

Editorials, commentaries, and Press Releases on the our research team's work with tobacco and youth:

Teens and tobacco, Daily Herald, December 12, 1991

We try to keep impressionable youngsters away from tobacco through education campaigns that convey the hazards of smoking. But sometimes peer pressure and a youngster's natural desire to emulate adult behavior are more powerful than the messages in those campaigns.

So what can be done to complement the education campaign? The village of Woodridge has formulated a very good answer.

In 1989, the village adopted a law that requires businesses to purchase a license, for \$50, in order to sell tobacco. A consequence

of selling tobacco to minors (state law forbids the sale of tobacco to anyone under 18, unless they have written permission from parents) is the loss of that license. Businesses can also be fined \$500.

The law has had its desired effect of limiting youngsters' over the counter access to cigarettes. According to a DePaul University study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association on Wednesday, the percent of stores selling cigarettes to minors dropped from 79 percent prior to the new law to less than 5 percent 18 months after its enactment. More important, DePaul reports that a "survey of junior high school students taken before and after the law revealed a 50 percent reduction in the rate of minors who had any smoking experience and a 69 percent decrease in the number of minors who smoked regularly."

This is quite a success story, and its principal author - Woodridge police Sgt. Bruce Talbot - deserves credit for not attaching frivolous status to a complaint about a youngster buying cigarettes. Instead Talbot, with the help of DePaul and a

cooperative village government, aggressively followed up on the complaint and got the tobacco law on the books.

Schaumburg and Mt. Prospect are among the communities that have followed Woodridge's lead and adopted similar laws to restrict sale of tobacco to minors. We would urge other communities to do the same.

True, such laws do not eliminate the chances of youngsters getting cigarettes. But evidence suggests they make it a lot harder for teens to take that first puff; to follow through on that curiosity that can kill them.

Tougher Tactics to cut Teen Smoking, voice of the people, Chicago Tribune,

Sept. 12, 1995

By Leonard Jason, DePaul University

Make no doubt about it. There is a war going on, with the tobacco industry spending billions of dollars to recruit new smokers for its deadly products.

President Clinton and others now believe that there is a relationship between increasing amounts spent on cigarette advertising campaigns and escalating numbers of teenage smokers. Unfortunately, there is too much smoke and puff in Clinton's recent recommendations to curb teen smoking and not enough fire and substance.

We are all for banning vending machines, but this measure will have limited effectiveness as most minors do not obtain addictive cigarettes from this source. They can and do directly purchase them from merchants. Requiring sales clerks to ask for IDs before selling cigarettes is an empty gesture; the law forbidding merchants to sell cigarettes to minors is openly flouted. So why would anyone expect merchants to become law-abiding citizens overnight and ask for IDs?

In research conducted at DePaul University, we have consistently found that more than 80 percent of merchants sell cigarettes to minors. In Chicago, we have found that merchants will only stop this distasteful practice when they are caught in the act via a "sting" operation and fined. When merchants do stop selling cigarettes to minors, as in suburban Woodridge, the rates of smoking among youth decline precipitously.

Banning smoking advertisements from areas surrounding schools, decreasing the attractiveness of cigarette ads in teen magazines and banning tobacco products on T-shirts and other paraphernalia are worthy goals.

But even more effective would be a ban on all cigarette advertising (as is done in Canada), coupled with fines for merchants selling cigarettes to minors and increasing taxes on cigarettes. This would dealt a real blow to our national disgrace: 3,000 youngsters beginning this offensive habit daily.

Do we really believe that the people who gave us "Joe Camel" will spend \$150 million to deter our youngsters from smoking That's like using kerosene to put out a campfire. We know the tactics needed to win the war. Half-baked rhetoric and pledges might gain some political

advantages, but they will do little to attack the cancer that is plaguing our most precious resource.

'Sting Tobacco Sales', The Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 13, 1996

By Leonard Jason

A child who knows not to touch the stove, but does it anyway and doesn't get burned, may do it again. Similarly, merchants who don't get burned for selling cigarettes to minors because nobody is watching are likely to keep doing it. After all, they get positive reinforcement for their crime - profits.

America won't see an authentic reduction in teen smoking until businesses stop profiting from selling cigarettes illegally to kids.

President Clinton's new initiatives to regulate tobacco advertising and sales through the Food and Drug Administration give important executive endorsement to the effort to reduce teen smoking. A public health problem this pervasive, caused by an industry so powerful, has no hope of solution unless there is a serious commitment from the president.

Strong forces have emerged to confuse the public, however, and their aim is to make people think the problem is being solved when it really isn't. Politicians who are embracing the issue of teen smoking and illegal cigarette sales are being taken in by tobacco industry efforts to emphasize education programs over enforcement programs that test whether merchants are complying with the law.

Rather than supporting merchant sting operations - where teens working with the police are sent into stores to try to buy cigarettes - tobacco interests have developed slick schemes with fancy signs and buttons carrying antismoking messages. All this looks attractive at press conferences, but it has little substance. More important, yields few results.

Politicians are endorsing these approaches because they will not upset business owners, who can claim they did something - when in fact their "something" did nothing. The real solution to the problem of teen smoking is to build in consequences for businesses that sell cigarettes to kids illegally.

Over the past eight years, my research team at DePaul University has demonstrated that sting operations significantly decrease cigarette sales to minors. When merchants know that random stings will occur in their stores at least three times a year, the short-term profits they gain from selling cigarettes to kids are overshadowed by the prospect of fines and loss of their tobacco license. Successful results have been duplicated in diverse communities from inner-city Chicago to various suburban towns. This program can work anywhere, as long as local governments are serious about enforcement.

Making cigarettes harder for teens to get has proven to be a successful strategy to reduce actual rates of teen smoking. Long-term data from Woodridge, Ill., a suburb of Chicago that started a merchant sting program several years ago, showed that its high school students were half as likely to be regular smokers than teens of the same age in towns that had not limited cigarette sales. These results came at a time, 1991 to 1994, when smoking among eighth-graders was increasing nationally by 30 percent.

This kind of result will never be produced by the insincere antismoking campaigns being pushed by tobacco interests and by the retail businesses profiting from youth cigarette sales.

If all stores are regularly faced with strong enforcement, the practice of selling tobacco products to youngsters will significantly decrease. This, in turn, can bring about a dramatic reduction in teen smoking. Do we have the commitment to make the tough choices to put our resources into the only strategy that has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness?

The question is not one of finances. These programs pay for themselves through fines and license fees. The question is whether community leaders are willing to hold merchants accountable. President Clinton's program is a small step in the right direction.

Leonard Jason is a professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago.

Politics vs Science: Do we really care about kids who light up? Chicago Tribune,

August 23, 1996

By Leonard Jason

For every 100 teenage girls who attempt to buy a pack of cigarettes illegally in Chicago, only one will be turned away. For every 100 boys, 17 will be denied. The sad fact is that the vast majority of stores in Chicago sell cigarettes to kids and set them up not only for chronic health problems, but on a path that often leads to alcohol and narcotic use.

Mayor Richard M. Daley and Ald. Edward Burke (14th) recently proposed an ordinance aimed at curbing unlawful cigarette sales to youth in Chicago, and President Clinton is prepared to enact an executive order designed to stem illegal sales nationally.

These are great first steps, but to achieve a true reduction in teen smoking we must price cigarettes out of reach for teens by raising the excise tax, reduce their appeal by banning advertising completely and fully implement the Synar Amendment, which holds states accountable for a measurable reduction in illegal cigarette sales. Chicago's program consists of a merchant education initiative to remind retailers of the law, an increase from \$200 to \$500 in fines against stores that sell cigarettes to kids, with license suspensions for stores caught in violation three times, and an enforcement program to test whether merchants are complying.

If executed carefully, Chicago could be the first major metropolitan area to enact such a program. But its success depends on the city's Commitment to the enforcement component.

Our research team at DePaul University has been sending minors randomly into stores to purchase cigarettes, so-called stings, in Chicago for several years. We found alarming rates of violation. Every gas station we visited sold to underage kids. In addition, 94 percent of convenience stores, 78 percent of grocery stores, 72 percent of mom and pop stores and 61 percent of pharmacies sold to out, 16- and 17-year-old testers.

The mayor and Aid. Burke should be commended for bringing this issue back to the forefront, but they must also be aware of the realities of their program. Our research determined that sales rates were unaffected when warning signs were posted in stores.

Additionally, even when merchants asked for age identification, they still sold to minors 33 percent of the time. When we provided merchants with training on the law, illegal sales of cigarettes decreased for a few months, but returned shortly to unacceptable levels.

The mayor has argued for continued merchant education programs, which are supported by the tobacco industry and the Illinois Liquor Control Commission and the Illinois Retail Merchants Association. It's not surprising that such groups advocate for education programs because they offer few negative consequences for businesses that sell cigarettes to minors. When combined with enforcement programs, these initiatives can be valuable, but if offered in and of themselves, these programs only support the vested interests of the status quo, and not the best interests of our youth.

Thus, the key to permanently reducing cigarette sales to kids is a consistent enforcement program in the same stores.

Using this method, teams who were able to buy cigarettes 85 percent of the time at the beginning of the study could only buy them 20 percent of the time after the study. Simply put, merchants got tired of paying fines and knew that if they continued to sell they would be caught.

Daley is also toying with the idea that youth who purchase cigarettes should be held responsible for their actions. The practicality of the police being called to an illegal buy is unwieldy and unwise. Several years ago, the Metropolitan Lung Association of Chicago worked with Ald. Burke's office to draft an ordinance which made the sale of cigarettes an administrative rather than a criminal activity. The old system required that a police officer witness an illegal cigarette purchase. As a consequence, no tickets were given out for years in Chicago for underage sales of cigarettes.

Now that the process has been changed, once a minor is sold cigarettes, a member of the Department of Revenue can issue a ticket. Tickets and regular feedback to merchants will significantly reduce the percentage of retailers who sell minors cigarettes. We know this strategy works. Now the question is whether this approach will be expanded to all stores in Chicago. It is only if all stores are brought into this program, and enforced at least every four months, will we make a dent in this problem.

The economics support these approaches because fines and license-fees pay for themselves. The question is whether our leaders have the courage and heart to enact the most potent and proven methods of attacking our youth's most deadly foe. There are powerful economic and political forces that will continue to thwart what needs to be done. With boldness, with decisiveness, with vision, our politicians can become statesmen, and in the process our youth can be protected.

Leonard Jason is a Professor of Psychology at DePaul University.

"I want to be like Mike" Cigars vs. the Public Interest, Chicago Tribune, June, 1997.

by Leonard Jason

There is no doubt about it--Michael Jordan is a super hero of mythic proportions. In game five of the NBA finals, sick and weakened with the flu, Michael almost single-handedly took control of the basketball game and guaranteed a win during this critical phase of the playoffs. Throughout the world, children look to this gifted athlete as a role model because Michael is unselfish in building team spirit, devoted to excellence even when injured or sick, and competitive in all aspects of his game. Is it not surprising that so many of our youth want to "be like Mike."

Several prominent basketball players, such as Charles Barkley, have argued that athletes should not be considered role models and that they are just people with well-developed, marketable talents. They believe their personal lives, which might involve behaviors that are inappropriate or high risk for youth, should be neither highlighted nor condemned for influencing young people.

Whether or not athletes desire to be role models, their high visibility, endorsements and vast economic resources, including fast cars and stately living quarters, appeal to many in our society, particularly impressionable youth. Our dilemma involves balancing athletes' individual rights with their moral obligations, whether they agree with them or not, to protect children from harm. Athletes most certainly enjoy the freedom to engagement in legal behavior in private, and while they have a right to do the same in public, they may assume that their behavior will be imitated by young people who will suffer the consequences. Social science research supports the likelihood of imitation, and,

as a result, it is important to identify which behaviors should be defined as dangerous.

Such a task is daunting and may reach little consensus. Few would criticize athletes for drinking champagne at a victory celebration, although repeated excesses and intoxications would certainly convey an inappropriate message to youth. If drinking champagne at celebrations is acceptable, how should we view lighting victory cigars at such celebrations? And if high profile athletes are seen frequently on television relaxing and enjoying the pleasures of a cigar, even when they are not being paid for such an endorsement, should such behavior be tolerated?

The tobacco industry has been on the defensive for the last few years, with just cause. With more than 400,000 people dying annually from smoking-related illnesses, tobacco products are our nation's number one health enemy. Billions of dollars continue to be spent on advertising,

and for years those responsible for movie productions have been paid to make popular actors smoke cigarettes on the big screen.

What a public relations victory for the tobacco industry when, on prime time television, the most popular athlete of our time shows his admiration for cigars, and unwittingly sends a powerful message to youth that engaging in this behavior is a legitimate way to celebrate a victory. When an athlete is hired to endorse a product, the endorsement's credibility is suspect because it was motivated by a paycheck. However, when the product is visibly consumed without any external compensation, the association between the product and the consumer is enhanced. Viewers believe the product is truly enjoyed and valued by the consumer. It delivers the implicit message that one can be an attractive, world-class athlete without suffering any detrimental effects from smoking. Three-thousand children begin smoking every day. Do we really want to encourage more of them to

begin a habit with such tragic consequences?

Many will undoubtedly say that this argument is another example of an exaggerated reaction to a simple victory celebration and question the audacity to criticize a living legend, particularly during this moment of well justified acclaim. In addition, it could be said that cigars have been a symbol of rites and rituals for generations. But some of our high profile athletes have been seen engaging in this habit at many publicized events, well beyond any victory celebrations. Even if Michael and other celebrities only displayed cigars during celebrations, youth might not recognize that they are not

regular consumers of tobacco products.

Michael is a generous and compassionate person, as demonstrated by his substantial contributions to our city. His courage in the face of adversity has already won our hearts. His eloquent arguments to keep the team intact for next year have secured our loyalty. By subtly challenging the Bulls' management, he has even appealed to the rebellious instincts within us. This combination of messages leaves an impression on our youth. They want to be like Mike by wearing clothes endorsed by him as well as products that he uses. Opponents of tobacco are not seeking politically correct behavior from public figures. Rather, we ask Michael and other high profile athletes to become members of a team that is waging a campaign for the hearts and minds of our youth.

Leonard Jason

Professor of Community Psychology

DePaul University

One way to keep cigarettes away from kids: Keep cigarettes away from kids, Chicago Tribune, Dec. 15, 1997

Commentary, by Leonard Jason

If there is one thing that demonstrates that at least some wisdom comes with age, it is smoking; very, very few first-time smokers are over 18. We've known for a long time that smoking is what former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler labeled a "pediatric disease." Although its health consequences may not be seen until much later (possibly when it's too late to do anything about them), the foundations of the smoking habit are laid in adolescence--or even younger.

The pending settlement between several state attorneys general and the tobacco industry will carry with it a mandate to reduce youth smoking. How that is accomplished is another question. Many public education Programs alone tend not to be very effective. Restrictions on advertising currently being considered would not keep children from seeing depictions of adults smoking. How about restricting teens' and pre-teens' access to cigarettes? Studies of adults in the U.S. show overwhelming support for policies that limit minors, yet more than three quarters of 8th graders in a recent survey said they believed it was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain them.

What's the problem here? The answer is: enforcement. A few years ago a local community began the process of proving that

The town of Woodridge tried a little experiment in behavior modification. It passed a law Prohibiting merchants from selling cigarettes to people under 18 with a civil (not criminal) penalty for violations. In addition, minors were fined for possession of tobacco. Before

the law went into effect, 70 Percent of merchants in Woodridge were selling cigarettes to minors, nine months after taking effect and, most importantly, being enforced, less than 5 percent of merchants were selling cigarettes to minors.

My research on this issue suggests that unless the number of merchants in a given community who sell cigarettes to minors is reduced to 10 percent or less, it is still too easy for kids to get them. Woodridge surpassed that in only nine months through strict enforcement. (The proposed settlement with the tobacco industry proposes to meet that 10 percent goal in 10 years.) Studies in Woodridge have found that with strict enforcement of the law against underage tobacco sales and with both the buyer and the shelter at risk of being fined, the percentage of high school students using tobacco has dropped in that community from 16 percent to 5 percent and has remained stable for seven years.

There is no single magic bullet that will prevent all young people from taking up smoking. We have learned from behavioral research that several tools, used in combination, can have impressive results. That same research now tells us that one of those tools must be restricted access, strictly enforced. Simply put: It works.

Leonard Jason is a Professor of Psychology at DePaul University. He testified recently on these issues before the House Commerce Committee's

Subcommittee on Health and Environment on behalf of the American Psychological Association.

Youth Tobacco Control Linked to Lower Crime Rates

May 2, 2000

Towns that come down the hardest on merchants selling cigarettes to minors and on minors buying cigarettes may also possess characteristics that protect them from crime, suggest the results of an exploratory study in Illinois.

"It is possible that early adopters of regulatory policies regarding youth access to tobacco products are also those communities that react early and prominently to other types of criminal behavior, and that it is these policies that tend to lower crime rates," suggested lead author Leonard A. Jason, PhD, of DePaul University in Chicago, Ill.

But Jason and colleagues also remarked that the association they noted between tough youth tobacco legislation enforcement and low crime rates could be a coincidence, and that further research is needed to determine if tough enforcement is actually linked with low crime rates.

The researchers surveyed 29 towns in DuPage County in Illinois, many of which based their legislation on a Woodridge, Ill., ordinance forbidding the sale of tobacco to individuals under 18 as well as the possession of tobacco by individuals under 18.

To determine how vigorously towns enforced youth tobacco legislation, the researchers measured how often in the past year minors had been sent by law enforcement officials to attempt cigarette purchases from merchants in each town. Merchants were subject to fines or license suspension or revocation for selling cigarettes to minors. The researchers also counted how many minors were fined for tobacco possession in each town during the past year.

Towns that enforced youth tobacco legislation most vigorously had the lowest rates of crime, including violent crime and property crime, the researchers found. The results of their study appear in the March/April issue of the American Journal of Health Promotion.

The researchers noted that towns with vigorous youth tobacco legislation and low crime had low crime rates even before tobacco legislation was enacted, suggesting that such towns may have characteristics that both help them enforce youth tobacco laws and protect them from crime.

"Towns that see the importance of responding relatively quickly to these types of adolescent problems might also be more ready to tackle other more visible community problems, and this vigilance and proactive stance ultimately results in lower overall crime statistics," said Jason.

"If the heavy enforcers have characteristics that serve as protective factors in deterring crimes, then it would be critical to engage in further research to better isolate what those factors might be," said Jason.

###

The American Journal of Health Promotion is a bimonthly peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the field of health promotion. For information about the journal call (248) 682-0707 or visit the journal's Web site at www.healthpromotionjournal.com.

Center for the Advancement of Health

Contact: Petrina Chong

Director of Communications

202.387.2829

Canada's Broadcasting Corporation polls its members on the Woodridge Study

[cbc.ca](http://www.cbc.ca) The National Features

(<http://www.tv.cbc.ca/national/pgminfo/teensmoke/woodridge.html>)

If you think it is impossible to keep cigarettes from kids or that it's just too hard to police, you'll get an argument in Woodridge, Illinois. A community of 30,000 people, this Chicago suburb has successfully stopped most kids from smoking for the last eight years.

In 1989, 83 per cent of the town's merchants were selling cigarettes to teenagers. That year, town council passed a tough municipal law, the first in North America. Stores who want to sell cigarettes have to purchase a licence and the licence fee is used to fund a tough surveillance program run by the police.

They use underage decoys in sting operations four times a year, or more if they receive a tip. Violators pay a hefty fine and, more importantly, repeat offenders lose their licence. The result: the Woodridge vendors know the cops are on the job and behave themselves most of the time. Additionally, kids under 18 are fined if caught in possession of cigarettes. A study by DePaul University in Chicago found that teen smoking in Woodridge has declined by 70% since the enforcement program commenced.

More Information:

- Find out more about Woodridge:

- Woodridge Police Department
- Woodridge and its surroundings
- Town Stats

- The DePaul University Study was first published in the Journal of American Medical Association :

Active Enforcement of Cigarette Control Laws in the Prevention of Cigarette Sales to Minors by Leonard A. Jason, PhD; Peter Y. Ji; Michael D. Anes; Scott H. Birkhead, published December 11, 1991. Follow studies were also done.

What do you think:

Should Canada get as tough as they are in Woodridge, Illinois?

Yes

No

Study looks at towns that Enforce Laws (<http://scienceu.fsu.edu/news/legalsmart/legal01.html>)

An Illinois study found a link between towns with tough controls to prevent minors from buying cigarettes and lower crime rates, according to a May 2 press release from the Center for the Advancement of Health.

"It is possible that early adopters of regulatory policies regarding youth access to tobacco products are also those communities that react early and prominently to other types of criminal behavior, and that it is these policies that tend to lower crime rates," said lead author Leonard A. Jason, Ph.D., of DePaul University in Chicago, Ill.

The exploratory study looked at 29 towns in DuPage County, Ill. Most of the towns have laws in place that prohibit the sale of tobacco to those under 18. Researchers measured how often in the past year minors had been sent by law-enforcement officials to try to buy cigarettes from

merchants in each town. They also looked at how many times minors were fined for tobacco possession in the past year.

Jason and his colleagues found that towns that aggressively enforced youth tobacco legislation had the lowest rates of crime, including violent crime and property crime.

"Towns that see the importance of responding relatively quickly to these types of adolescent problems might also be more ready to tackle other more visible community problems, and this vigilance and proactive stance ultimately results in lower overall crime statistics," said Jason. "If the heavy enforcers have characteristics that serve as protective factors in deterring crimes, then it would be critical to engage in further research to better isolate what those factors might be."

The study is published in the March/April issue of the American Journal of Health Promotion .

Robert Wood Johnson Press Release on the YTAP studies

CONTACT: Prabhu Ponkshe

Health Matrix, Inc

703-918-4930

FOR RELEASE: Tuesday, May 6th, 2003

**RETAIL FINES PREVENT KIDS FROM STARTING CIGARETTE USE; POSSESSION
LAWS REDUCE SMOKING RATES AMONG REGULAR SMOKERS, TWO STUDIES
CONCLUDE**

Chicago, May 5 – Enforcing laws that fine retailers who sell cigarettes to minors helps prevent youth from starting to smoke. But enforcing laws that also fine youth for possession of tobacco products helps reduce cigarette use among youth who are already smoking, according to two studies published in health journals this week.

The two conclusions apply mostly to white kids in suburban and rural communities. The studies are from researchers at DePaul University. The researchers looked at tobacco laws in northern and central Illinois towns and surveyed more than 3,000 kids in those towns from 1999 to 2001. The anonymous surveys of the students included information about their own tobacco use and that among family and friends.

“Higher retail availability is related to higher initiation rates of smoking among youth. The effect of availability is seen above and beyond the effect of smoking by peers and smoking among adults in the home” according to DePaul researcher, Steven Pokorny, Ph.D. His study was published in the May issue of the Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology.

“But enforcing retail sales laws, including \$50-\$100 fines for first offenses, is not enough to affect established smokers, because they can find other ways of getting their cigarettes. Our research shows that enforcement of retail sales laws along with possession laws, which impose a \$25 to \$50 fine on youth, in combination with community service and smoking awareness classes, make a significant difference in smoking rates among white kids who are already regular smokers,” according to Leonard Jason, Ph.D. His study was published in the latest issue of a British journal, Critical Public Health.

Smoking rates traditionally increase from sixth grade to the eighth grade. Jason’s research shows that communities that enforce retail sales laws alone see smoking rates go up from 0.4 cigarettes in a month in the 6th grade to 27.4 cigarettes a month by the 8th grade. Communities that also enforce fines for possession, see smoking rates go up from 1.1 cigarettes per month in the 6th grade to 6.3 cigarettes per month by the 8th grade. Smoking rates at the 6th grade reflect kids who are just experimenting with tobacco.

Jason said imposing fines for possession of tobacco products is controversial for enforcement reasons. It is also not a popular approach among tobacco control advocates, “Because the fines target the youth, instead of the tobacco industry’s marketing practices. But our research shows

that possession fines are effective at least among white kids in reducing smoking rates of established smokers.”

Typically, youth increase their use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs from 6th to 8th grade. However, students in communities that fined retailers for selling tobacco to minors and fined minors for possession of tobacco products, reported significantly fewer peers who were using tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, when compared to communities that only fined the retailers. Negative attitudes toward the fines also reduced over the three-year study period among youth smokers who came from communities that enforced retail sales laws as well as possession laws, according to Jason.

The data on retail availability of tobacco products came from youth actually attempting to buy cigarettes in 11 communities. The youth did not pretend to be over age, did not use fake identification cards and did not lie about their age. Pokorny’s research is the first to develop a measure of retail availability, which reflects the risk of exposure for youth in a community to illegal tobacco sales.

The towns had an average population of about 33,000. A random group of half the towns enforced laws on retail sales of tobacco products while the other random group of towns enforced retail laws as well as possession laws. Both groups of towns had police departments that checked enforcement of retail sales of cigarettes to minors two to three times a year. Merchants in violation had a \$50-\$100 fine for a first offense, and a one-day suspension of the license to sell cigarette products plus a higher fine for a second offense. Repeated violations resulted in higher fines and longer periods of license suspensions to sell tobacco products.

The student survey asked respondents if they had ever smoked cigarettes, if they had quit, smoked occasionally or smoked everyday. Students were also asked questions about how easy or difficult it would be to get tobacco products, questions about use of substances among their peers, questions about how many of their friends used alcohol or other drugs, and questions related to their feelings about whether police should find youth for using, carrying or holding tobacco products.

The Substance Abuse Policy Research Program (www.saprp.org) of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org) funded the two studies. SAPRP is a \$54 million program that funds policy research on alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. Jason and Pokorny’s SAPRP-funded

research has enabled them to continue their work in 24 communities through a \$2.5 million grant from the federal National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Based in Princeton, N.J., RWJF is the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. It concentrates its grantmaking in four goal areas: to assure that all Americans have access to quality health care at reasonable cost; to improve the quality of care and support for people with chronic health conditions; to promote healthy communities and lifestyles; and to reduce the personal, social and economic harm caused by substance abuse - tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.