

# FINDINGS

MARCH 2022 • PREMIUM CIGARS: PATTERNS OF USE, MARKETING, AND HEALTH EFFECTS

In the report *Premium Cigars: Patterns of Use, Marketing, and Health Effects* an expert committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine presents 10 key findings about patterns of use.

To see the report conclusions and recommendations and to read the full report and related resources, please visit [nationalacademies.org/premium-cigars-study](https://nationalacademies.org/premium-cigars-study).

## **Finding 3-1<sup>1</sup>**

Large, machine-produced cigars have been the dominant cigar type for much of the last century. Total cigar consumption began declining in the mid-1970s and reached its lowest level in 1993, when promotion of premium cigars reversed overall consumption trends for all cigar types. Since the release of the National Cancer Institute's 1998 monograph on cigars, overall cigar consumption has increased every year, with a total increase of 145 percent from 1998 to 2020.

## **Finding 3-2**

Premium cigars are consistently a small, stable percent of the U.S. cigar market.

## **Finding 3-3**

About 1 percent of the U.S. adult population smokes premium cigars, a frequency that has remained stable over time.

## **Finding 3-4**

Cigarettes remain the most commonly used combustible tobacco product among adults in the United States. The prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults in 2018–2019 was 16.4 percent compared to 0.7 percent for premium cigars, 0.5 percent for nonpremium cigars, 1.4 percent for cigarillos, and 0.8 percent for filtered cigars.

## **Finding 3-5**

The majority of premium cigar users are male, white, with higher income and education levels compared to those who smoke cigarillos, little filtered cigars, or cigarettes. Premium cigar users are on average 7–10 years older than those who smoke cigarillos or little filtered cigars. Premium cigar use is less common among youth, and only 0.6 percent of those who reported smoking a premium cigar brand in the past 30 days were under the age of 18. Premium cigar use is also less common among women, non-Hispanic Black people, and people with less than a high school education.

## **Finding 3-6**

The frequency and intensity of smoking is lower for premium cigars compared to other types of cigars and cigarettes. Only about 5 percent of premium cigar users smoke these daily, whereas 22 percent of nonpremium cigar users, 19 percent of cigarillo users, 40 percent of filtered cigar users, and 76 percent of cigarette users smoke those products daily. The median number of cigars or cigarettes smoked per day is about 0.1 for premium cigars, 0.2 for nonpremium cigars, 0.3 for cigarillos, 1.0 for filtered cigars, and 10 for cigarettes.<sup>2</sup>

## **Finding 3-7**

Premium cigar users are less likely to smoke cigarettes or other cigar types concurrently than other cigar type users. Dual use with cigarettes was highest for filtered cigar users (~70 percent), followed by cigarillo users (~60 percent) and nonpremium cigar users (~50 percent), and lowest for premium cigar users (~26 percent).

<sup>1</sup> For all findings, “premium cigar user(s)” are those reporting use for at least one of the past 30 days.

<sup>2</sup> The median was calculated, consistent with peer-reviewed, published methods: respondents reporting smoking less than one cigar per day on the days smoked were assigned as 0.5 cigars per day.

**Finding 3-8**

Premium cigar users are more likely to be never or former cigarette smokers than users of other cigar products. They are also more likely than the general population to smoke cigarettes.

**Finding 3-9**

The prevalence of alcohol dependence among those who smoke premium cigars is similar to those who smoke nonpremium cigars or cigarettes. The prevalence of cannabis and illicit drug dependence among those who smoke premium cigars is lower than those who smoke nonpremium cigars or cigarettes. However, the prevalence of alcohol, cannabis, and illicit drug dependence among those who smoke premium cigars is higher than for those who do not use any tobacco products.

**Finding 3-10**

Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health Study analyses suggest that about three-quarters of exclusive premium cigar users continued smoking premium cigars in the following year. Among exclusive premium cigar users in Wave 1 (2013–2014), slightly more than half remained as exclusive premium cigar users in Wave 5 (2018–2019). About 35 percent discontinued use of cigars and cigarettes by Wave 5. Less than 5 percent became cigarette smokers (exclusive or dual with premium or nonpremium cigars) by Wave 5. Additionally, exclusive premium cigar users who smoked infrequently (i.e., less than 6 days in the past 30 days) were more likely to discontinue use within 1 year compared to those who smoked more frequently.

To read the full report, please visit:

<http://www.nationalacademies.org/premium-cigars-study>

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