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## BACKGROUND AND STUDY OBJECTIVE

- Many young adults do not consider themselves cigarette smokers despite having smoked in the previous 30 days.
- Efforts to reduce cigarette smoking and related health problems may not effectively address those who do not identify as smokers.
- The odds of being a non-identifying smoker are higher among ethnic minorities including African Americans.
- **We explored experiences and reasons for non-identifying smoking identity among African American young adults in California, US**

## METHODS

- Data obtained as part of a larger study about perceptions of tobacco denormalization efforts in this population.
- We analyzed the narrative data from 8 African American young adults non-identifying cigarette smokers.

## PARTICIPANTS

- 8 African American young adults (18-25) in the San Francisco Bay Area.
- Recruited on the street, through Facebook advertising, and by referrals.
- 5 males, 2 females and 1 genderqueer.

## PROCEDURES

- In-depth in-person interviews.
- Interview topics included: participants' background, experiences as a member of a marginalized group, personal tobacco use and smoking identity, beliefs about tobacco, and the social unacceptability of tobacco.
- Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, and transcripts were linked to ATLAS.ti to facilitate pattern-level analysis.
- The code list was extensive and included codes like smoking identity, addiction, stigma, tobacco use, marijuana use, structural inequality, and stress.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None of the authors have a conflict of interest.

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## FINDINGS

- On average, participants smoked cigarettes on 10.75 days in the past 30 days, compared with 24.50 days reported by those participants who self-identified as smokers.
- The mean number of cigarettes per day reported by the non-identifying cigarette smokers was 1.75.
- Analyses revealed four primary themes which can be seen as potential grounds for rejecting a smoker identity by some current cigarette smokers.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Results suggest that African American young adult non-identifying smokers should be recognized and targeted as a distinct group for tobacco prevention and cessation.
- The importance of marijuana smoking identity for African American non-identifying smokers should be taken into account.
- Prevention efforts can help people to recognize their smoking identity, assess aspects of their addiction (physiological and psychological) and identify personal motives to quit smoking.

