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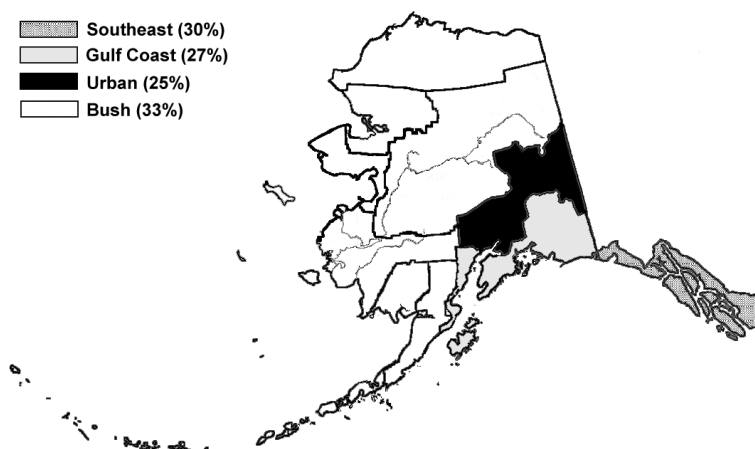
Smoking Related Mortality in Alaska: 1992-94

Cigarette Smoking in Alaska

Alaska has one of the highest smoking prevalence rates in the United States. Alaska's smoking rates are similar to those found in Nevada and in the tobacco-growing states¹. Alaska Natives have even higher smoking rates (Table 1). The highest smoking prevalence is found in the Bush region, and the lowest in the Urban region (Figure 1).

	Alaska Native ²	All Races ³
Men	46.5%	28.1%
Women	39.3%	25.0%

Figure 1. Smoking Prevalence in Alaska²



Deaths Caused by Smoking

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated that each year cigarette smoking results in approximately 419,000 deaths in the United States⁴. Deaths that are related to cigarette smoking include a portion of: cardiovascular disease; cancers of the lung, larynx, oral cavity, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, kidney and cervix; chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and other respiratory deaths⁵. Smoking also results in deaths in the perinatal period because it causes low birth weight infants and preterm delivery.

Using software provided by CDC⁵, we estimate that **1,416 deaths to Alaska residents** during 1992-1994 were attributable to smoking, accounting for 19.8% of the 7,159 deaths during that time (Table 2).

Cause of Death	Total # of Deaths ⁶	Smoking Related Deaths ⁵	Percent Smoking Related
Cardiovascular	2,010	533	26.5%
Cancers	1,655	546	33.0%
Respiratory	503	260	51.7%
Perinatal (<12 mos)	204	14	6.9%
Total	7,159	1,416	19.8%

Smoking Related Mortality Among Men and Women in Alaska

Of the 1,402 deaths among adults attributable to smoking, 912 were men, and 490 were women. Historically, men have been smoking longer than women and many smoking deaths are caused by long term use of cigarettes. Because smoking rates are now similar for men and women, women may have higher smoking attributable mortality in the future.

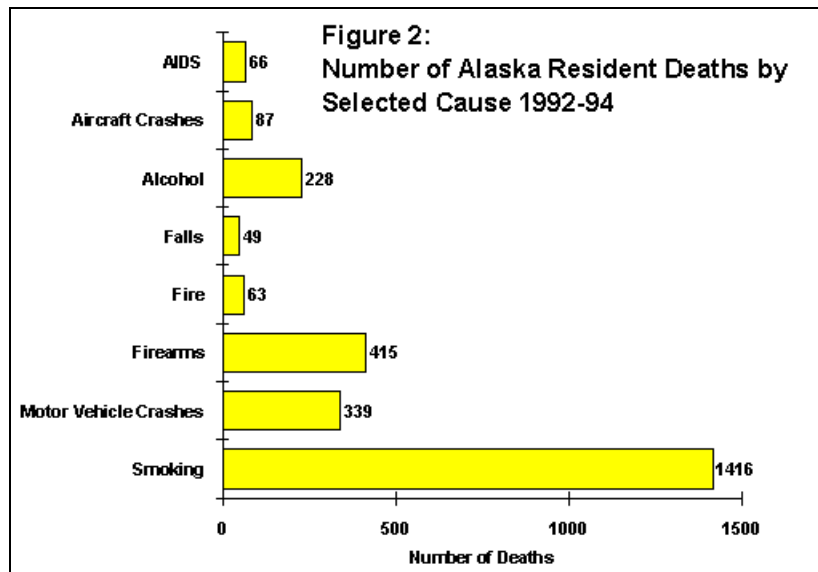
Deaths to Alaska Natives from Smoking

Alaska Natives account for 23.2% (329) of the smoking related deaths, although they account for 16.5% of the state's

population.

Comparison to Other Important Causes of Death

The graph below shows how smoking compares to other preventable causes of death in Alaska⁷.



Summary

Each year, smoking kills more Alaskans than AIDS, aircraft crashes, alcohol, falls, fires, firearms and motor vehicle crashes combined. Alaska Natives are at higher risk because of their higher smoking rates.

Tobacco is considered the leading preventable cause of death in the United States⁸. The majority of smokers began smoking before 18 years of age⁹. In the U.S., by the 1980's, almost no regular smoking began after the age of 18⁹. Therefore, efforts to decrease tobacco use in the U.S. are being directed towards school-age children and adolescents, including limiting advertising and access to cigarettes¹⁰. Additional tobacco cessation efforts include developing and enacting strong policies for clean indoor air, increasing excise taxes and increasing educational efforts.

References

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7. Mortality Data for Alaska Residents, provided by the Bureau of Vital Records, AK Division of Public Health. Aircraft Crashes: ICD-9 840-845; AIDS ICD-9 42-44; Alcohol ICD-9 291,303,305,357.5,535.3, 425.5, 790.3, 860, 571.0-571.3; Falls ICD-9 880-888; Fires ICD-9 890-899; Firearms ICD-9 922,955,965,970,985; Motor Vehicle Crashes ICD-9 810-825
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