

Are Adolescents Attempting to Buy Cigarettes on the Internet?

The availability of tobacco products online raises questions about whether minors might turn to Internet cigarette vendors as a source of cigarettes. This study provides the first assessment of the extent to which minors attempt to purchase tobacco on the Internet.

Key Findings

The study analyzed surveys completed by more than 17,000 10th and 12th grade students in California during the 1999-2000 school year.

- Of the 1,689 respondents who identified as current smokers, only 2.2% reported attempting to buy cigarettes online.
- Online cigarette purchasing attempts were more common among younger respondents, males, frequent smokers, and those who felt they had limited access to cigarettes from friends or retail stores.

Although the overall proportion of minors who had sought cigarettes online was low, this study showed that the Internet could become a source of cigarettes for youth as Internet access grows and access to cigarettes through retail stores becomes increasingly difficult for minors. The study raises the need for continued monitoring and regulation of online tobacco sales.

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