

Minority Research Center has awarded the following proposal for our 2022-2023 RFP:

Principal Investigator:

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Abstract

Title: African-American college student's attitudes and behaviors about tobacco use during COVID-19.

Rationale:

Tobacco companies target African-American communities (Truth and initiative, 2020). There have been legal challenges to minimize the targeting of minority communities. Unfortunately for communities of color, COVID-19 occurred with devastating effects. African-American smoking rates are smoking much higher at 77.4% than their white counterparts at 23% (American Lung Association, 2020). In Arkansas, the overall smoking rates pre-COVID-19 had fallen to 20% (Aspire Arkansas, 2019).

Due to COVID-19, college students have higher levels of stress (Jacimovic, 2021). Additionally, this stress is causing students to exhibit behaviors and attitudes they have never experienced before. COVID-19 is making it difficult, for college students, who are finding ways to cope. Smoking is one of the ways they cope with stress. Life has drastically changed as students try to maintain some normalcy. In another study about college students, smoking and COVID-19, smoking decreased, when COVID-19 first occurred, but the amount of smoking was the same (Sokolovsky et.al, 2021). Additionally, it stated when college students were exposed to news stories about COVID-19, smoking tended to increase.

Objective: To understand African-American student's attitudes and behaviors toward tobacco use during COVID-19. **Design:** A Qualitative narrative with a combination of virtual, and in person interviews/focus groups. **Setting:** Philander Smith College students and other African-American Pulaski County college students. **Participants:** 200 African-American traditional (ages 18-24) and non-traditional (ages 25 and up) college students. **Intervention:** Using this study to prevent, minimize and stop smoking. **Measurements:** To include central tendency, measures of variation and frequencies. **Potential Limitations:** Student's time and unwillingness to disclose personal information about the subject.