

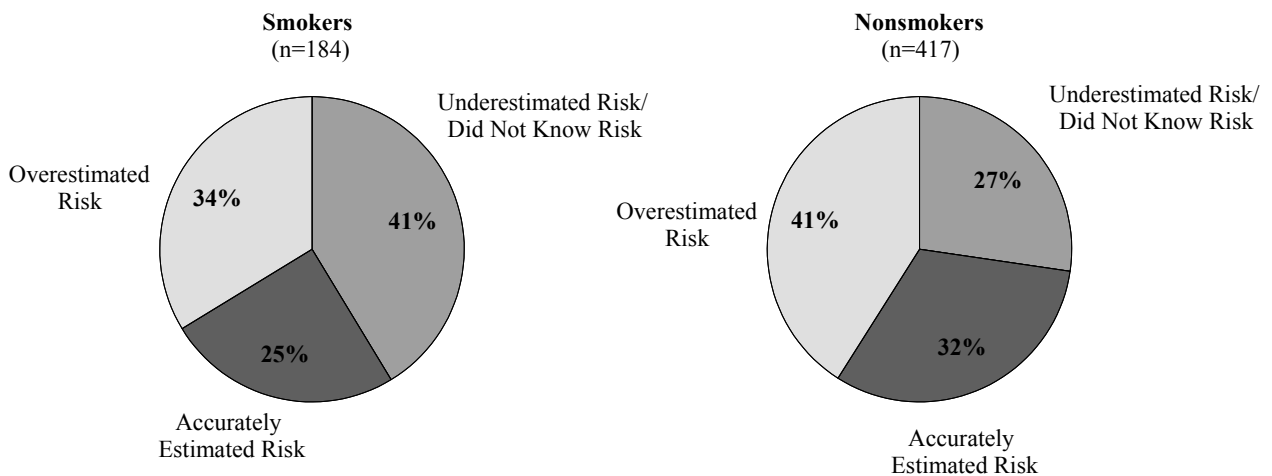
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

41% of Youths Who Smoke and 27% of Nonsmoking Youth Underestimate the Risk of Death from Smoking

Youths do not have an accurate view of the mortality risks from smoking, according to a nationally representative study of 600 youths ages 14 to 22. Only one-fourth of youths who smoked and one-third of nonsmokers accurately estimated the risk lifetime smokers have of dying from a smoking-related illness. A large proportion (41% of smokers and 27% of nonsmokers) either underestimated or did not know the risk. In addition, youths who smoked consistently underestimated their personal risk of dying from smoking. According to the authors, "These findings underscore the need to continue to educate both young and older people about the risks of smoking so that they can adequately assess the risks to themselves" (p. 21).

Percentage of Youth Smokers (Ages 14-22) and Nonsmokers Underestimating, Accurately Estimating, and Overestimating the Mortality Risk of Lifetime Smokers



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Romer D. and Jamieson P. "Do Adolescents Appreciate the Risks of Smoking? Evidence from a National Survey," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 29(1):12-21, 2001. For more information, contact Dr. Daniel Romer at dromer@asc.upenn.edu.