	9,487	20,071	1,126
45-64 years.....	38,985	24,874	14,224	14,115	10,451	9,695	14,065	925
65 years and over.....	20,728	9,413	3,439	3,414	5,947	5,587	11,302	386
Male.....	64,936	42,655	23,815	23,613	18,492	17,227	22,269	1,535
Female.....	71,671	32,668	21,946	21,587	10,489	9,623	38,956	1,337
<u>Black</u>								
17 years and over.....	14,572	7,231	5,278	5,189	1,904	1,762	7,341	243
17-24 years.....	3,587	1,306	1,068	1,054	239	212	2,281	*41
25-44 years.....	5,540	3,165	2,520	2,468	634	555	2,375	130
45-64 years.....	3,633	2,142	1,394	1,371	710	697	1,491	*48
65 years and over.....	1,812	618	296	296	322	298	1,195	*24
Male.....	6,256	3,918	2,730	2,675	1,162	1,069	2,338	161
Female.....	8,316	3,313	2,548	2,515	742	693	5,003	*82

¹Includes smokers with unknown present smoking status.

²Includes all other races, which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 3. Percent distribution of persons 17 years and over by cigarette smoking status, according to race, sex, and age:
United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Total population ¹	All smokers ²	Present smoker		Former smoker		Never smoked	All occasional smokers
			Regular and occasional smoker	Regular smoker only	Regular and occasional smoker	Regular smoker only		
<u>All races²</u>	Percent distribution							
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	100.0	54.4	33.7	33.2	20.3	18.8	45.6	2.0
17-24 years.....	100.0	41.3	32.6	32.1	8.4	7.5	58.7	1.5
25-44 years.....	100.0	59.0	39.0	38.4	19.5	18.0	41.0	2.2
45-64 years.....	100.0	63.0	36.5	36.2	26.0	24.2	36.9	2.3
65 years and over.....	100.0	44.6	16.5	16.3	28.0	26.3	55.4	1.8
Male 17 years and over.....	100.0	65.3	37.4	37.0	27.4	25.5	34.7	2.3
17-24 years.....	100.0	43.5	33.9	33.4	9.2	8.0	56.4	1.9
25-44 years.....	100.0	66.9	42.3	41.7	24.1	22.1	33.1	2.6
45-64 years.....	100.0	77.4	39.9	39.8	36.9	34.9	22.6	2.2
65 years and over.....	100.0	69.6	22.9	22.9	46.4	43.8	30.3	2.6
Female 17 years and over.....	100.0	44.6	30.4	29.9	13.9	12.8	55.3	1.8
17-24 years.....	100.0	39.2	31.4	30.9	7.5	7.0	60.8	1.2
25-44 years.....	100.0	51.5	35.9	35.3	15.2	14.1	48.5	1.9
45-64 years.....	100.0	50.1	33.4	32.9	16.2	14.5	49.7	2.4
65 years and over.....	100.0	27.1	11.9	11.8	15.2	14.1	72.9	1.2
<u>White</u>								
17 years and over.....	100.0	55.1	33.5	33.1	21.2	19.7	44.8	2.1
17-24 years.....	100.0	41.9	32.9	32.4	8.6	7.7	58.1	1.6
25-44 years.....	100.0	59.6	38.5	37.9	20.6	19.1	40.4	2.3
45-64 years.....	100.0	63.8	36.5	36.2	26.8	24.9	36.1	2.4
65 years and over.....	100.0	45.4	16.6	16.5	28.7	27.0	54.5	1.9
Male.....	100.0	65.7	36.7	36.4	28.5	26.5	34.3	2.4
Female.....	100.0	45.6	30.6	30.1	14.6	13.4	54.4	1.9
<u>Black</u>								
17 years and over.....	100.0	49.6	36.2	35.6	13.1	12.1	50.4	1.7
17-24 years.....	100.0	36.4	29.8	29.4	6.7	5.9	63.6	*1.1
24-44 years.....	100.0	57.1	45.5	44.5	11.4	10.0	42.9	2.3
45-64 years.....	100.0	59.0	38.4	37.7	19.5	19.2	41.0	*1.3
65 years and over.....	100.0	34.1	16.3	16.3	17.8	16.4	65.9	*1.3
Male.....	100.0	62.6	43.6	42.8	18.6	17.1	37.4	2.6
Female.....	100.0	39.8	30.6	30.2	8.9	8.3	60.2	*1.0

¹Excludes persons with unknown smoking status.

²Includes smokers with unknown present smoking status.

³Includes all other races, which are not shown separately.

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1970 and 34.7 percent in 1978—the proportion of females has remained about the same (57.5 and 55.3 percent, respectively).

Although estimates of male present smokers and smokers 25-44 years of age are declining, the average number of cigarettes consumed daily per smoker is increasing. In 1970, 23.3 percent of all adult cigarette smokers smoked 25 cigarettes or more a day, while in 1978, 27.9 percent of all smokers reported smoking at this level (tables 4 and 5). In addition greater proportions of adults smoked less than 15 cigarettes per day in 1970 than in 1978 (32.9 compared with 29.4 percent). This trend is found among both men and women and in all age groups. These findings probably reflect several phenomena; among them are changes in the cigarette product itself, increased smoking by some smokers who have switched to lower

tar cigarettes, and a disproportionate number of persons smoking fewer cigarettes may be quitting.

The 1978 cigarette consumption data also show that persons smoking less than 15 cigarettes daily were more often female, black, and either under 25 years of age or 65 years and over. In contrast, persons smoking 25 cigarettes or more a day were predominantly 25-64 years of age, male, and white.

The Health Interview Survey data from 1978 further show that the majority of people who now smoke cigarettes have made at least one serious attempt to quit during their smoking years. About 60 percent of the over 50 million current adult cigarette smokers have tried to stop smoking at some time, of whom an estimated 13½ million have made an attempt during the past year (table 6). These data were

Table 4. Percent of present smokers 17 years and over by amount smoked daily, sex, and age: United States, 1970, 1974, and 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Sex and age	Amount smoked daily					
	Less than 15 cigarettes			25 cigarettes or more		
	1978	1974	1970	1978	1974	1970
Both sexes						
Percent of present smokers ¹						
All ages 17 years and over.....	29.4	32.2	32.9	27.9	24.9	23.3
17-24 years.....	37.8	43.6	43.4	17.3	14.3	13.9
25-44 years.....	26.9	28.1	28.3	30.7	29.2	26.7
45-64 years.....	25.3	27.8	30.8	32.6	27.3	25.7
65 years and over.....	38.7	44.0	45.5	19.6	17.7	14.7
Male						
All ages 17 years and over.....	23.4	26.3	27.8	34.1	30.6	27.7
17-24 years.....	33.1	39.1	39.7	18.9	15.4	15.6
25-44 years.....	20.3	22.1	22.8	37.3	35.2	30.8
45-64 years.....	18.5	20.8	24.5	42.4	36.9	32.4
65 years and over.....	36.0	39.3	44.5	22.3	18.8	16.8
Female						
All ages 17 years and over.....	36.0	38.7	39.1	21.0	18.5	18.0
17-24 years.....	42.6	48.5	47.7	15.6	13.0	11.8
25-44 years.....	34.2	34.7	34.8	23.6	22.5	21.7
45-64 years.....	32.8	35.3	38.4	22.2	16.9	17.7
65 years and over.....	42.3	50.7	47.2	15.9	16.2	11.4

¹Excludes present smokers with unknown amounts smoked.

Table 5. Number of present smokers 17 years and over and percent distribution by number of cigarettes smoked daily, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Number of present smokers in thousands	Number of cigarettes smoked daily				
		Total ¹	Less than 15	15-24	25-34	35 or more
<u>All races</u> ²						
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	52,348	100.0	29.4	42.7	13.0	14.9
17-24 years.....	10,386	100.0	37.8	44.9	10.9	6.4
25-44 years.....	22,337	100.0	26.9	42.3	14.7	16.0
45-64 years.....	15,854	100.0	25.3	42.0	12.3	20.3
65 years and over.....	3,772	100.0	38.7	41.8	11.3	8.3
Male 17 years and over.....	27,408	100.0	23.4	42.5	15.4	18.7
17-24 years.....	5,258	100.0	33.1	48.0	12.3	6.6
25-44 years.....	11,763	100.0	20.3	42.4	16.8	20.5
45-64 years.....	8,225	100.0	18.5	39.2	15.5	26.9
65 years and over.....	2,161	100.0	36.0	41.7	14.3	8.0
Female 17 years and over.....	24,940	100.0	36.0	43.0	10.4	10.6
17-24 years.....	5,127	100.0	42.6	41.8	9.5	6.1
25-44 years.....	10,573	100.0	34.2	42.2	12.4	11.7
45-64 years.....	7,629	100.0	32.8	45.1	8.9	13.5
65 years and over.....	1,610	100.0	42.3	41.8	*7.1	8.8
<u>White</u>						
17 years and over.....	45,761	100.0	25.6	44.1	14.1	16.2
17-24 years.....	8,945	100.0	33.7	47.3	11.8	7.2
25-44 years.....	19,153	100.0	22.3	44.0	16.3	17.5
45-64 years.....	14,224	100.0	21.9	42.6	13.4	22.1
65 years and over.....	3,439	100.0	37.7	42.6	11.4	8.3
Male.....	23,815	100.0	19.5	43.5	16.5	20.4
Female.....	21,946	100.0	32.1	44.7	11.5	11.7
<u>Black</u>						
17 years and over.....	5,278	100.0	57.9	32.9	3.9	5.3
17-24 years.....	1,068	100.0	68.1	28.0	*4.0	*.1
25-44 years.....	2,520	100.0	56.0	32.7	*3.6	7.7
45-64 years.....	1,394	100.0	56.0	36.9	*3.0	*4.1
65 years and over.....	296	100.0	45.6	*33.4	*10.5	*10.5
Male.....	2,730	100.0	51.4	35.1	5.8	7.6
Female.....	2,548	100.0	64.7	30.6	*1.9	*2.8

¹Excludes present smokers with unknown amounts smoked.²Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE:When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 6. Number of present regular smokers 17 years and over and percent distribution by never attempting and ever attempting to quit smoking and attempts to quit in past year, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, age, and sex	Number of present regular smokers in thousands	All present regular smokers ¹	Never attempted to quit smoking	Ever attempted to quit smoking			
				Total ²	Attempts in past year		
					None	1	2 or more
<u>All races³</u>			Percent distribution				
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	51,685	100.0	40.7	59.3	32.7	17.8	8.4
17-24 years.....	10,224	100.0	46.0	54.0	17.3	26.2	10.5
25-44 years.....	21,992	100.0	38.7	61.3	35.7	18.1	7.3
45-64 years.....	15,723	100.0	39.7	60.3	38.6	13.3	7.8
65 years and over.....	3,746	100.0	42.4	57.6	31.9	12.4	11.9
Male 17 years and over.....	27,151	100.0	39.9	60.1	35.5	16.7	7.7
17-24 years.....	5,176	100.0	45.7	54.3	17.7	25.4	11.3
25-44 years.....	11,615	100.0	38.7	61.4	37.6	16.6	7.0
45-64 years.....	8,199	100.0	38.2	61.8	43.3	12.0	6.0
65 years and over.....	2,161	100.0	38.7	61.4	37.3	14.0	8.9
Female 17 years and over.....	24,535	100.0	41.6	58.4	29.5	19.1	9.2
17-24 years.....	5,048	100.0	46.3	53.7	16.9	27.1	9.7
25-44 years.....	10,377	100.0	38.7	61.3	33.5	19.8	7.6
45-64 years.....	7,524	100.0	41.3	58.7	33.6	14.6	9.7
65 years and over.....	1,585	100.0	47.6	52.4	24.7	10.3	15.8
<u>White</u>							
17 years and over.....	45,200	100.0	40.3	59.7	34.3	17.5	7.6
17-24 years.....	8,810	100.0	45.4	54.6	17.9	26.2	10.5
25-44 years.....	18,861	100.0	37.8	62.2	38.0	17.7	6.3
45-64 years.....	14,115	100.0	39.7	60.3	39.8	13.0	6.9
65 years and over.....	3,414	100.0	42.8	57.2	33.1	12.5	10.5
Male.....	23,613	100.0	38.8	61.2	37.3	16.6	7.0
Female.....	21,587	100.0	41.8	58.2	30.9	18.5	8.3
<u>Black</u>							
17 years and over.....	5,189	100.0	42.8	57.2	20.1	22.3	14.3
17-24 years.....	1,054	100.0	48.4	51.6	*11.6	30.9	*9.1
25-44 years.....	2,468	100.0	43.3	56.7	19.5	23.0	13.8
45-64 years.....	1,371	100.0	38.5	61.5	28.0	17.8	15.8
65 years and over.....	296	100.0	*39.5	60.5	*18.6	*8.4	*29.4
Male.....	2,675	100.0	46.4	53.6	21.5	19.5	12.1
Female.....	2,515	100.0	39.1	60.9	18.7	25.2	16.5

¹Excludes unknown if ever attempted to quit smoking.

²Includes unknown number of attempts in past year.

³Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

derived from two questions: "Have you ever made a serious attempt to stop smoking cigarettes?" and "During the past 12 months, that is since (date) a year ago, about how many times would you say you made a fairly serious attempt to stop smoking cigarettes entirely?"

About the same percent of black and white present smokers have attempted to quit at some time. However, data show a higher percent of black smokers than of white smokers with one attempt or more within the past year (36.6 and 25.1 percent, respectively). Although a slightly higher proportion of male smokers have ever attempted to quit, proportionately more women than men have made one attempt or more to quit during the year (28.3 and 24.4 percent, respectively). This sex difference is more apparent among black smokers (41.7 compared with 31.6 percent) than among white smokers (26.8 and 23.6 percent).

Young smokers—those 17-24 years of age—more frequently reported attempts to quit smoking cigarettes in the last year than smokers 25 years of age or older did (about 37 compared with about 24 percent).

Respondents who attempted to quit smoking in the past year were asked: "How long did you actually stay off cigarettes the last time?" While this question was designed to elicit a specific number of days, weeks, etc. that persons actually stopped smoking, about 11 percent of the respondents instead said that they did not stay off. Since no followup question was asked to determine specifically what was meant by this response—less than a day, less than a week, or some other interval—persons answering this way are shown in a separate category in table 7.

Almost two-thirds (60.5 percent) of the current smokers who attempted to quit in the past year stopped for 1 week or longer during their last attempt. A slightly higher percent of male than of female smokers (62.9 and 58.2 percent) were able to stay off cigarettes for 1 week or more. The reverse pattern is seen for the interval 1 month or more; 28.5 percent of male smokers and 30.5 percent of female smokers who attempted to quit stayed off cigarettes for this length of time.

Young adults had appreciably greater success (if success is measured by length of time stayed off)—almost 70 percent stayed off cigarettes for 1 week or more—than persons 45-64 years did.

For the latter group, about 50 percent stopped for 1 week or more. No appreciable differences were found in the length of time black and white smokers stayed off cigarettes.

For this survey a former smoker is defined as a person who has smoked at least 100 cigarettes during his lifetime but is not smoking now. Overall, about one-third of all adults classified as former smokers reported quitting within the past 3 years (table 8). Perhaps more meaningful statistics are derived when estimates of former smokers who quit smoking during the past 12 months are combined with present smokers.

Data in table 9 show that 30.8 percent of recent smokers—persons who smoke now or smoked sometime during the past year—made an attempt or actually quit smoking during the past year. Of those who tried to quit, 1 in 5 persons was successful. Proportionately more young smokers (41.9 percent) attempted to quit smoking than other persons did. Middle-aged smokers—45-64 years—were least likely to try to quit and were least likely to succeed of all age groups. While a slightly higher proportion of female than of male smokers attempted to quit (32.7 compared with 29.1 percent), male smokers were slightly more likely to succeed (21.5 compared with 18.8 percent). Similarly, while a higher proportion of black smokers than white smokers made an attempt to quit (39.1 and 29.9 percent), the rate of success was higher among white smokers (21.4 and 10.3 percent).

The above estimates represent a crude measure of a "quit rate," as they contain all persons who have recently stopped. Included are persons who quit only several days before the interview and may have resumed smoking. In contrast, excluded are persons who reported at the time of interview that they smoked but actually were in the process of quitting and may have subsequently been successful. The effects of these imprecise inclusions and exclusions may cancel each other out. Further analysis of these data and the results from another smoking survey now being designed should provide further insight regarding the extent of this phenomenon.

This is the first year the HIS questionnaire has contained questions to identify tar and nicotine levels of cigarettes smoked most often (tables 10 and 11).

Since much of the current interest in tar

Table 7. Number of present regular smokers 17 years and over who attempted to quit smoking and percent distribution by length of time off cigarettes, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Number of smokers who attempted to quit in thousands	Length of time off cigarettes						
		Total ¹	Did not stay off	Less than 1 week	7-13 days	2 weeks but less than 1 month	1 month but less than 3 months	3 months or more
<u>All races</u> ²		Percent distribution						
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	30,434	100.0	10.8	28.8	12.4	18.6	14.9	14.6
17-24 years.....	5,492	100.0	7.3	23.4	11.9	24.4	17.8	15.3
25-44 years.....	13,359	100.0	10.7	28.3	10.4	18.5	15.7	16.3
45-64 years.....	9,449	100.0	14.2	35.3	15.4	13.8	12.4	9.0
65 years and over.....	2,134	100.0	*12.9	30.0	16.1	*11.9	*7.2	21.7
Male 17 years and over.....	16,188	100.0	9.2	27.9	13.0	21.4	15.4	13.1
17-24 years.....	2,788	100.0	6.7	23.6	12.6	31.2	12.6	13.3
25-44 years.....	7,032	100.0	10.2	28.3	9.2	19.3	18.1	14.9
45-64 years.....	5,059	100.0	9.1	34.0	19.2	14.8	17.4	*5.6
65 years and over.....	1,310	100.0	*13.6	*25.2	*16.8	*14.5	*5.5	*24.5
Female 17 years and over.....	14,246	100.0	12.2	29.5	11.8	15.9	14.5	16.0
17-24 years.....	2,704	100.0	7.9	23.1	11.1	17.4	23.2	17.2
25-44 years.....	6,327	100.0	11.2	28.3	11.5	17.8	13.4	17.7
45-64 years.....	4,390	100.0	18.2	36.3	12.3	13.1	8.4	11.7
65 years and over.....	824	100.0	*12.1	35.7	*15.3	*9.2	*9.2	*18.4
<u>White</u>								
17 years and over.....	26,845	100.0	11.0	28.6	13.1	17.8	15.1	14.4
17-24 years.....	4,793	100.0	7.7	23.0	12.0	24.9	17.5	14.8
25-44 years.....	11,648	100.0	10.7	28.6	11.4	17.2	16.2	15.9
45-64 years.....	8,474	100.0	14.1	34.7	16.2	12.5	13.3	9.2
65 years and over.....	1,930	100.0	*15.1	29.5	17.0	*10.0	*5.0	23.6
Male.....	14,362	100.0	9.9	27.0	13.3	20.7	15.6	13.4
Female.....	12,483	100.0	12.0	30.0	13.0	14.9	14.6	15.5
<u>Black</u>								
17 years and over.....	2,935	100.0	10.7	28.4	9.3	24.3	12.9	14.3
17-24 years.....	529	100.0	*6.1	*22.7	*10.2	*26.1	*18.5	*16.3
25-44 years.....	1,384	100.0	*11.2	27.0	*7.1	*23.5	*12.8	18.3
45-64 years.....	843	100.0	*16.6	34.3	*11.9	*23.3	*5.4	*8.5
65 years and over.....	179	100.0	*..	*37.5	*11.6	*27.7	*23.2	*..
Male.....	1,403	100.0	*5.3	32.5	*12.3	27.1	*12.5	*10.5
Female.....	1,532	100.0	15.0	25.3	*7.0	22.2	13.3	17.3

¹Excludes smokers with unknown length of time off cigarettes.

²Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 8. Number of former regular smokers 17 years and over and percent distribution by length of time since smoked cigarettes, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Number of former regular smokers in thousands	Length of time since smoked cigarettes					
		Total ¹	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-7 years	8-11 years	12 years or more
<u>All races²</u>		Percent distribution					
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	29,237	100.0	11.7	20.3	18.7	18.6	30.8
17-24 years.....	2,372	100.0	38.8	43.4	15.3	*2.5	*.
25-44 years.....	10,306	100.0	15.4	25.5	22.9	20.5	15.7
45-64 years.....	10,520	100.0	6.2	15.3	17.3	21.3	39.8
65 years and over.....	6,039	100.0	4.1	10.8	15.2	16.8	53.1
Male 17 years and over.....	18,730	100.0	9.7	18.5	18.3	18.5	35.0
17-24 years.....	1,233	100.0	36.4	39.7	19.1	*4.8	*.
25-44 years.....	6,157	100.0	12.4	25.9	22.1	21.9	17.7
45-64 years.....	7,205	100.0	6.1	14.4	18.2	19.7	41.5
65 years and over.....	4,134	100.0	3.5	8.0	12.5	15.5	60.5
Female 17 years and over.....	10,507	100.0	15.3	23.4	19.3	18.6	23.3
17-24 years.....	1,139	100.0	41.4	47.5	*11.2	*.	*.
25-44 years.....	4,148	100.0	19.8	24.8	24.0	18.5	12.9
45-64 years.....	3,315	100.0	6.5	17.2	15.4	24.7	36.2
65 years and over.....	1,905	100.0	*5.5	16.7	20.9	19.5	37.4
<u>White</u>							
17 years and over.....	26,849	100.0	11.5	19.8	18.8	18.3	31.5
17-24 years.....	2,081	100.0	35.6	44.8	16.7	*2.9	*.
25-44 years.....	9,487	100.0	15.6	24.9	22.2	20.9	16.4
45-64 years.....	9,695	100.0	6.6	15.1	17.7	20.6	40.1
65 years and over.....	5,587	100.0	4.0	9.9	15.7	16.1	54.4
Male.....	17,227	100.0	9.4	18.2	18.6	17.8	36.1
Female.....	9,623	100.0	15.3	22.6	19.3	19.4	23.4
<u>Black</u>							
17 years and over.....	1,762	100.0	12.3	25.4	14.9	20.9	26.4
17-24 years.....	212	100.0	65.1	*34.4	*.	*.	*.
25-44 years.....	555	100.0	*8.7	29.6	35.4	*18.6	*7.6
45-64 years.....	697	100.0	*1.8	*18.1	*10.5	25.2	44.2
65 years and over.....	298	100.0	*4.9	*29.6	*.	*30.0	*35.4
Male.....	1,069	100.0	*9.7	21.4	*13.1	28.5	27.3
Female.....	693	100.0	*15.9	31.3	*17.5	*10.0	25.2

¹Excludes former smokers with unknown length of time since smoked cigarettes.²Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 9. Number of recent smokers (persons smoking in past year) 17 years and over and number and percent who attempted or quit smoking in past year, by present smoking status, race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	All recent smokers	Recent smokers attempting to quit or quitting in past year			Smokers attempting or quitting in past year	Smokers attempting to quit and who succeeded in past year
		Total	Present smokers who attempted to quit	Former smokers who quit		
<u>All races¹</u>	Number in thousands ²				Percent ²	
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	55,106	16,962	13,541	3,421	30.8	20.2
17-24 years.....	11,144	4,672	3,752	920	41.9	19.7
25-44 years.....	23,579	7,173	5,586	1,587	30.4	22.1
45-64 years.....	16,375	3,970	3,318	652	24.2	16.4
65 years and over.....	3,994	1,158	910	248	29.0	21.4
Male 17 years and over.....	28,968	8,442	6,625	1,817	29.1	21.5
17-24 years.....	5,625	2,349	1,900	449	41.8	19.1
25-44 years.....	12,378	3,504	2,741	763	28.3	21.8
45-64 years.....	8,639	1,916	1,476	440	22.2	23.0
65 years and over.....	2,306	640	495	145	27.8	22.7
Female 17 years and over.....	26,143	8,551	6,943	1,608	32.7	18.8
17-24 years.....	5,520	2,330	1,858	472	42.2	20.3
25-44 years.....	11,198	3,664	2,843	821	32.7	22.4
45-64 years.....	7,739	2,043	1,828	215	26.4	10.5
65 years and over.....	1,690	519	414	*105	30.7	*20.2
<u>White</u>						
17 years and over.....	48,288	14,433	11,345	3,088	29.9	21.4
17-24 years.....	9,551	3,974	3,233	741	41.6	18.6
25-44 years.....	20,341	6,007	4,527	1,480	29.5	24.6
45-64 years.....	14,755	3,449	2,809	640	23.4	18.6
65 years and over.....	3,637	1,008	785	223	27.7	22.1
Male.....	25,232	7,192	5,573	1,619	28.5	22.5
Female.....	23,059	7,257	5,785	1,472	31.5	20.3
<u>Black</u>						
17 years and over.....	5,406	2,116	1,899	217	39.1	10.3
17-24 years.....	1,192	560	422	138	47.0	24.6
25-44 years.....	2,516	956	908	*48	38.0	*5.0
45-64 years.....	1,384	474	461	*13	34.2	*2.7
65 years and over.....	311	127	*112	*15	40.8	*11.8
Male.....	2,779	949	845	*104	34.1	*11.0
Female.....	2,625	1,159	1,049	*110	44.2	*9.5

¹ Includes all other races not shown separately.

² Excludes occasional smokers.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 10. Number of present regular smokers 17 years and over and percent distribution by tar level of cigarettes smoked, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Number of present regular smokers in thousands	Tar level of cigarettes smoked					
		Total ¹	Less than 5 mg	5-9 mg	10-14 mg	15-19 mg	20 mg or more
<u>All races²</u>		Percent distribution					
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	51,685	100.0	4.2	7.5	17.1	61.4	9.8
17-24 years.....	10,224	100.0	1.3	5.9	19.4	71.8	1.6
25-44 years.....	21,992	100.0	4.1	7.6	18.1	62.6	7.5
45-64 years.....	15,723	100.0	4.9	7.8	15.2	54.7	17.3
65 years and over.....	3,746	100.0	9.6	9.5	12.6	53.2	15.1
Male 17 years and over.....	27,151	100.0	3.3	6.2	13.5	63.5	13.6
17-24 years.....	5,176	100.0	*0.8	4.9	13.4	78.5	2.4
25-44 years.....	11,615	100.0	3.4	6.9	14.9	63.6	11.1
45-64 years.....	8,199	100.0	3.1	5.8	12.2	55.9	23.0
65 years and over.....	2,161	100.0	9.0	6.8	10.6	55.0	18.7
Female 17 years and over.....	24,535	100.0	5.2	8.9	21.1	59.1	5.7
17-24 years.....	5,048	100.0	*1.9	6.9	25.4	65.0	*0.8
25-44 years.....	10,377	100.0	4.8	8.4	21.7	61.6	3.6
45-64 years.....	7,524	100.0	6.9	10.0	18.5	53.5	11.2
65 years and over.....	1,585	100.0	10.5	12.9	15.3	50.8	10.5
<u>White</u>							
17 years and over.....	45,200	100.0	4.7	8.1	18.0	59.5	9.7
17-24 years.....	8,810	100.0	1.5	6.5	20.0	70.5	*1.4
25-44 years.....	18,861	100.0	4.5	8.5	19.3	60.3	7.4
45-64 years.....	14,115	100.0	5.5	8.2	16.1	53.3	16.9
65 years and over.....	3,414	100.0	10.5	9.6	13.5	51.9	14.5
Male.....	23,613	100.0	3.7	6.6	14.4	62.2	13.0
Female.....	21,587	100.0	5.8	9.6	21.9	56.6	6.0
<u>Black</u>							
17 years and over.....	5,189	100.0	*0.5	2.8	9.6	76.8	10.3
17-24 years.....	1,054	100.0	*	*2.7	12.8	83.2	*1.4
25-44 years.....	2,468	100.0	*1.0	*1.6	10.2	79.0	8.3
45-64 years.....	1,371	100.0	*	*4.5	*7.5	69.0	19.1
65 years and over.....	296	100.0	*	*4.6	*4.2	72.2	*19.4
Male.....	2,675	100.0	*	*2.7	5.6	74.8	16.9
Female.....	2,515	100.0	*1.0	*2.8	13.7	78.8	*3.7

¹Excludes present smokers with unknown tar levels.

²Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

Table 11. Number of present regular smokers 17 years and over and percent distribution by nicotine level of cigarettes smoked, according to race, sex, and age: United States, 1978

[Data are based on household interviews of the civilian noninstitutionalized population. The source of data, sampling, and limitations and qualifications of Data are given in the technical notes]

Race, sex, and age	Number of present regular smokers in thousands	Nicotine level of cigarettes smoked					
		Total ¹	Less than 0.5 mg	0.5-0.9 mg	1.0-1.19 mg	1.2-1.39 mg	1.4 mg or more
<u>All races²</u>		Percent distribution					
Both sexes 17 years and over.....	51,685	100.0	4.3	26.7	34.6	24.0	10.3
17-24 years.....	10,224	100.0	1.3	28.5	41.0	26.0	3.1
25-44 years.....	21,992	100.0	4.3	28.2	35.1	24.5	7.9
45-64 years.....	15,723	100.0	5.1	24.5	30.0	22.9	17.5
65 years and over.....	3,746	100.0	10.0	22.8	32.1	20.4	14.7
Male 17 years and over.....	27,151	100.0	3.3	19.9	36.6	26.2	14.0
17-24 years.....	5,176	100.0	*0.8	18.3	47.1	29.7	4.1
25-44 years.....	11,615	100.0	3.6	22.1	37.5	25.6	11.3
45-64 years.....	8,199	100.0	3.1	18.3	29.3	26.0	23.2
65 years and over.....	2,161	100.0	9.0	17.4	33.7	21.9	18.0
Female 17 years and over.....	24,535	100.0	5.5	34.2	32.3	21.6	6.4
17-24 years.....	5,048	100.0	*1.9	38.9	34.8	22.3	*2.1
25-44 years.....	10,377	100.0	5.1	34.9	32.6	23.3	4.2
45-64 years.....	7,524	100.0	7.2	31.0	30.7	19.6	11.5
65 years and over.....	1,585	100.0	11.3	29.8	30.0	18.5	10.5
<u>White</u>							
17 years and over.....	45,200	100.0	4.9	28.2	35.1	21.8	10.0
17-24 years.....	8,810	100.0	1.5	29.8	44.0	22.0	2.6
25-44 years.....	18,861	100.0	4.8	30.1	35.0	22.4	7.7
45-64 years.....	14,115	100.0	5.7	25.7	30.2	21.6	16.9
65 years and over.....	3,414	100.0	10.9	23.8	32.5	18.8	14.1
Male.....	23,613	100.0	3.7	21.3	37.5	24.1	13.3
Female.....	21,587	100.0	6.1	35.7	32.5	19.3	6.4
<u>Black</u>							
17 years and over.....	5,189	100.0	*0.5	15.0	27.7	44.2	12.6
17-24 years.....	1,054	100.0	*-	16.7	18.2	59.7	*5.4
25-44 years.....	2,468	100.0	*1.0	15.7	30.2	43.4	9.7
45-64 years.....	1,371	100.0	*-	13.9	29.8	34.4	22.0
65 years and over.....	296	100.0	*-	*8.8	*31.0	*41.2	*19.4
Male.....	2,675	100.0	*-	8.9	25.8	46.7	18.7
Female.....	2,515	100.0	*1.0	21.2	29.6	41.7	6.6

¹Excludes present smokers with unknown nicotine levels.

²Includes all other races which are not shown separately.

NOTE: When a figure is shown with an asterisk, it is presented only for the purpose of combining with other cells. An estimate has a relative standard error of less than 30 percent when the aggregate is at least 125,000.

levels centers on the use of lower tar cigarettes—defined for this report as those containing less than 15 mg of tar—table 10 includes three lower tar categories. Over one-fourth of adults who currently smoke (28.8 percent) use lower tar cigarettes. A higher proportion of women (35.2

percent) than men (23 percent) smoke these cigarettes. Data also show that lower tar cigarettes are used by a higher proportion of white smokers (30.8 percent) than black smokers (12.9 percent).

SYMBOLS

Data not available-----	---
Category not applicable-----	...
Quantity zero-----	-
Quantity more than 0 but less than 0.05-----	0.0
Figure does not meet standards of reliability or precision (more than 30 percent relative standard error)-----	*

TECHNICAL NOTES

SOURCE OF DATA

The data presented in this report were obtained from household interviews in the Health Interview Survey. These interviews were conducted during the final 2 quarters of 1978 in a probability sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States. During that period there were approximately 20,000 interviewed households containing about 55,000 persons. The cigarette smoking questions were asked of each household member 17 years of age and over who was identified as a "sample person." This subsample included approximately 12,000 persons. Sample persons were required to answer the cigarette smoking questions for themselves unless some physical or mental health problem precluded their participation.

SAMPLING

The sampling pattern for sample person selection was based on the total number of related and unrelated household members. Sample persons (approximately a one-third subsample of the Health Interview Survey sample) were selected by the interviewer at the time of

Table I. Standard errors of estimates of aggregates

Size of estimate in thousands	Standard error in thousands
50	24
70	29
100	35
125	38
300	60
500	77
700	91
1,000	109
5,000	243
10,000	342
20,000	478
30,000	579
50,000	731
100,000	970

Table II. Standard errors, expressed in percentage points, of estimated percentages

Base of percentage in thousands	Estimated percentage				
	2 or 98	5 or 95	10 or 90	20 or 80	50
50	6.8	10.7	14.7	19.6	24.4
70	5.8	9.0	12.4	16.5	20.7
100	4.8	7.5	10.4	13.8	17.3
300	2.8	4.3	6.0	8.0	10.0
500	2.2	3.4	4.6	6.2	7.7
700	1.8	2.8	3.9	5.2	6.5
1,000	1.5	2.4	3.3	4.4	5.5
5,000	0.7	1.1	1.5	2.0	2.4
10,000	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.4	1.7
20,000	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.2
30,000	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.0
50,000	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8
100,000	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5

interview. To determine which household member to designate as a sample person, the interviewer referred to a preselected flashcard after listing all related and unrelated persons in the household on the questionnaire. The flashcard contained, for each household size, one person number or more that were to be identified as sample persons.

Since the estimates shown are based on a sample rather than on the entire population, they are subject to sampling error. Standard errors appropriate for estimates of the number of persons are shown in table I; standard errors appropriate for estimated percentages are shown in table II.

LIMITATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS
OF DATA

All the limitations and qualifications that apply in general to Health Interview Survey data apply to the data shown in this report. A full statement of these limitations and qualifications may be found in any report in Series 10 of *Vital and Health Statistics*.

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