

A Mixed Methods Study of the Stanislaus State Community's Knowledge and Behaviors Surrounding Tobacco/Nicotine

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Tobacco and nicotine have undeniable adverse health effects, making it one of public health's greatest epidemic threats. The chemicals present in tobacco product waste (TPW), carcinogenic nitrosamines, formaldehyde, heavy metals, and various other toxicants, have the potential to leech from cigarette butts and eventually bio-accumulate in the human food chain. To effectively prevent and control tobacco-related health disparities, various points of intervention are required—a critical point being college students. As students of California State University, Stanislaus, we created our study with the goal of exploring the CSUS campus community's tobacco/nicotine use and disposal, perceptions of use, and level of tobacco-related environmental knowledge. The ACHA III provides data on tobacco and nicotine usage for the students at California State University, Stanislaus (CSUS), however, there is no data available that includes CSUS faculty and staff. Additionally, our study intends to examine additional variables such as LGBTQ+ status, familial immigration status, age, and geographical location. We conducted a mixed methods study that included unobtrusive participant observations at multiple CSUS campus locations alongside an online survey. Our tentative findings show people visiting the CSUS campus are rarely smoking in the places we observed and the smoking that does occur mainly happens on the outskirts of campus. We did not observe any TPW disposal behaviors. When compared to their peers, community members, and strangers, most survey respondents were most concerned with their family's tobacco use.