

Significance

We examined patterns of flavored combustible tobacco use (menthol cigarette use and/or flavored cigars use) at the intersection of age, sex, race and ethnicity, and income to better understand the impact of the proposed FDA flavor ban on subgroups of the population.

Methods

Data source: 2018-2019 Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey

Study sample: N=135,781 US adult respondents (18+)

Intersectionality definition: We used four sociodemographic variables to generate an intersectionality variable with 72 categories:

- Age (18-34, 35-54, 55+)
- Sex (male (M), female (F))
- Race and ethnicity (NH White (NHW), NH Black (NHB), Hispanic (H), NH other (NHO))
- Annual household income (<\$50,000 (LI), \$50,000-\$99,999 (MI), \$100,000 or more (HI))

Combustible tobacco use definition: We classified respondents into five categories:

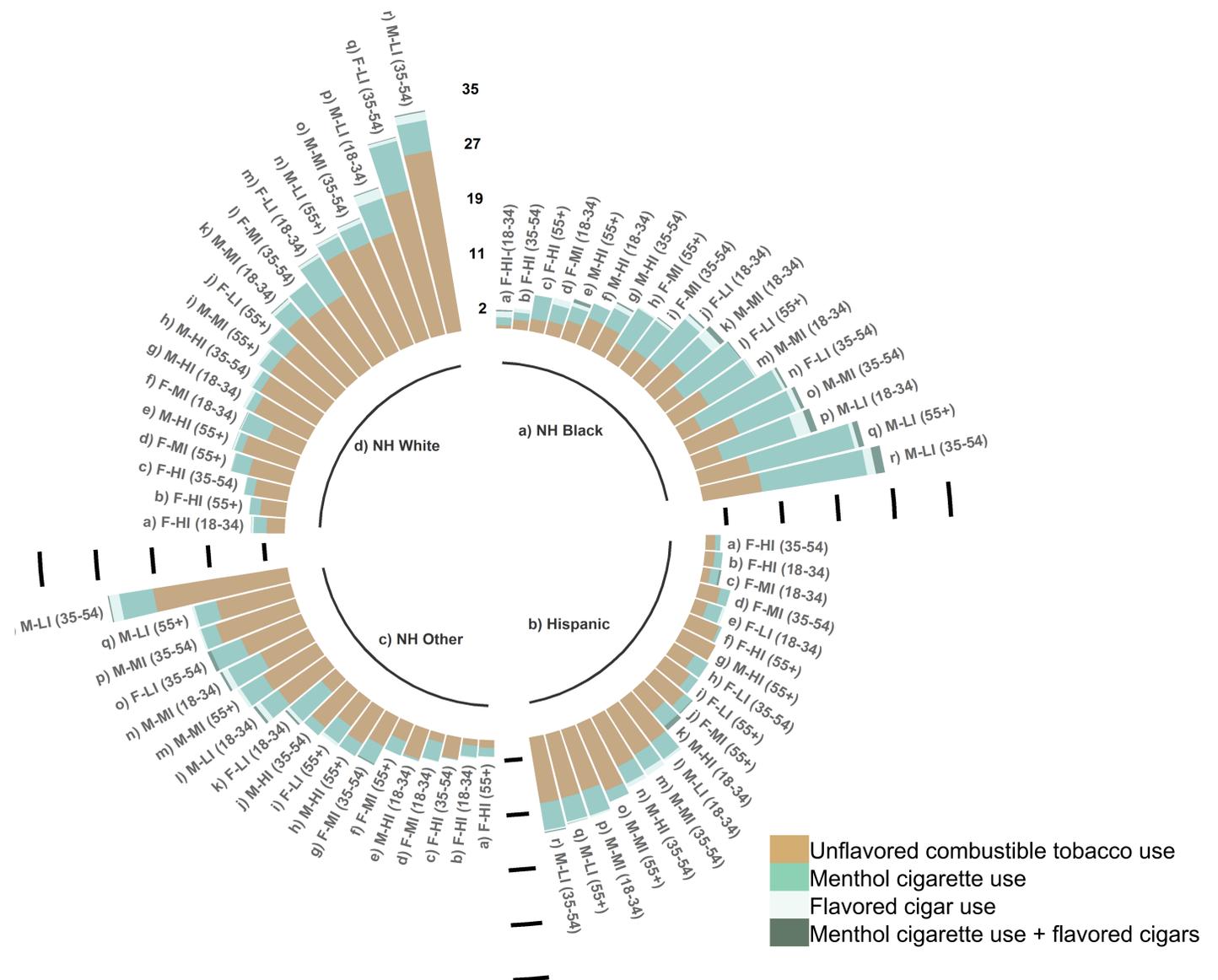
1. No current use of cigars or cigarettes
2. Unflavored combustible tobacco use (cigarettes and/or cigars)
3. Menthol cigarette use, with or without unflavored cigars
4. Flavored cigar use, with or without non-menthol cigarettes
5. Dual use of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars

Analytic strategy

- We estimated weighted prevalence of flavored and unflavored combustible tobacco use and 95% confidence intervals at the intersection of age, sex, race and ethnicity, and income.
- We showed results by using a visualization tool that allows a detailed characterization of patterns and tobacco use disparities.

Results & Key Findings

Figure 1. Prevalence of menthol cigarette use, flavored cigar use, and dual use of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars at the intersection of age, sex, race and ethnicity, and income.



- **Flavored combustible tobacco use was highest among low-income NH Black adults.** For example, the prevalence of combustible tobacco use among low-income NH Black male adults aged 35-54 was 26.3%, with flavored combustible tobacco use contributing the most to the prevalence: exclusive menthol cigarette use (15.2%), unflavored combustible tobacco use (8.6%), dual use of menthol cigarettes and flavor cigars (1.3%), and exclusive flavor cigar use (1.2%).
- **Unflavored combustible tobacco use was highest among low-income NH White adults.** For example, the prevalence of combustible tobacco use among low-income NH White male adults aged 35-54 years was 32.6%, with unflavored combustible tobacco use contributing the most to the prevalence: unflavored combustible use (26.6%), exclusive menthol cigarette use (4.5%), exclusive flavor cigar use (1.2%), and dual use menthol cigarettes and flavor cigar use (0.2%).

Discussion & Conclusions

- Our study reveals the population groups disproportionality affected by the use of flavored and unflavored combustible tobacco products.
- The proposed FDA flavor ban has the potential to reduce tobacco use among low-income NH Black communities, given their disproportionate use of flavored combustible tobacco products.
- The proposed FDA ban would have a limited effect on reducing tobacco use among communities with high rates of unflavored tobacco use, including low-income NH White populations.

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