Developing Media Messages that Target Perceptions about Hookah Smoking among Multi-Ethnic Young Adults: A Qualitative Analysis

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Background

Hookah:
Usage Among Young Adults (aged 18-24)
• Popular flavored tobacco product for young adults
• Positive attitudes, normative beliefs, and cessation-related self-efficacy held by young adult users

The Truth About Hookah
• Single session: 1.7X nicotine, 6.5X CO, 46.4X tar exposure than cigarettes

Study Aim
• Conduct a content analysis of extant data for perceptions of hookah smoking among young adults
• Findings will be used to develop media messages that address risk perceptions for hookah tobacco among referent group

Methodology

Qualitative Research Design
Inclusion Criteria:
<1) African American or White, (2) aged 18-30 years old, (3) enrolled at least part-time in participating universities, and (4) smoked hookah at least once in past 30 days

Participants:
• N=64

Data Collection:
• 8 focus groups conducted April-June 2012 at two participating Georgia universities

Analysis

Qualitative Analysis Approach

Conclusions and Next Steps

How do young adults view hookah?
• Less addictive than cigarettes
• Harmful agents are filtered by water vapor
• More socially acceptable and fashionable than cigarettes
• Lack of media messaging targeting hookah smoking

Development of Media Messaging
• Currently developing counter-marketing media messages to address hookah safety misperceptions

Implications for FDA

• Qualitative results provide evidence of individual cognitive and affective factors associated with hookah use (FDA Priority Research Question #9)
• Informs FDA’s development of tobacco product standards for characterizing flavors in hookah tobacco and possible restrictions of its advertising
• Informs the development of FDA’s public education campaign about hookah smoking

Results: Emerging Themes

Theme 1: Addiction
Subtheme 1: Definition of Addiction
• “If you’re an addict, you’re going to do it morning, noon, and night.”

Subtheme 2: Addictiveness of Hookah
• “Water vapor filters the nicotine out, so you can’t get addicted.”
• “I crave the social environment, I’m not addicted.”

Theme 2: Risk
Subtheme 1: Absolute Risk
• “We know the risks” vs “The smoke is filtered…”

Subtheme 2: Comparative Risk
• “…it’s better than smoking cigarettes.”

Theme 3: Role of Media
Subtheme 1: Anti-Tobacco Campaigns
• No one reported seeing hookah-specific PSAs

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