

E-CIGARETTE USE AMONG HISPANIC YOUNG PEOPLE: WHY ACCULTURATION MATTERS

Presented by: Emily Sanders (she/her), FDA CTP
Everly Macario (she/her) IQ Solutions, Inc.
Yvette Frias (she/her) IQ Solutions, Inc.

Co-authors: Sarah Evans (IQ Solutions, Inc.)
Ileana Castillo-Pozo (IQ Solutions, Inc.),
Alex Budenz (FDA)

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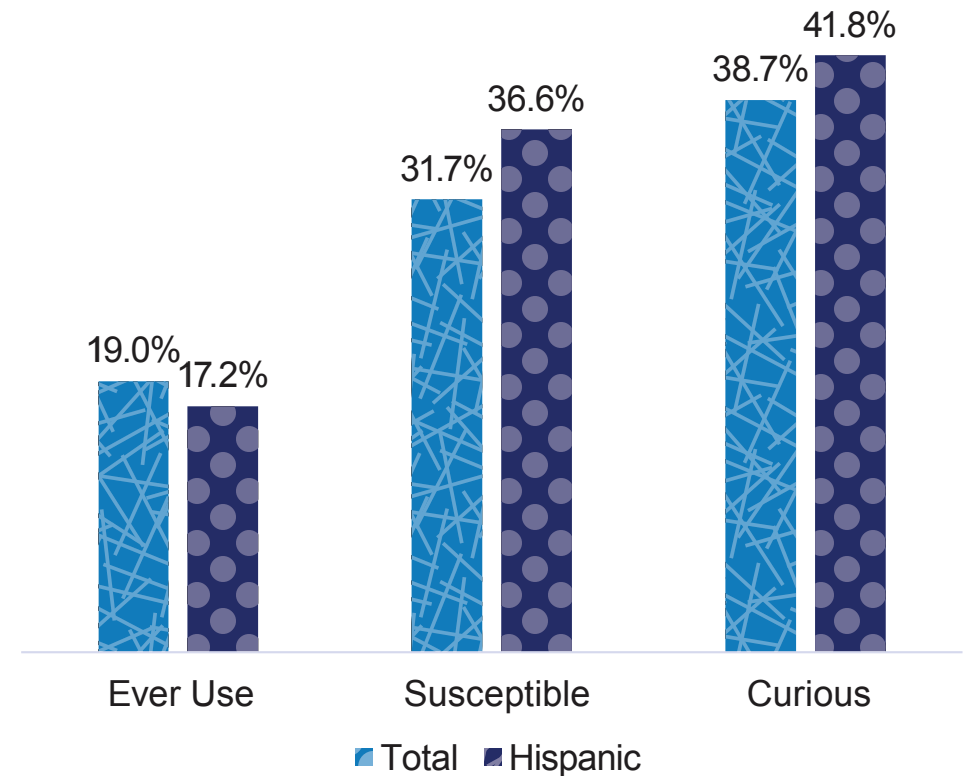
NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

- In this presentation we use the term “Hispanic” as this was the preferred term for self-identification among most of our participants.
- We acknowledge that use of this term is not ubiquitous and that many identify by other terms including Latino/a, LatinX, and Latine.
- We further acknowledge that this population is highly diverse and not monolithic, and that many prefer to identify by their national background and/or alternative racial/ethnic identities (e.g., Mestizo/a).



- Hispanic youth were **more likely to be curious about and/or initiate** tobacco use with e-cigarettes compared to the general U.S. youth population.²
- Prior research has found that Hispanic young people may be at higher or lower risk of tobacco use based on a range of factors including country of origin, gender, and level of **acculturation**—the complex process of blending into the mainstream culture while navigating one’s heritage culture.^{3, 4, 5}
- Understanding the **heterogeneity** of the Hispanic population is critical to addressing tobacco-related health disparities.

2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey E-Cigarette Use

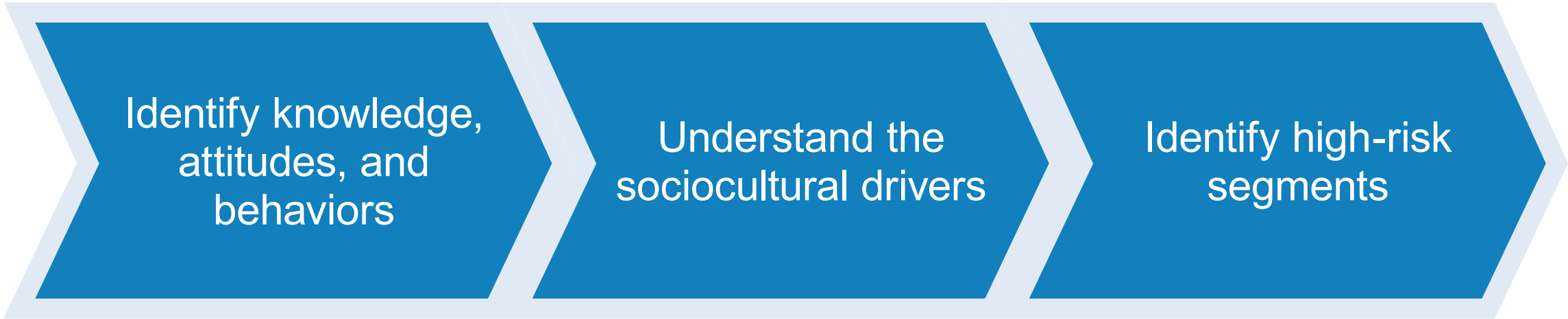


¹NYTS 2022 data does not show similar pattern. NYTS 2023 data not yet available.

OBJECTIVES

To better understand the demographic, psychographic, and sociocultural determinants of e-cigarette use among Hispanic youth and young adults.

Our specific goals were to:

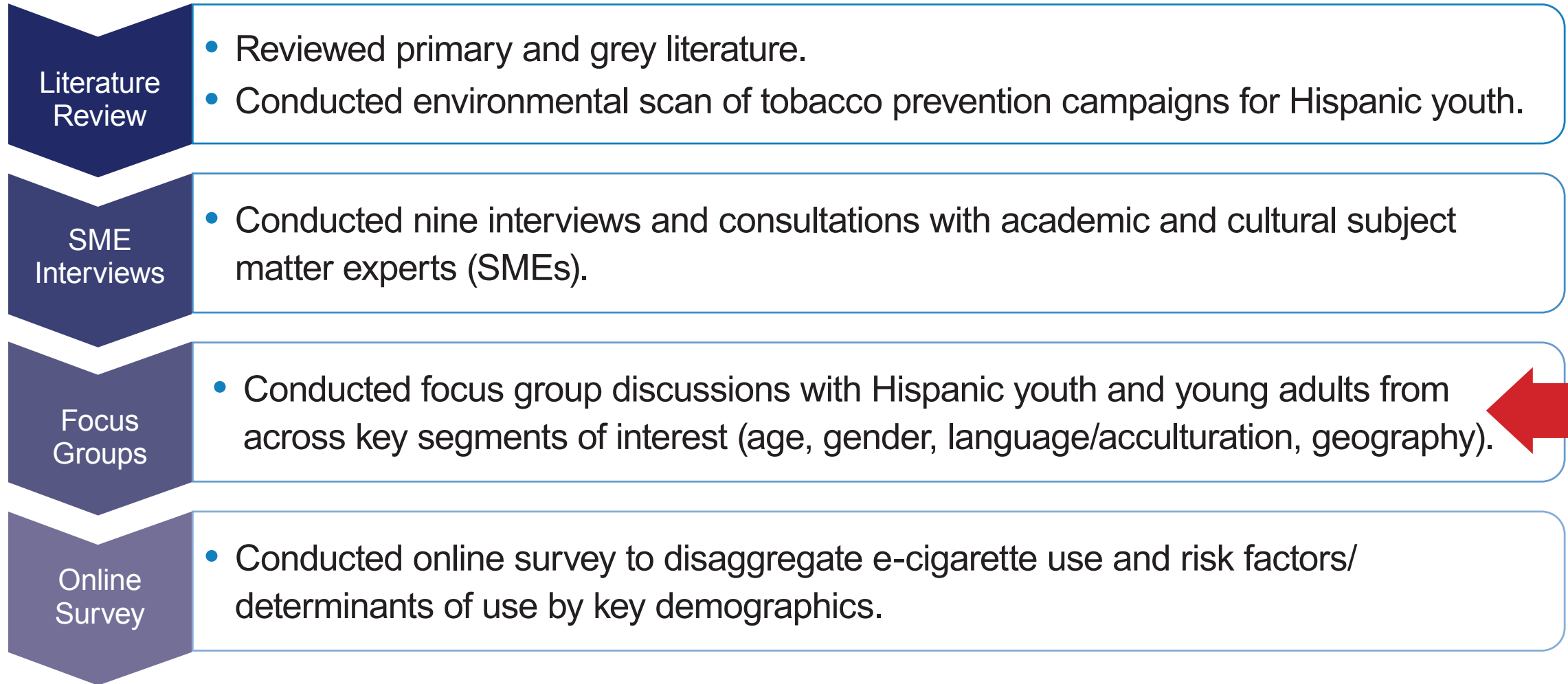


Identify knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

Understand the sociocultural drivers

Identify high-risk segments

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH EFFORTS



- Twenty virtual focus groups among youth and young adults ages 13–24 (95 participants)* conducted between December 2021 and January 2022.
 - Segmented by age, e-cigarette use (frequent use, recent but not frequent use, or susceptibility) and acculturation level.
 - Sixteen groups conducted in English, four in Spanish by bicultural* moderator.
- Prior to discussion, participants completed a demographic survey and provided an image that represented their Hispanic identity.
- Semi-structured discussion guide covered topics including Hispanic identity; e-cigarette knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; and reasons for use/curiosity.
- Transcripts were coded in their original language by three bilingual researchers using a codebook for thematic analysis and exploration of differences by segment.
 - Intercoder reliability alpha was .89.

* Detailed recruitment information available in appendix A

- **Acculturation** is the complex process of blending into the mainstream culture while navigating one’s heritage culture.
- Linguistic acculturation has been associated with increased tobacco use; however, retaining family-oriented Hispanic cultural values protects against tobacco uptake among youth.^{6, 7, 8, 9}
- We measured acculturation in this study based on language preference (with family) and country of birth.¹⁰

Participant Type	Definition
Higher Acculturation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually speaks “only English” or “mostly English” with family.• Born in U.S./territories.
Lower Acculturation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually speaks “only Spanish” or “mostly Spanish” with family.• Born outside the U.S./territories.
Bicultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All other combinations.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

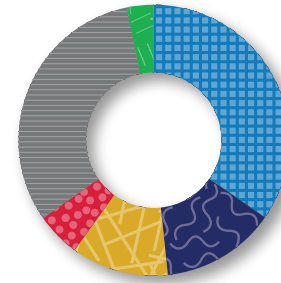
Ninety-five total participants who self-identified as Hispanic represented the following demographic characteristics

Race



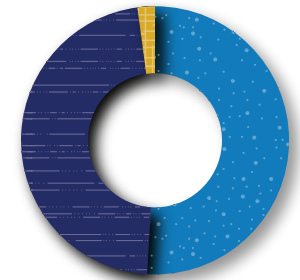
- White (34%)
- Other (27%)
- Black or African American (21%)
- Mestizo/a (14%)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (2%)

Hispanic Subgroup



- Mexican (35%)
- Puerto Rican (14%)
- Dominican (12%)
- Cuban (5%)
- Other (32%)
- Multiple Selected (3%)

Gender Identity



- Boy/Man (51%)
- Girl/Woman (47%)
- Gender queer/gender fluid/non-binary/gender non-conforming/agender (2%)

78% born in the United States

15 Spanish-speaking countries represented

FINDINGS

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF THEIR HISPANIC IDENTITY

- Coming together through music, dance, and soccer
- “Familismo”
- Connection through cultural traditions
- Work ethic



Images from participants



YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES RELATED TO THEIR HISPANIC IDENTITY

- **Discord between traditional values of the older generation and changing values of the younger generation.**
 - Participants across segments spoke of a disconnect between Hispanic family values and personal values related to gender roles in particular.

“

It is very common for Hispanic families to have more conservative views, like the older generation. So, it sucks when the newer generation is open-minded on different things – especially when it comes to like, U.S. culture, and being open to more diverse ideology. It's like **that separation makes it kind of difficult** at times. (18-24_Recent Not Frequent User_Bicultural)

”

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES RELATED TO THEIR HISPANIC IDENTITY CON'T

- **Acculturative disconnect between parents and children.**
 - Bicultural segments highlighted challenge of integrating into the American culture while maintaining connection to their Hispanic identity.

“

Now, I barely speak Spanish. Only when I am talking to my mom. I don't want to talk about it in school or anything like that. So, **I kind of want to start embracing that side of me more**, because I don't want to lose touch with it...that's what makes everybody special...where you're from. Where your family comes from.” (15-17_Susceptible Non-trier_ Bicultural)

”

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES RELATED TO THEIR HISPANIC IDENTITY CON'T

- **Experiences of both in and out group discrimination are common.**
 - Both lower and higher acculturation segments more frequently than bicultural noted challenges with discrimination based on skin color and language proficiency (English or Spanish).

“

Yeah, a lot of people think that if you are Hispanic, you should automatically know the language. And, like, just my last name alone...[my] Spanish teacher saw that my last name was [X] and she automatically started speaking Spanish to me...I was so lost, because I did not grow up speaking Spanish...So, there's just like a lot of stereotypes around. (15-17_Susceptible Non-trier_More Acculturated)

”

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE IS MIXED

- Participants had mixed perceptions about whether tobacco or nicotine was more or less likely to negatively impact physical health or lead to addiction.
- Higher acculturation segments had greater overall knowledge and familiarity with tobacco and nicotine.

“

I'm not really sure. I know that tobacco and nicotine are both addictive...I feel like all of these would be on that list of stuff to avoid... [but] I wouldn't really know how to differentiate between either one of them. (15-17_Susceptible User_Bicultural)

”

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF TOBACCO AND NICOTINE IS MIXED (CON'T)

- Most believe e-cigarettes contain nicotine and that nicotine is addictive.
- There was less consensus on the relationship between nicotine and tobacco.
- Few participants considered e-cigarettes as a product that contained tobacco.



PRODUCT TERMINOLOGY: E-CIGARETTES

- Across all acculturation level subgroups, the most common terminology used to identify e-cigarette products were vape, vape pen, Juul, Puff Bars, dab pens, pods, and e-cigarettes. Occasional mentions included carts, pods, mods, cuvie, and nic.
- Juul and Puff Bars, although brand names, were frequently used as generic terms for any e-cigarette product.



E-CIGARETTE USE IS COMMON AMONG HISPANIC YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

- Participants say e-cigarette use is pervasive. While most frequent among White young people, use transcends race/ethnicities.
 - Age of initiation is early high school.
- When shown a product board, in addition to e-cigarettes, cigarettes and hookah were most familiar.
 - Participants with lower acculturation levels were overall less familiar with tobacco products.



PERCEPTIONS OF E-CIGARETTE HARM ARE POLARIZED

LOWER HARM

- Controlling contents of e-cigarettes (e.g., nicotine level) and frequency of use reduced harm perception.
- Beliefs that vapor is less harmful than combustion and knowledge of e-cigarettes as a cessation device contributed to lower harm perceptions.

HIGHER HARM

- Perceived negative health risks (e.g., cancer, lung disease), and uncertain long-term effects increased risk perception.
- Easy access, concealed use, and varying nicotine levels associated with amplified harm potential.
- For some, flavors make e-cigarettes more addictive.

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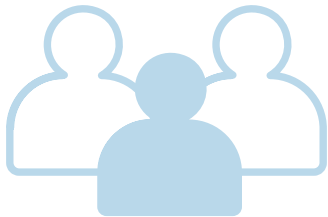
[Vapes] have been advertised as healthier because of all the water vapor – that it is mostly vapor. (18-24_Recent Not Frequent User_More Acculturated)

”

CURIOSITY DRIVES E-CIGARETTE INITIATION

- E-cigarette initiation was linked to curiosity, which was driven by:

Flavors.



Social norms.

Sensation seeking.



Some bicultural and lower acculturation segments discussed elder family members smoking cigarettes as sparking their curiosity to try their generation's version.

“

It really just stemmed off of curiosity and **what the people around you were doing**. I know that my big sister and my parents are a big influence on what I do, and what I think, and so are my friends...It was like, 'What is it like? What does it taste like?' I am a very curious person, and I act on my curiosity. (15-17_Recent Not Freq_BiCul).

”

“

They want to try it and see what it feels like. Like, what's the hype?...**Does it even feel good?** Like **what do you get out of it?** So you want to find out what they are feeling, I would say. Just curiosity, in general. (18-24_Recent Not Freq_More ACC)

”

CONTINUED USE DRIVEN BY PEERS, PERCEIVED BENEFITS

- Keeping up with **peers, maintaining friendships**, and **social aspects** such as “looking cool” to peers encourages repeated use.
- **Addiction** (though not always by name) was consistently mentioned across groups for continued use.
- Many participants discussed perceived **benefits to mental health** (relief from anxiety or depression) as a reason for continued use.

“ I think that various factors come into play. Maybe they use it as a way to de-stress or, like, to deal with stuff. Or sometimes the **nicotine levels** that the product that they are using has...**Maybe it hooks them** and their body reacts to it and their brain keeps telling them, ‘Oh, maybe let’s do it again, next time.’ Or, they just get hooked on it. ... It really depends. Or even the person – like when they get addicted to heroin – but then there’s people who have been sober for seven years. So, it could be the person’s willpower as well. So I guess it really depends. (18_24_Frequent User_Bicultural) ”

“ Personally, I don’t do it, but if I saw one of my Hispanic or Latino classmates ... [if I] were to see a group of people smoking like a vape, or something, they’d be like, ‘**Oh, everyone else is doing it.** I should be doing it, too. I can fit in.’ It’s mostly the fitting in part of it. (15-17_Recent Not Frequent User_More Acculturated) ”

SOME CHALLENGES RELATED TO HISPANIC IDENTITY MAY MAKE E-CIGARETTES MORE APPEALING

- According to some participants, the disconnect between generations and fear of stigma/ stereotyping around vaping may make ease of concealment appealing.
 - Some participants in both the bicultural and lower acculturation segments highlighted the ability to easily hide e-cigarettes from elder family members.
 - Lower acculturation segments specifically mentioned the stigma and disapproval associated with vaping in the Hispanic community.

“

It's a little bit easier to hide it [e-cigarettes compared to cigarettes] from like strict parents. (18-24_Recent Not Frequent User_ Bicultural)

”

SOME ELEMENTS OF HISPANIC IDENTITY MAY PROTECT AGAINST USE OF E-CIGARETTES

- Across segments, participants noted the following influences on behaviors related to e-cigarette use:
 - Family:
 - Disappointment or disapproval from relatives (more common in susceptible non-trier risk group).
 - Seeing family members struggle with addiction.
 - Work ethic:
 - Reinforced in Hispanic families and culture.
 - Feeling the need to work hard and make the most of opportunities.

The bicultural and less acculturated segments more frequently discussed being motivated to work hard and succeed because of previous generations' sacrifices. The concept of “respeto” was more frequently mentioned in these segments as well.

“

...I am first-generation, here in the U.S. So, my parents did not have the opportunity that I had with schooling. And they didn't have – I guess they just thought they could never reach the American dream. So, I feel like it is just ingrained in us, to actually move forward, pay it, and contribute back to whoever paved the way for us to be here. (18-24_Frequent User_Bicultural)

”

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR E-CIGARETTE USE VARY BY ACCULTURATION LEVEL

Segment-specific considerations

HIGHER ACCULTURATION

- Believe that nicotine is in products that burn
- Link direct peer pressure to e-cigarette use



BICULTURAL

- Navigate dual stressors: Hispanic roots vs. assimilation
- Curiosity about e-cigarettes, may lead to experimentation
- Peer pressure linked to e-cigarette use
- Recognize use of e-cigarettes leads to strain on family, still open to use
- Flavors reduce self-efficacy to quit or moderate e-cigarette use

LOWER ACCULTURATION

- Limited awareness of tobacco products other than e-cigarettes, hookah, and cigarettes
- Some unaware of nicotine content in products other than e-cigarettes and cigarettes
- Concerned with stigma and disapproval associated with vaping from Hispanic community members
- Link desire to fit in or “look cool” as a driver for use
- Highlighted the strain e-cigarette use has on family

IMPLICATIONS

PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING OF HISPANIC YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO MAY BE AT HIGHER RISK



Who they are, what they value, and what they have experienced



What they are thinking



What they are feeling



What they are wondering





Who they are, what they value, and what they have experienced

- Fifteen to seventeen years old (though some level of risk is present at all age cohorts in this study).
- More acculturated or bicultural.
- High value on relationships and togetherness; close to others who use e-cigarettes.
- Motivated to work hard; aware of previous generations' sacrifices.
- Feel tension between Hispanic values (respeto, marianismo) and mainstream values of independence.



What they are thinking

- Curiosity is normal, and it's okay to try things; interest is greatest around e-cigarettes.
- Unsure whether e-cigarettes contain nicotine or what nicotine is.
- I can control how much I use e-cigarettes and how much nicotine I consume—and, subsequently, I can control potential negative outcomes.
- People who get addicted to e-cigarettes haven't used them “responsibly.”
- E-cigarettes would be easy to get, I can use e-cigarettes anywhere, and I won't get caught.
- If I'm going to “try” something, e-cigarettes are not that bad (compared, for example, to cigarettes).
- Vapor isn't as harmful as smoke.



What they are feeling

- Curious, especially bicultural young people.
- Anxious, stressed, or sad, or even that they need an “escape.”
- Desire to fit in, especially bicultural young people—a desire to connect emotionally with others through something they have in common, like the use of e-cigarettes.
- Pulled from the middle—between Hispanic and non-Hispanic friends, between older peers and family members they admire and younger peers and family members they want to protect, between acculturation levels of self and important others.
- Aware of negative impact of the use of e-cigarettes on family relationships but are willing to use e-cigarettes regardless, especially bicultural young people.



What they are wondering

- What does a nicotine buzz feel like?
- With a pleasant smell and so many flavors, how do e-cigarettes taste?
- What's the appeal? Why are my friends using e-cigarettes?
- Is using e-cigarettes fun?
- Will I get more friends if I use e-cigarettes, especially with peers at social gatherings?

- Larger sample sizes in a quantitative effort would allow for additional exploration of the intersections of key demographics.
- The formative nature of this research resulted in iterative updates to the Moderator's Guide during fielding.
- Finally, there may be biases to the data collected as a result of:
 - Self-selection.
 - Social desirability and acquiescence research has documented that these biases are particularly salient among Hispanic people.

- Acculturation is critical to understanding experiences, risk, and protective factors related to e-cigarette initiation and experimentation among Hispanic youth and young adults.
- Public health efforts must recognize the heterogeneity of the Hispanic population and the role acculturation plays in susceptibility to e-cigarettes.
- More research is needed to explore intersectionality among acculturation and other variables including gender, national background, race, and sexual orientation in order to more fully understand Hispanic youth and young adults that may be at higher and lower risk of e-cigarette use.

THANK YOU

FDA

“Yo diría que es una comunidad fuerte cuando nos identificamos como Latinos. Siempre se sabe que hay confianza entre nosotros. Tenemos experiencias muy similares. Será por lo que sufrimos igual... por la historia que tenemos, hemos transformado este país”.

[“I would say that it is a strong community when we identify ourselves as Latinos. We know that there is trust among us. We have very similar experiences. It’s likely because of what we commonly endure ... because of the history we have, we have transformed this country.”]

Questions?

Contact: Emily.Sanders@fda.hhs.gov

APPENDIX

- We worked with two recruitment vendors to hit our targets for recruitment.

Field Goals	Rivera Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on high acculturation and bicultural participants.• Maintains a database of thousands of potential participants who have voluntarily opted in to be contacted for focus group opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on low acculturation participants.• Specializes in recruitment of Hispanic people.• Has built a database of potential participants through direct-to-community touchpoints including faith-based organizations.

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