

# Youth Tobacco Access Research

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Three thousand youngsters begin smoking every day, and smoking rates among adolescents are increasing. Restricting access to cigarettes and fining minors for possession of tobacco products might be effective strategies to reduce the rising rates of teenage smoking. It is unfortunate that the issue of whether or not minors are fined for possession of tobacco products has not been systematically studied, and there is much interest among public health officials in this issue. It is important to evaluate whether the combination of more consistent vendor enforcement and fining minors for possession of tobacco products or just consistent vendor enforcement is the optimal intervention for bringing about changes in smoking prevalence rates among adolescents. The study involved 24 towns in Illinois, all of which have regular enforcements and low levels of illegal merchant cigarette sales to minors. Towns were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: no fines to minors for tobacco possession or fines to minors for tobacco possession. There were 12 towns in each experimental condition. For three years, we assessed rates of smoking among youngsters in grades 7-12. This study helped determine which types of policies are most likely to reduce rates of smoking among students.

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