Agenda

• What is menthol?
• What are the harms of menthol?
• Who is using menthol?
• What is the history of menthol?
• How has the tobacco industry marketed menthol?
• What has been done to regulate menthol?
WHAT IS MENTHOL?

Menthol...

- Is a chemical compound extracted from the peppermint or corn mint plant or created synthetically.
- Has anesthetic or numbing qualities.
- Is used to relieve throat irritation and produces a cooling feeling.

Menthol is used as an additive in nearly all cigarettes to make them more palatable, but only some are promoted as menthol-flavored cigarettes.
WHAT ARE THE HARMS OF MENTHOL?

MENTHOL’S IMPACT
BY THE NUMBERS

ACCORDING TO THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, smoking-related illnesses kill more Black Americans than AIDS, car crashes, murders and drug and alcohol abuse combined.¹

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN TOBACCO CENTRAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
Menthol = Easier to Start

“Menthol helps the poison go down easier.”
-Phillip Gardiner, Dr. PH

Menthol = Harder to Quit

- Menthol increases nicotine absorption, leading to greater dependence.
- Among high school smokers, those who smoke menthols are more likely to smoke within one hour of waking and more likely to report cravings compared to high school smokers of non-menthols.

Percent of Smokers Who Quit


WHO IS USING MENTHOL?
MN Youth Tobacco Survey, 2014

Percent of smokers who use menthol

MN High School Smokers: 44%
MN Adult Smokers: 22%

African Americans Use Menthol More Than Other Racial/Ethnic Groups


African Americans Adult Smokers Who Use Menthol

5% 14% 44% 82%
1920s: Invention of Menthol Cigarettes

- Lloyd “Spud” Hughes, an Ohio smoker
- Spud brand cigarettes, first menthol cigarettes
  - Many others would follow
  - By 1932, Spuds were the 5th best-selling cigarette in the country

TPSAC Report
1933-1955: Kool Dominates

• Brown & Williamson
• Originally introduced for use to calm throats irritated by smoking regular cigarettes or winter weather
• Seen as a specialty product, not for regular use
  – “For occasional use-Kool for a change”
  – “In between the others, rest your throat with Kools”

KOOL ad, 1937
Source: Stanford School of Medicine
1956-1962: Rise of Salem

- R.J. Reynolds
- Introduced in 1956, first menthol with a filter
- Marketed as a light and refreshing smoke with slogan like “refreshing as all outdoors”
- By 1960, annual sales were $35 billion, 7.5% of cigarette market
- Newport introduced

Salem ad, 1956
Source: Stanford School of Medicine
1963-1974: Kool Comeback

- Kool markets heavily to African Americans and younger people
  - Kool becomes market leader in menthol
- Newport growth begins
- Menthol brands grow from 9 to 23

In 1969 alone, Lorillard increased its "Negro market budget" by 87% over 1968 due to increased efforts marketing its menthol cigarette, Newport, to the African American market.

Source: Stanford School of Medicine

- Menthol accounted for 28% of cigarette market share
- Newport is leading menthol brand
  - “Alive with pleasure”
- Marlboro menthol was second most popular
  - “…menthol smokers are likely to be female, black, younger, and city dwellers.”

TPSAC Report

Newport ad, 1976
Source: Stanford School of Medicine
Menthol: Tobacco Industry Targeting

- There is sufficient research to **confirm** that tobacco companies targeted youth, women, and African Americans with menthol marketing
- Research also **suggests** that tobacco companies targeted Latinos, Asians, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders
“We don’t smoke that s___. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the black and stupid.”

RJ Reynolds Executive, 1971

R.J. Reynolds executive’s reply when asked why he didn’t smoke according to Dave Goerlitz, lead Winston model for seven years for R.J. Reynolds.] Giovanni, J, “Come to Cancer Country; USA; Focus,” The Times of London, August 2, 1992.

“…the base of our business is the high school student.”

Lorillard (Makers of Newport), 1978
Menthol & Women

• Women were the first group targeted for menthol.
• The tobacco industry used messages about cleanliness and freshness to appeal to female smokers.
• Women are 1.6 times more likely than men to smoke menthols.


[Image: 1976 advertisement for Belair menthol cigarettes]
"In 1915, Mrs. Cheryl Van Easton cleverly hid her cigarettes in a hollow duck decoy; The decoy fooled her husband and 750 southbound mallards."
You've come a long way, baby."
"Virginia Slims. With rich Virginia flavor women like."

Ad found in:
Family Circle, January 1976

KOOL ad, 1991
Source: Stanford School of Medicine

www.trinketsandtrash.org
Spanish KOOL ad, 1990s
Source: Stanford School of Medicine

Ad Found in:
Vogue: March 2004
Jane: February 2004
Latina: February 2004
Sports Illustrated, November 2003
Cosmopolitan: November 2003
Honey: November 2003
Maxim: November 2003

www.trinketsandtrash.org
Menthol & African Americans

“No one really knows how African Americans came to prefer menthol cigarettes in the first place. But relentlessly targeted marketing campaigns locked the preference in place.”

*The Atlantic, 2011*
Targeting started in 1960s with these five approaches:
1. Collect data about AA consumers
2. Use mobile marketing vans
3. Develop special promotions for inner city tobacco retailers
4. Engage with local organizations to improve corporate image
5. Advertise in AA magazines

Yerger et al. (2007)

1. Collect data about AA consumers

“A Study of Ethnic Markets”
R.J. Reynolds, 1969
240 page report of “Negro, Spanish-language, and Jewish special markets”

Source: https://industrydocuments.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=jrgc0035
“Blacks simply have more pressing concerns than smoking issues.”

-RJ Reynolds, 1985

TPSAC Report

“The daring, flamboyant aspect of YA [young adult] Black smokers’ personalities are evident in the many trends they start. And the fact that these trends often spread to the general population speaks to the unrecognized power and influence of this subgroup yields on society.”

R.J. Reynolds, 1989

TPSAC Report
2. Mobile Marketing Vans

Introducing: Black Lives / Black Lungs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmaWcSj5rhk

Background

For many years, Salem has carried the image of a brand that the older generation smoked. The brand considered most popular among the Black TAL - Newport and secondly Kool. The Salem Black Initiative Program was created to combat the build that Kool and Newport have over the young adult, Black consumer market. The specific target for this program is the 18-25 year old, Black, female and male consumer.

This year-round program is presently being conducted in three lead markets - Chicago, Cleveland, and Memphis.

The Salem Video Van promotions are scheduled five to six days a week, 8-12 hours a day. Video van stops include:

- retail outlets
- currency exchanges/check cashing stations
- public aid offices
- large housing complexes
- shopping malls
- rapid transit locations
- busy street corners
- nightclubs/bars

At each video van stop, Salem samplers distribute full complimentary packs of Salem cigarettes and/or unique Salem premium items to qualified individuals.

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“Salem Black Initiative Program”

RJR, 1989
3. Develop special promotions for inner city tobacco retailers

1989, Salem Black Initiative Lead Market Plan:

“Objective is to attract growing segment of 18-24 year old urban Black smokers. Program includes monthly retail pack promotions.”

4. Engage with local organizations to improve corporate image

“Kool is to develop programs which ingratiate themselves with the Black community. These programs are to show the makers of Kool as a community citizen, be backfire-proof and pave the way for supporting the brand...”

- Brown & Williamson, 1976

Source: https://industrydocuments.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=mtdn0139
Bottom Line…

Keep African Americans engaged as consumers and silent as opponents, while getting their African American leaders to speak on behalf of the tobacco industry.

Dr. Valerie Yerger

AA Organizations with Ties to Tobacco

- NAACP
- National Urban League
- Congressional Black Caucus
- National Black Chamber of Commerce
- National Black Police Association
- United Negro College Fund
- Southern Christian Leadership Council
- National Conference of Black Mayors

Yerger et. al (2007)
"The National Black Chamber of Commerce believes strongly that menthol is a rather inconsequential ingredient in a cigarette. Menthol simply is a taste preference preferred by African Americans and it should not be singled out for a ban."

- Harry Alford, TPSAC Public Hearing, March 17, 2011
Kool Jazz Festival Ad, 1981
Source: Stanford School of Medicine

Source: Trinkets & Trash
5. Advertise in AA magazines

“Younger adult Blacks of the 1930s to 1950s had basically gone with whatever brand was big among younger adult White smokers…It was time for Blacks to build their own brand in the 1960s, the heyday of Martin Luther King and ‘Black pride’… Kool apparently capitalized on this aspect of the 1960s by simply advertising to Blacks before its competitors did. Kool ads were in Ebony consistently from at least 1962, when our records start…Kool became ‘cool’ and, by the early 1970s, had a 56% share among younger adult Blacks – it was the Black Marlboro.”

- Diane Burrows, RJ Reynolds, 1984

http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/ene39d00

“However, if the key objective is to sell more of Product A to more Negroes, then they must be communicated with, not merely reached.”


https://industrydocuments.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=jrgc0035
1962

Source: Stanford Research into the Impact of Tobacco Advertising

1974

Sources: http://tobacco.stanford.edu/ and www.trinketsandtrash.org

2013
Newport ad, 1994
Source: Stanford School of Medicine

Source: www.trinketsandtrash.org 2004
Menthol and the LGBTQ Community

- Menthol use is significantly higher among LGBTQ smokers, especially LGBTQ youth.
- The tobacco industry targets the LGBTQ community in general, and specifically with menthol products.

Source: Trinkets and Trash
"America's best companies can't put a value dollar on diversity, but they recognize the importance of it nonetheless...each of these companies has decided to demonstrate its commitment to gay and lesbian Americans by speaking directly to us in...Companies that Care."

January 2002 issue of OUT

Source: Trinkets and Trash
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REGULATE MENTHOL?

Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, 2009

Congress bans the manufacture of all cigarettes with candy, fruit, or spice flavorings

Directed the FDA to decide whether continued sale of menthol is “appropriate for public health”
TPSAC: Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee

“Removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health in the United States.”

TPSAC report, March 2011

Tobacco Industry Opposition

- **Lorillard’s ad campaign:** Adults should be free to choose to smoke menthol cigarettes with the headline "Freedom of Choice for Grown Folks" and that "the history of African Americans in this country has been one of fighting against paternalistic limitations and for freedoms"

- **Litigation:** Lorillard sued the FDA in 2011. A district court judge ordered the FDA to disregard TPSAC reports and findings. The FDA appealed that ruling. In January 2016, the appellate court reversed the Judge’s earlier decision. The appellate court’s ruling frees the FDA to rely on the TPSAC menthol report to take action to regulate menthol tobacco products.
Bottom Line…

• Let’s not wait for the FDA to act when we know we can work together to protect our communities from the harm of menthol.

What can we do?

• The only city to regulate the sale of menthol is Chicago.
• Cities and counties in MN have the authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products, including menthol.
• Minneapolis and St. Paul have prohibited the sale of non-menthol flavored tobacco products in stores where kids can enter. The same could be done for menthol.
If menthol were banned…

• Of MN Adults who smoke menthol, about half said they would quit smoking if menthol cigarettes were no longer sold in the United States. (MATS, 2014)

Join our menthol coalition!

• A group of health and community organizations in Minnesota committed to reducing the harm caused by menthol-flavored cigarettes and other tobacco products. We share a common goal of working to reduce the harm caused by menthol tobacco.

• Contact Betsy Brock (betsy@ansrmn.org) or LaTrisha Vetaw (lvetaw@northpointinc.org) to sign up!
For more information and a guide for church leaders, visit:

http://www.naatpn.org/nomentholsunday

Discussion

• What message against menthol resonated most with you?

• What materials would be helpful to bring this information to your communities?

• What steps do you plan to take to spread the message about the danger of menthol?
Questions?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead