



How Healthy Are You? General Health Perceptions Among Cigarette Smokers in Kansas

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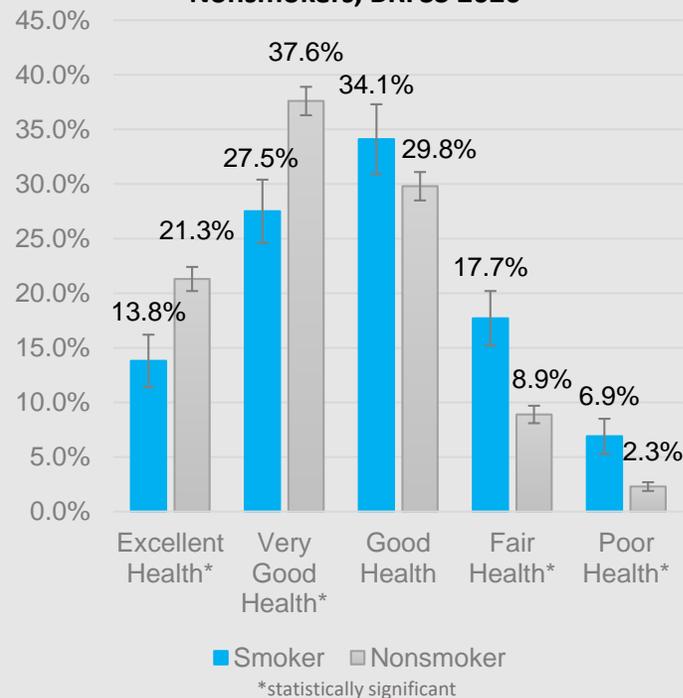
BACKGROUND

Cigarette smoking is known to cause many health issues including cancer, lung diseases, and heart disease. The U.S. Surgeon General has long encouraged smokers to take steps to quit for a healthier life. Given that smoking has immediate and long-term health effects, the question was raised of how healthy adult smokers perceive themselves to be – especially in relation to nonsmokers. While it is widespread knowledge that smoking damages the body in a multitude of ways, and many studies have looked at the perceived risks of smoking from smokers’ viewpoints, it is not well-known how healthy smokers feel they are. Thus, this was the focus of the analysis conducted.

METHODS

2020 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey results were utilized for this analysis. Survey respondents were asked about their general health and could answer it was “Excellent,” “Very Good,” “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor.” Current smoking status was also asked. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were used for analysis of these two variables.

General Health Perceptions of Smokers vs. Nonsmokers, BRFSS 2020



RESULTS

Of all survey respondents, 16.6% (95% CI: 15.6%, 17.6%) smoked cigarettes. Statistically significant results showed that more nonsmokers rated their health as excellent or very good compared to smokers while more smokers rated their health as fair or poor than nonsmokers. The largest gaps between smokers and nonsmokers included “very good” health [27.5% (95% CI: 24.6%, 30.4%) smokers; 37.6% (95% CI: 36.3%, 39.0%) nonsmokers] and “fair” health [17.7% (95% CI: 15.2%, 20.3%) smokers; 8.9% (95% CI: 8.1%, 9.7%) nonsmokers]. Among smokers, only 13.8% (95% CI: 11.4%, 16.1%) perceived their health to be excellent compared to 21.3% (95% CI: 20.2%, 22.4%) of nonsmokers.

CONCLUSION

Overall, cigarette smokers perceive themselves as less healthy than do nonsmokers. Perhaps increased education on the health benefits of cessation and further promoting cessation services, such as the Quitline, is needed in order to increase how healthy Kansans feel – and actually are.

Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking in Kansas, BRFSS 2020

