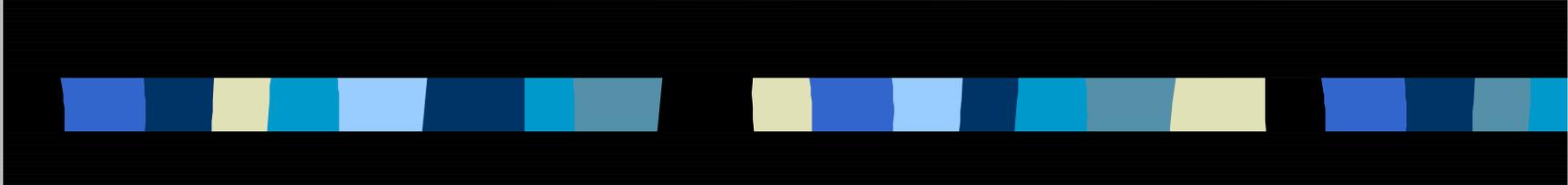
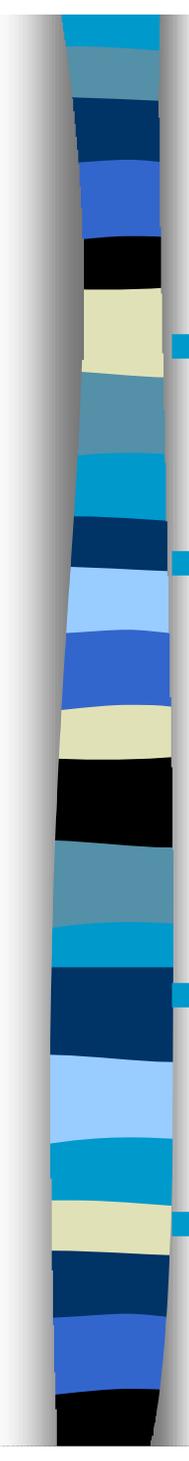


“Teenage Smoking”
in US newspapers:
Issues for tobacco control

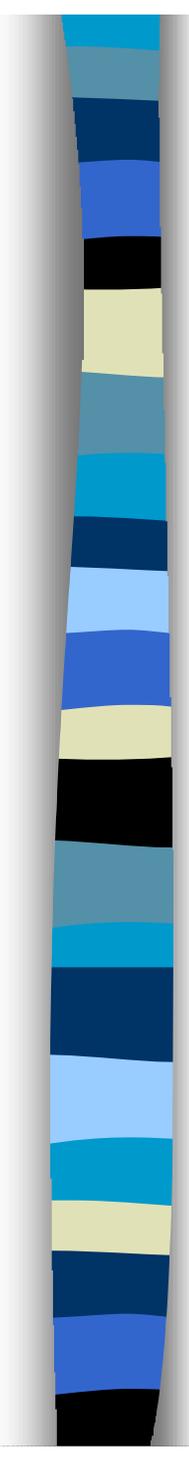


Katherine Clegg Smith
University Of Illinois at Chicago



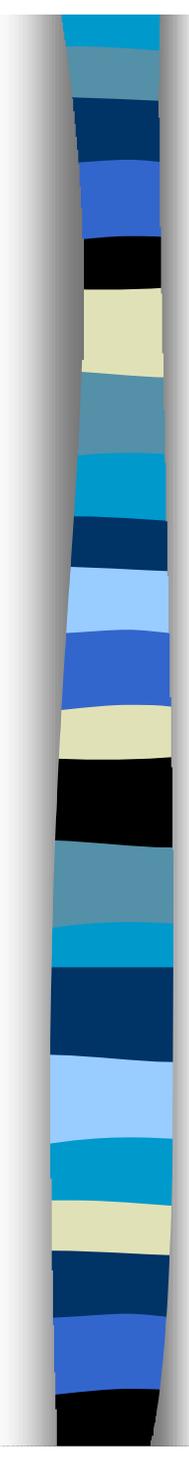
Background to this Presentation

- This research is preliminary and reflects only the author's personal opinion
- Part of ***Youth Smoking and the Media*** research project
Principal Investigator: *Melanie Wakefield*, PhD
Co-investigators: Frank Chaloupka, PhD. George Balch, PhD.
Brian Flay, DPhil. Lloyd Johnson, PhD. Sherry Emery, PhD.
Henry Saffer, PhD. Sandy Slater, MS.
- Administered by: Health Research and Policy Centers
University of Illinois at Chicago
- Funded By the **National Cancer Institute**
Grant# ROI CA86273-01



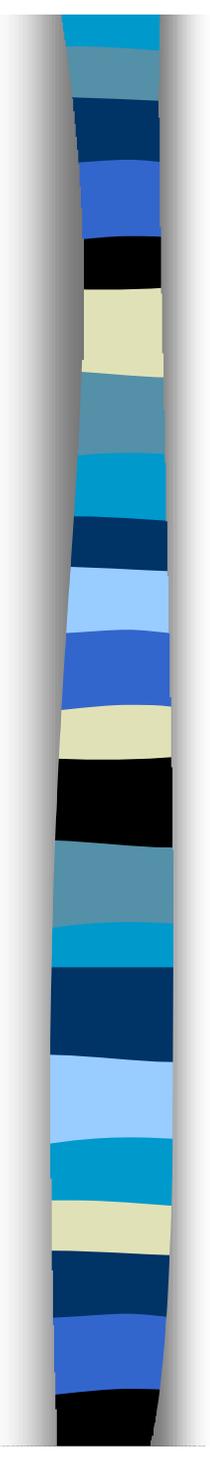
In this presentation I will address the following:

- The debate over a ‘youth smoking’ focus in tobacco control
- How are youth smoking issues portrayed in US newspapers?
- How might a ‘Youth’ focus influence attempts to reduce smoking levels?



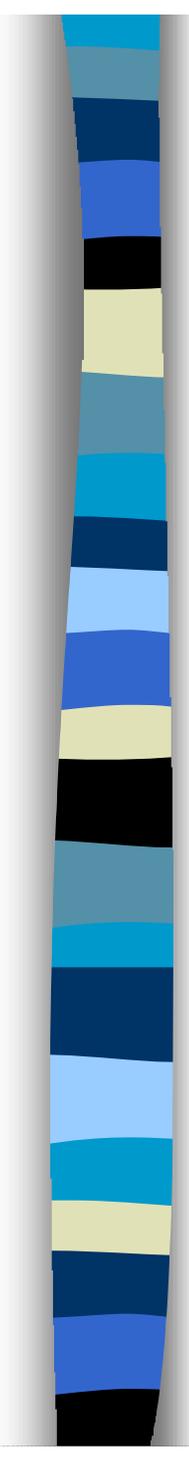
Theoretical Background: Teenage Smoking as a Social Problem

- Social Problems are not simply reflections of 'fact' (Glassner, 1999)
- Social Problems are created by 'claims makers' (Linders, 1998) through the use of 'rhetoric' (Best, 1994).
- It is easier to gain public support for action to 'protect' children than for general restrictions. Children can be constructed as symbolic of society(Reynolds, 1995)



The Debate in Tobacco Control

- Should resources be focused towards policies that limit the opportunity for youth to smoke, or those that limit smoking generally?

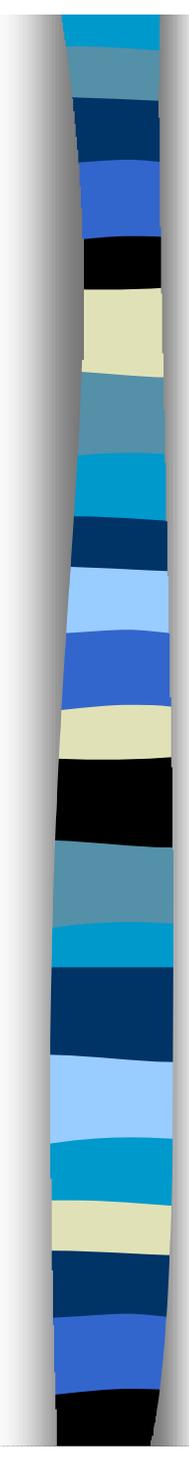


Youth Smoking is an important public health issue

- Centers for Disease Control estimate that 3000 young people become regular users of cigarettes every day

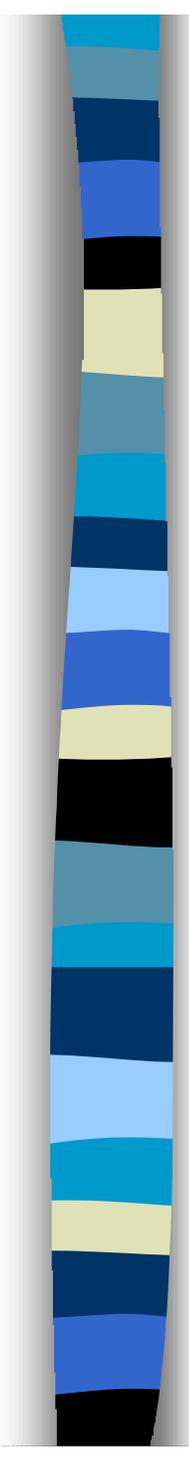
Approximately 80% of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18 (CDC).

- In November 1998, 46 states signed the Master Settlement Agreement. This has provided more money for tobacco control efforts – many of which focus on youth.



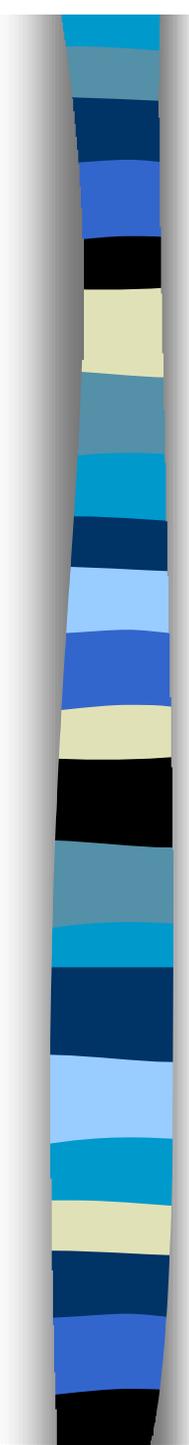
Tobacco Control Position 1: 'Kids' is a good place to start

- The prevention of disease is always preferable than any possible cure.
- Focusing on youth is a plausible short-term goal – get people on board.



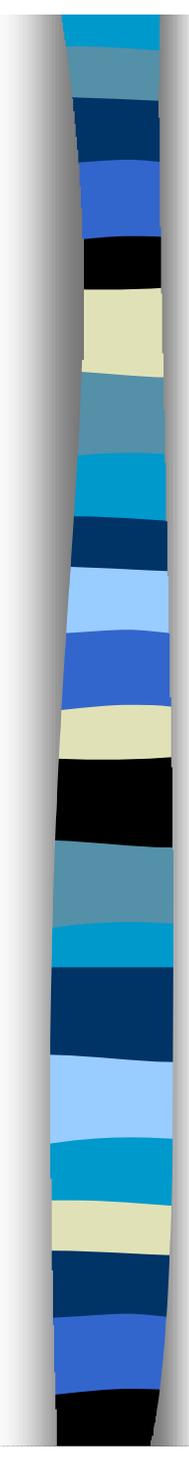
*Tobacco Control Position 2: We will get kids
to stop by getting adults to stop*

- Focusing on youth is just the path of least resistance.
- The most effective way to reduce youth smoking is to change the normative environment (Glantz, 2000)



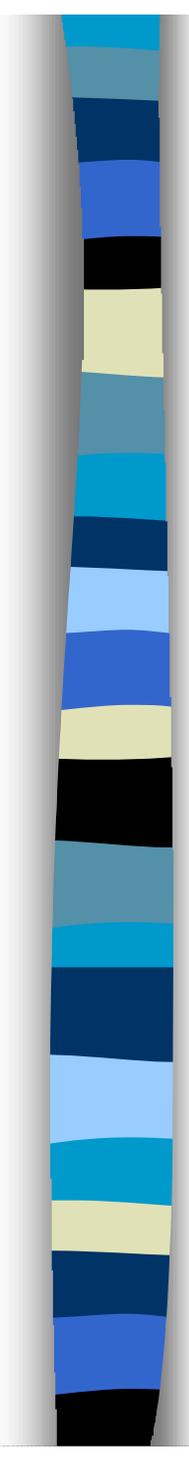
The Research

- Consider whether tobacco control is being presented as a youth issue in US newspapers
- Mass media used as a powerful tool in gaining important public support for social problems claims
- News coverage also reflects tobacco control efforts in 'the real world'



Methods I

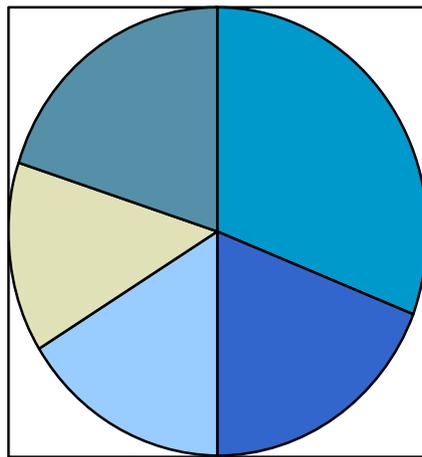
- Articles relating to smoking and tobacco were collected every other day from 336 US newspapers over a period of 6 months (October 2000- March 2001). Approximately 4000 articles
- From these, we extracted a subset of articles that included a 'youth' term in either the headline or first paragraph. 697 articles.



Methods II

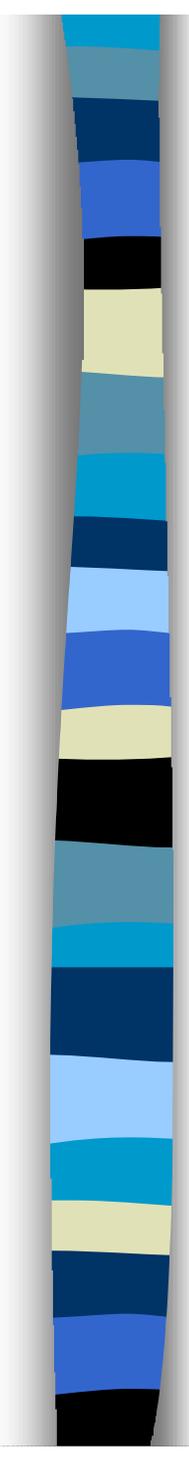
- A content analysis was performed on the youth articles focusing on the type of article, its placement in the newspaper, its overall theme and prioritized topics relating to tobacco control and whether or not it framed youth as vulnerable.

Results



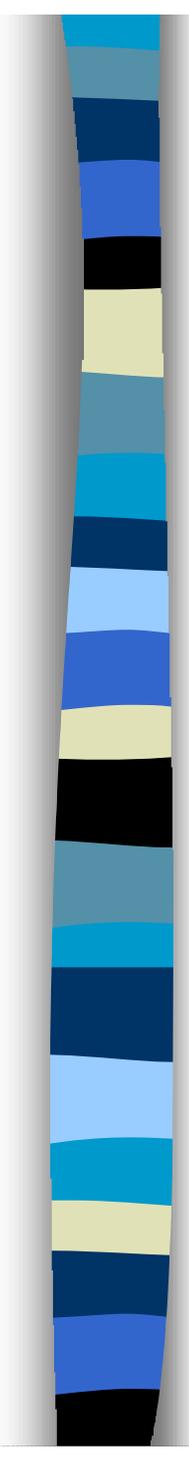
- Education and prevention
- Health Effects
- Tobacco Advertising
- Youth Access and Possession
- Other

- Approximately 700 of the 4000 (17.5%) articles focused on youth
- Nearly 1/3 of these articles dealt with education and prevention efforts



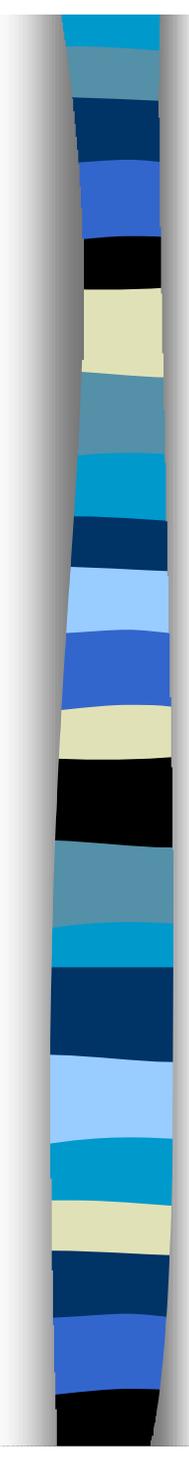
Results II – Education and Prevention

- 181 of the 218 articles coded for education and prevention focused specifically on youth
- 66 of these 218 articles framed youth as vulnerable (30.2%).
- This is significantly different from the general population (Chi Square 11.37 df 1, $p < 0.001$)



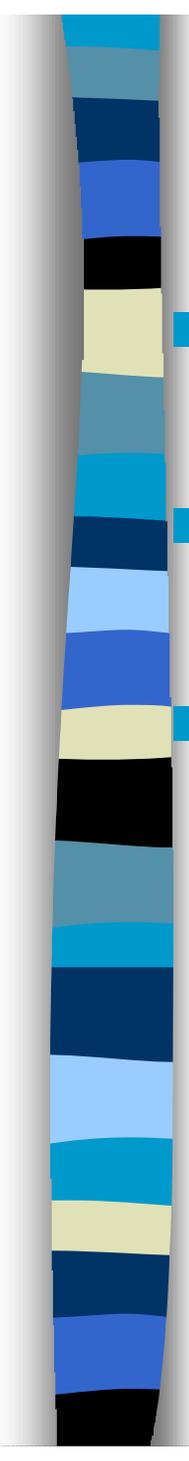
Results III

- Very few 'youth' articles were deemed important enough to be given front page coverage. Only 33 articles appeared on the front page.
- Education and prevention articles were the most likely to be given front page coverage (13 of the 33 articles or 40%). This is within the range of expectation given the proportion of education articles.



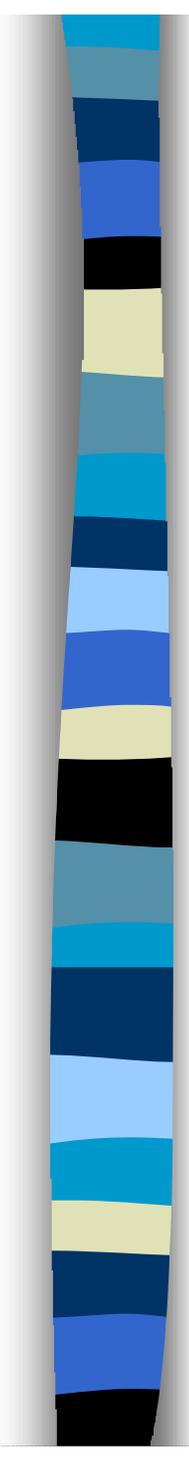
Results IV – Youth as Vulnerable Frame

- 156 of the 697 articles presented youth as vulnerable (in need of protection)
- Articles coded for the youth education and advocacy topic were significantly more likely to frame youth as vulnerable. (Chi Square 9.02 df 1: $p < 0.01$)
- The topics of youth smoking behavior and ETS health and comfort also co-occurred with the youth vulnerability frame more frequently than would be expected by chance.



Conclusions I

- Social problems can be typified in various ways. Definitions suggest the solution (Best, 1990).
- There is a division within tobacco control over whether to focus on youth.
- Tobacco control efforts are frequently being constructed in relationship with youth issues.



Conclusions II

- Youth issues get relatively high levels of newspaper coverage.
- Education and prevention efforts is the most prevalent theme in the youth focused news coverage.
- This theme also tends to be related to a ‘vulnerable’ portrayal of youth in the news.
- This may not yield the ‘positive’ coverage sought by tobacco control advocates
- Further research needs to be conducted exploring how a youth focus may shape the success of tobacco control efforts.