

When Black Youths Smoke Less, Is It All About the Benjamins?

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The number of black and white youth puffing on cigarettes was almost equal during the early 1970s, and both groups scaled back around 1976. But new research shows cancer stick usage dropped more sharply among black youth between the 1970s and mid-1990s, possibly because of social and economic factors, according to a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* and reported by a University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) [press release](#).

For the study, researchers from UMDNJ's School of Public Health examined dozens of tobacco, economic and other social studies done during the previously mentioned time period. Scientists collected these study findings and arrived at an outcome.

Findings showed racial differences in parental attitudes, religious ties, negative health perceptions and experiences were among some of the social reasons that black youth cut back on smoking. But researchers also noted that economic concerns, such as lower family income, increased food stamp use and steep cigarette prices (from state and federal excise taxes), were also major reasons for the lower black youth smoking rate.

Interestingly, some other studies suggested that African-American youth replaced cigarettes with alcohol, drugs or other forms of tobacco, said Tyree Oredein, a UMDNJ doctoral student and study author. "But there was an overall decline in the use of both licit and illicit drugs among black high school seniors from the mid-1970s through the early 1990s alongside the fall of cigarette use," Oredein explained.

Another researcher added that the decline in smoking among black youth during this almost 20-year period may also be responsible for the decrease in young adult cancer cases among this group 10 to 20 years later.

But the most immediate take-away, according to study authors, is that higher cigarette prices reduce cigarette use, especially among African-American youth.

[Click here](#) to read about how menthol cigarettes marketed to black youth neglect to disclose that

these minty smokes are more addictive.

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