

Estimates of Cigarette Smoking From the NJ Adult Tobacco Survey: Real or Spurious?

Cristine D. Delnevo, PhD, MPH; Daniel A. Gundersen, MA; Mary Hrywna, MPH; Olivia Wackowski, MPH; Randal S. ZuWallack, MS

Objective: To explore, post hoc, whether a large decline in smoking estimates between the 2005 and 2006 New Jersey Adult Tobacco Surveys is real or spurious given various methodological and environmental changes between the 2 time periods of data collection. **Methods:** Using multiple data sources, we explored survey timing, poststratification approach, midinterview terminations, wireless substitution, and question order. **Results:** Changes in question

order were likely responsible for the majority of the unexpected decline in smoking prevalence; to a lesser degree, wireless substitution and midinterview terminations also likely contributed to an artificially exaggerated decline. **Conclusion:** Methodological changes can artificially affect trends in prevalence estimates.

Key words: cigarette smoking, surveillance, survey methods, response rates, survey bias

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