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Adolescent smokers and the contraband tobacco market

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Why is this topic important?

- The contraband tobacco market likely undermines two of the most effective youth tobacco control policies designed to discourage the initiation and continuation of smoking:
 - Price control (through taxation)
 - Point-of-sale age restrictions

YSS: STUDY 1

Use of cigarettes among adolescent daily smokers in Canada

A population-based sample study was conducted using high school students (aged 14-18 years) who participated in Canada's 2006/2007 Youth Smoking Survey.

Key variables:

➤ **Daily smokers: 100 cigarettes/lifetime; smoked at least one cigarette per day over the last 30 days.**

➤ Cigarette consumption

Question: "Thinking back over the last 30 days, on the days that you smoked, how many cigarettes did you usually smoke each day?"

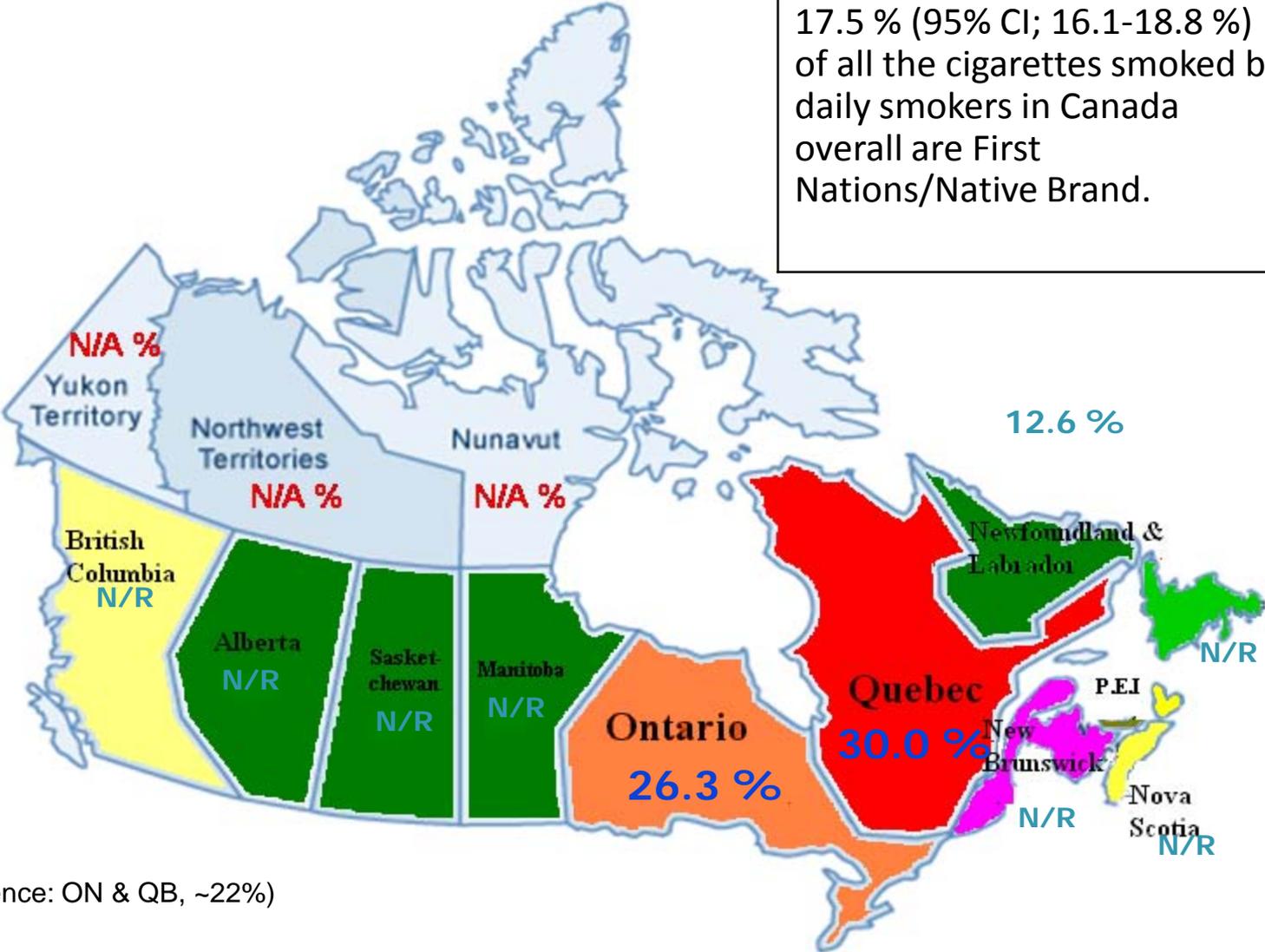
➤ Respondent's usual cigarette brand

Question: "What brand of cigarettes do you usually smoke?"

• Study identified daily smokers of "First Nations/Native brand" cigarettes.

Volume of Native brand cigarettes consumed, in relation to total volume of cigarettes smoked by adolescent daily smokers across Canada between 2006-2007

17.5 % (95% CI; 16.1-18.8 %) of all the cigarettes smoked by daily smokers in Canada overall are First Nations/Native Brand.



(Prevalence: ON & QB, ~22%)

OSDUHS: STUDY 2

Contraband cigarette consumption among adolescent daily smokers in Ontario, Canada

What is the usage prevalence and market share of reserve-manufactures contraband cigarette, commonly known as “Native” cigarettes?

Key variables:

➤ Current daily smoker:

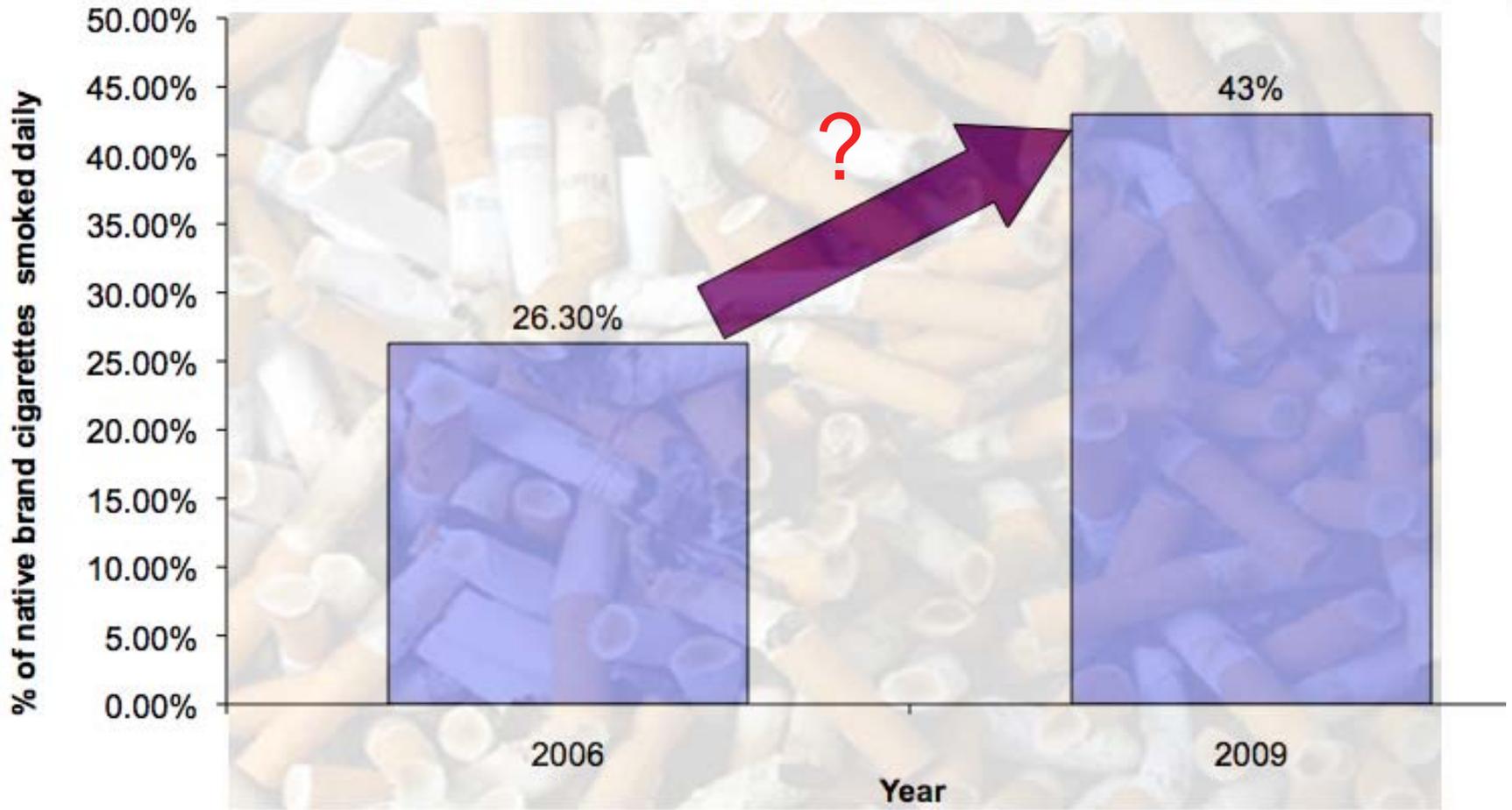
Question 1: “In the last 12 months, how often did you smoker cigarettes?” - Those who reported smoking at least 1 cigarette per day during the last 12 months were identified as daily smokers.

➤ Contraband cigarette use

Question 2: “In the last 12 months, how often did you smoke cigarettes made on Native reserves”

Students who reported smoking one or more contraband cigarette per day were identified as regular contraband smokers.

First Nations/Native brand cigarettes as % of all cigarettes smoked daily among Ontario high school students in 2006 and 2009



STUDY 3

Contraband cigarette use among adolescent smokers in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal: A Respondent driven sampling (RDS) approach

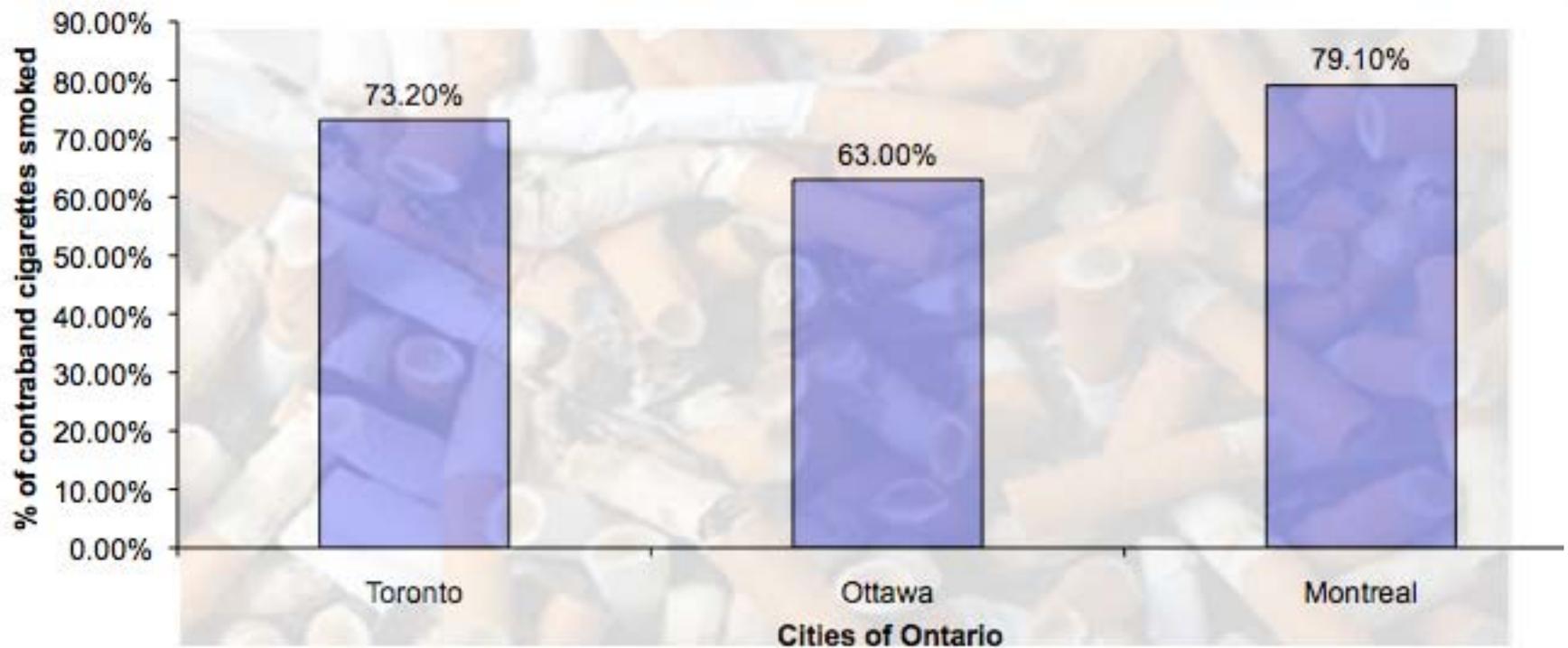
Population based sample study of adolescent smokers (16-18 years of age) in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal who completed a 30-minute, interviewer administered questionnaire for socio-demographic and smoking related variables.

Key variables:

- Current smokers
- Native cigarette use: “Do you smoke cigarettes manufactured on Native reserves? If yes, how many cigarettes per month?”



% of contraband cigarettes smoked among adolescents during the past 30 days in three cities of Ontario - Toronto, Montreal & Ottawa



Contraband cigarette use among adolescent smokers in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal

- Smokers reported high prevalence of past-month Native contraband cigarette usage: **73%** (95% CI 66-79%) in Toronto, **63%** (95% CI 56-71%) in Ottawa, and **79%** (95% CI 69-88%) in Montreal.
- Most adolescent smokers in all three cities reported that acquiring contraband cigarettes was “easy” or “very easy.”
- Approximately one-third of smokers perceived Native contraband cigarettes as less harmful than fully taxed brands.

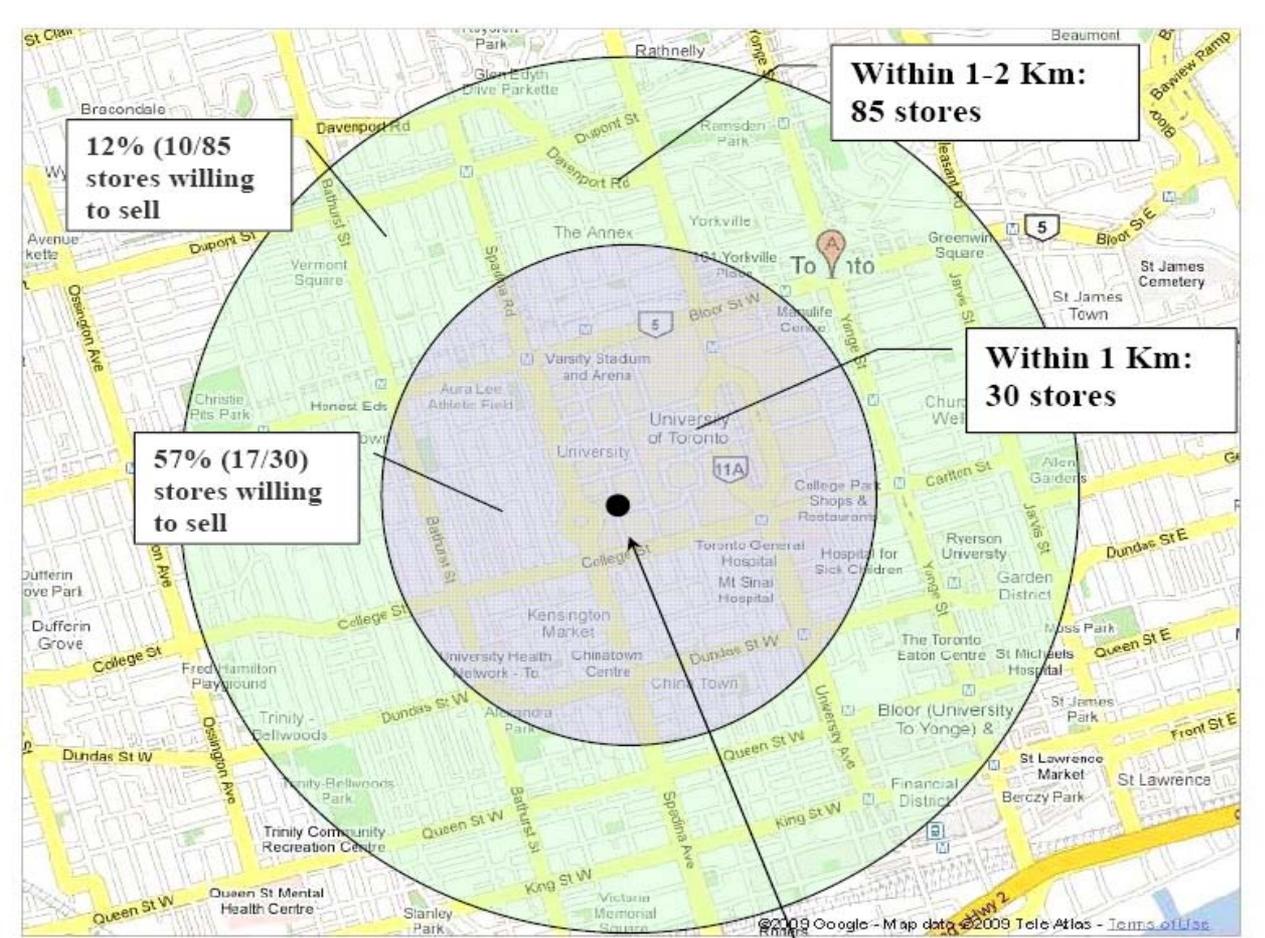
STUDY 4

Convenience Stores As a Major Supplier of Contraband Cigarettes?

What are the mechanisms of the contraband-cigarette supply network?

- Hypothesis: convenience stores within 1 km of the psychiatric hospital → more likely to sell contraband cigarettes than convenience stores located a distance of 1-2 km from the facility.
- Sample: included all of the 115 independent convenience stores located within a 2 km distance from the psychiatric hospital: 30 within 1 km, and 85 within 1-2 km.
- Method: A male research assistant entered each of the 115 stores and asked the clerk, "Do you have the native cigarettes?" A store was coded as willing to sell illicit native cigarettes, if: (1) the clerk provided an affirmative answer; (2) the clerk engaged the research assistant in a selling transaction (e.g., the clerk asked the research assistant, "How much money do you have?"); or (3) the research assistant saw the clerk selling illicit native-manufactured cigarettes.

Independent convenience stores in Toronto appear to be suppliers of contraband cigarettes.



Implications of All Results

A large majority of adolescent smokers participate in the contraband tobacco market, and “First Nations/Native” tobacco constitutes a substantial share of consumption among adolescent daily smokers.

This pattern may undermine key tobacco control strategies to limit the uptake and continuation of youth smoking.

Key references

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