

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Poll Finds U.S. Adults with Higher Income and Education Levels Report Lower Smoking Rates

Income and education both affect smoking rates, according to data from a Gallup-Healthways poll of adults ages 30 to 64. The poll found that current smoking decreased as income increased among adults at all education levels, except for those who did not graduate high school. Likewise, smoking decreased as education increased across all income levels. The highest smoking rates were found among those that had the lowest education and income levels, while the lowest smoking rates are found among those with the highest education and income levels. In fact, those in the lowest education and income categories were six times more likely to report smoking than those in the highest categories (42% vs. 7%), suggesting that “the combined effect of income and education is greater than the relationship between smoking and either variable on its own” (p. 2).

Percentage of U.S. Adults Ages 30 to 64 Answering Yes to the Question “Do You Smoke?,” 2009-2010

		<div> <div>Lower Household Income</div> <div>→</div> <div>Higher Household Income</div> </div>			
		Less Than \$24,000	\$24,000 to Less Than \$36,000	\$36,000 to Less Than \$90,000	\$90,000 and More
<div> <div>Lower Education</div> <div>↓</div> <div>Higher Education</div> </div>	Less Than High School	42%	36%	40%	40%
	High School Graduate	39%	32%	26%	23%
	Some College/Vocational School	38%	29%	21%	18%
	College Graduate/Post-Grad	22%	15%	10%	7%

NOTE: Data are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of more than 220,000 national adults ages 30 and older, conducted between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010, as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. Sampling error is ± 1 percentage point.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Gallup, Income, Education Levels Combine to Predict Health Problems, Press Release, April 28, 2010. Available online <http://www.gallup.com/poll/127532/income-education-levels-combine-predict-health-problems.aspx>.