

Hello and welcome to the fourth *PATH Study Newsletter*. Thank you for your ongoing participation in the PATH Study. Every interview you complete helps researchers better understand the effects of tobacco products on the health of people in the United States.

Researching Tobacco Use for the Next Generation: Dr. Eva Sharma and Dr. Katy Edwards

Dr. Eva Sharma and Dr. Katy Edwards are leading voices in tobacco research who are committed to understanding the effects of tobacco use, particularly among youth.

Eva and Katy are Principal Research Associates at Westat. Eva joined the Westat PATH Study team in 2015 after earning her doctorate in public health with a focus on tobacco research from the University of Maryland. Katy joined the Westat PATH Study the following year after completing her postdoctoral fellowship in tobacco regulatory science at the University of California, San Francisco.

Eva and Katy became fast friends through their shared expertise in pharmacology research, love of soup dumplings, and growing families. Eva has 2 boys, ages 10 and 4, who keep her busy. “Being a mom, I have a particular interest in e-cigarette use among youth and want to better understand ways we can prevent tobacco use in future generations.”



Dr. Eva Sharma

Katy welcomed her first child earlier this year. “With a newborn, I am always looking at labels and thinking about what she might be exposed to. There are so many new types of tobacco products on the market. This has made me even more interested in understanding the harmful chemicals in tobacco products.”



Dr. Katy Edwards

Eva and Katy have a keen interest in sharing what they learn from the PATH Study with the research community and the public. As moms and scientists, they work to improve public health for the next generation each day.



Exciting news: You can now complete your PATH Study interview online in 2025!

This change can make completing the interview easier and more convenient. When it is time to start your interview, we will send you a letter, email, or text with the web address and your unique PIN. If you can't complete your interview online, a PATH Study interviewer will contact you to complete it in person.

What Is the Connection Between Tobacco Products and Breathing Problems Among Young People?

We know cigarette smoking can cause disease among people of all ages. But we're still learning about the health effects of other tobacco products like e-cigarettes, especially among young people. The PATH Study data help us better understand the connection.

For example, researchers looked at data from more than 21,000 young people ages 12 to 24 who completed the PATH Study interview from 2016 to 2017. They wanted to find out: what's the relationship between tobacco product use and breathing problems like coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath in people in this age group?

Key findings:

- Young people are more likely to have breathing problems if they:
 - ✓ Smoke cigarettes
 - ✓ Use cannabis (marijuana)
 - ✓ Are exposed to any secondhand smoke
- In young people who smoke cigarettes, the risk of breathing problems is higher the more they smoke.
- The data don't show a link between e-cigarette use and breathing problems. However, the tobacco market has changed in the last 8 years. New e-cigarette and vaping products might have different health implications. Information from future PATH Study data interviews will help researchers see how these products affect our health over time.



The Link Between Tobacco Products and Oral Health in U.S. Adults

Many people in the United States have problems with their teeth and gums. These problems can cause pain, make teeth fall out, and be expensive to fix. They can also make doing things at home, school, or work hard.



Using tobacco, including smoking or chewing it, is bad for your mouth. There's strong evidence that smoking cigarettes can cause gum disease, which hurts your gums and the bones around

your teeth. But the way people use tobacco and nicotine is changing, especially with the rise of e-cigarettes.

From 2013 to 2019, thousands of adults in the PATH Study answered questions about their oral health. Using the data from these participants, researchers can show the connection between tobacco products and oral health.

Key findings:

- ✓ **Cigarettes:** People who smoke cigarettes have more gum disease and loose or missing teeth. People who smoke for a long time can also have bone loss around their teeth.
- ✓ **Cigars:** People who smoke cigars are more likely to get cancer in their mouth.
- ✓ **E-Cigarettes:** Many people who use e-cigarettes have problems like bleeding after brushing or flossing. This could lead to gum disease over time. Data from future waves of the PATH Study can tell us more.

Tips to Stay Physically Active

Getting regular physical activity is important at any age. It can keep your body healthy, reduce stress levels, and help you sleep better.

Federal guidelines recommend that adults get at least **150 minutes (2 ½ hours)** of physical activity each week. Teens should be active for **60 minutes (1 hour)** every day. But even small actions make a difference.

Here are five tips to get moving:



Start slowly. Be active for 10 minutes at a time. If it gets your heart beating faster, it counts!



Try aerobic activities such as walking, dancing, or swimming. Everyday activities like household chores and yard work also get you moving.



Other tips: Take the stairs, park farther away, or walk around the block.



Make those muscles work, too. Try activities like push-ups, sit-ups, lifting weights, or yoga.



Don't like to do it alone? Join a local fitness class or a sports team at your school.



More than
800 scientific papers
have been published using
PATH Study data

PATH Study Data Keep Us Learning—Thanks to You!

Your participation in the PATH Study is a contribution to science. Tobacco researchers use the survey answers you provide to better understand topics like:

- Signs of nicotine dependency among those who use e-cigarettes and cigarettes
- Stages of change for quitting e-cigarettes
- E-cigarette use and chest pain
- Use of smoking-cessation products among women
- Cigar use in youth and young adults
- Social media use and tobacco brand engagement among youth

Thank
you!

Questions?

If you need any help related to the PATH Study, go to pathstudy.nih.gov or call 1-888-311-1819 toll-free. Scan the QR code on your smartphone to get to the website.



... for your participation
in the PATH Study. Your
responses matter and are
very important to this long-
term project.