

Looking Beyond the Urban Core: An Examination of Tobacco Use in Rural Missouri

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Background

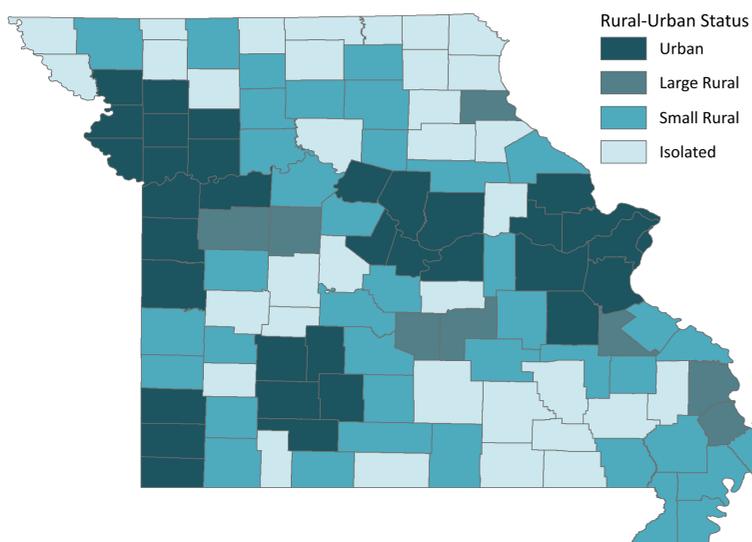
Identifying and eliminating tobacco-related disparities is of particular importance to tobacco control. In the Center for Tobacco Policy Research report, *Who is Most Affected? Tobacco-related Disparities in Missouri*, residents were categorized as living in a rural or urban area. While this definition was helpful in illustrating differences between the urban core and the rest of Missouri, it did not distinguish between different levels of rurality. This presentation applies an alternate definition of rural that allows for greater distinction between levels of rurality.

Methods

We conducted a secondary data analysis of the 2007 Missouri County-Level Study. Utilizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural-Urban Continuum Codes, Missouri counties were classified across a continuum of rurality as follows:

- **Urban**- metropolitan county
- **Large Rural**- nonmetro county with an urban population of 20,000 or more
- **Small Rural**- nonmetro county with an urban population of 2,500 to 19,999
- **Isolated**- nonmetro county with an urban population of less than 2,500

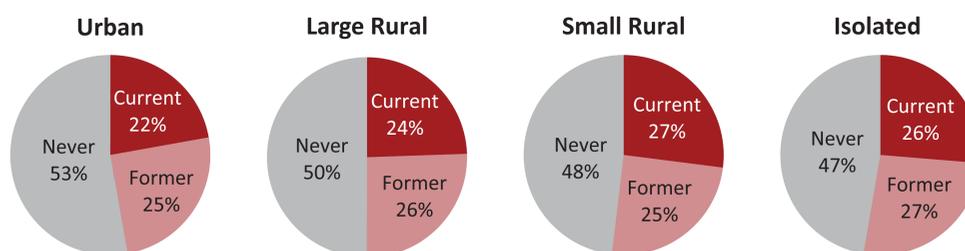
Using this classification, 73% of respondents lived in Urban settings, 6.3% in Large Rural, 14.7% in Small Rural and 5.9% in Isolated.



Results

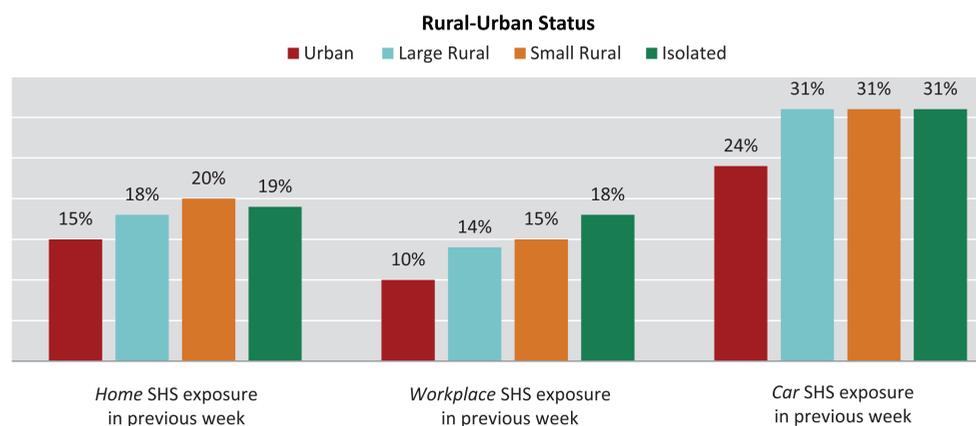
Smoking Status

Current smoking rates were highest among residents in Small Rural areas and lowest among residents in Urban areas.



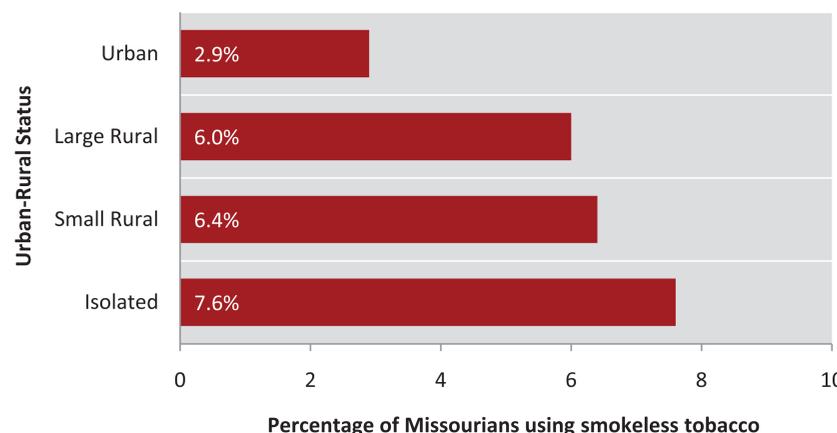
Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Urban residents were less likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke in the home, car, and workplace than residents in Large Rural, Small Rural, or Isolated areas.



Smokeless Tobacco Use

The percentage of Large Rural, Small Rural, or Isolated residents who used smokeless tobacco products was over two times higher than the percentage of Urban residents.



Results

Additional results included:

- **Smoking Level**- Of those who smoked, residents in Urban areas smoked significantly fewer cigarettes per day on average compared with residents in Large Rural, Small Rural, and Isolated areas.
- **Smoking Cessation**- Among Urban, Large Rural, Small Rural, and Isolated participants, there was no significant difference in the number of smokers who had attempted to quit smoking in the last year or were intending to quit in the next six months.
- **Confidence to Quit**- Urban smokers were significantly more likely to believe they could successfully quit smoking compared to all other participants.

Recommendations

To achieve future reductions in overall smoking prevalence and secondhand smoke exposure, disparate groups need to be considered in tobacco control policies and programs.

In order to effectively address geographic tobacco-related disparities, tobacco control stakeholders should consider the following recommendations from the literature:

- Implement comprehensive population-level tobacco controls policies and programs
- Ensure access to affordable and relevant cessation services
- Implement public awareness campaigns targeting smokeless tobacco in rural settings

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