

The Science of Decision Making: Connecting People and Policy

Conducting Consumer Behavior, Risk Perception and Media Research on Novel Tobacco Products (Project 3)

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Abstract:

The TCORS project titled “Conducting Consumer Behavior, Risk Perception and Media Research on Novel Tobacco Products” will examine the role of affective and cognitive factors (e.g. risk perceptions, attitudes and normative beliefs) on tobacco use behaviors. Our new information about use patterns and risk perception will help the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) meet its mission to best inform the public on the risks associated with novel and alternative tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, snus, dissolvables and little cigars. Using mixed methods research that combine online survey panels with qualitative focus groups from targeted segments of the population, we will examine the role of affective and cognitive factors (e.g. risk perceptions, attitudes and normative beliefs) on tobacco use behaviors. Specifically, we will learn more about the behaviors, risk perceptions, use patterns and beliefs of adults who use electronic cigarettes, snus, dissolvables and little cigars. Additionally, we will merge the new information from the annual comprehensive tobacco use surveys with participants’ health information-seeking, lifestyle, and media usage behaviors. Analysis of this information will inform the development of traditional and new media messages (e.g., YouTube videos, tweets, etc.) to inform consumers about the risks associated with tobacco products. This work directly addresses FDA’s research priority questions that focus on understanding the diversity of tobacco products and communications about these products. A nationally representative survey will be conducted annually and will ask approximately 90 questions about novel tobacco use behaviors and risk perceptions related to alternative nicotine products. The survey will be administered to a random probability sample of 6,000 adults annually, with an oversampling of current smokers. We will conduct three sets of qualitative focus groups (including 36 individuals each time) over the grant period, the goal of which are to explore risk perceptions of alternative tobacco use and elicit beliefs about alternative tobacco use using the Theory of Planned Behavior construct. The data from the surveys and focus groups will inform the creation of media messages that will be tested among a target population, resulting in messaging that FDA can use to inform the public about alternative nicotine products. A total of 30,741 individuals will be a part of this research project over the five year grant period.