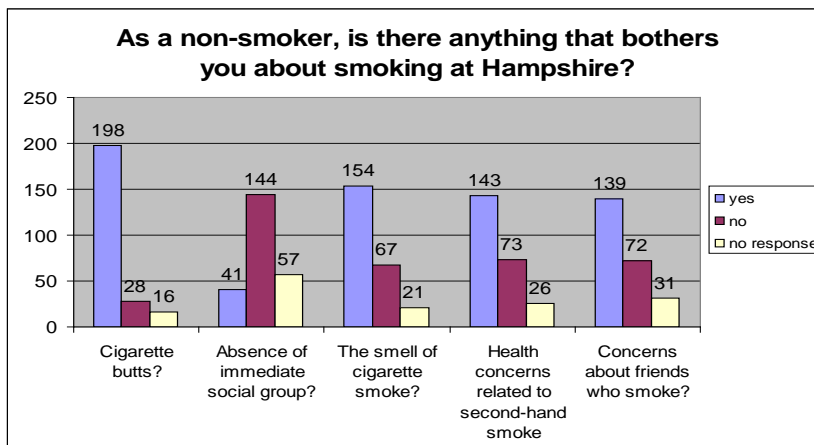


Smoking Survey Results

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In December 2007, The Community Health Collaborative developed a survey about cigarette smoking to find out students' opinions and experiences about smoking on the Hampshire campus. The survey questions were developed based on the input of several students, including both smokers and non-smokers. A copy of the survey was placed in every student mailbox, and the students who filled them out participated voluntarily. A total of 304 surveys were completed and returned, 242 (or about 80%) by non-smoking students, and 62 (or about 20%) by smoking students. This could be considered roughly proportional to the number of non-smoking and smoking students on campus, as 25% of Hampshire students reported smoking 3 or more times a week in the 2006 Core Survey.

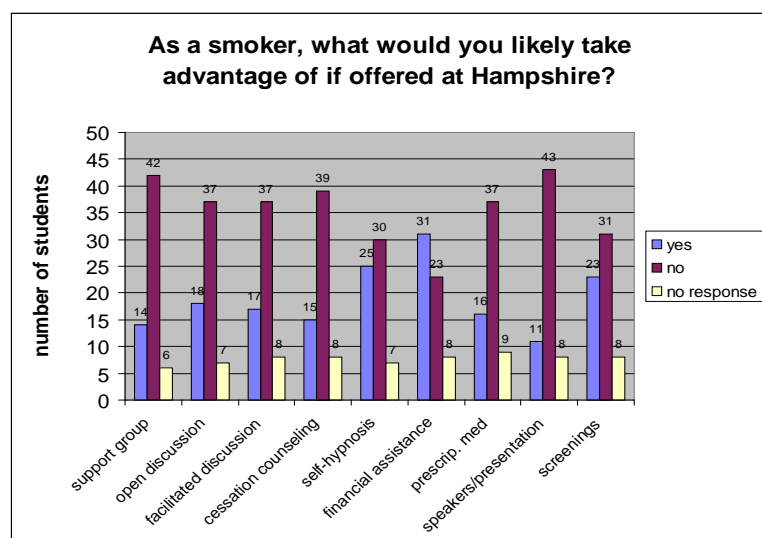
There has been some heated controversy on the topic of smoking over the past couple of years, so we were interested to find out how comfortable students felt on this campus as smokers or non-smokers: 94% of smokers and 82% of non-smokers said they felt comfortable. When asked if they saw smoking as a problem on campus, 69% of non-smoking students said yes, compared to only 27% of smoking students.



Non-smokers weighed in on the concerns depicted in the graph, and identified a wide range of other problems as well. Numerous respondents suggested that smoking within 20 feet of buildings was a big issue while others raised concerns about the environmental impact of smoking, and “the hypocrisy of funding the big corporations we are supposed to be fighting!” among other issues.

Interestingly, 24% of non-smoking students reported that they have felt tempted to start smoking at Hampshire, primarily for social reasons. One student said, “At the beginning of my first year, during orientation, it was what people did to hang out to meet friends. I didn't seriously consider smoking, but it sort of felt like “is that what I have to do to meet people?”” Others reasons included: stress/relaxation, availability, the desire to be thinner, fire drills at 2AM, affordable stimulation, and more. On the other hand, 17% of the non-smoking students had smoked in the past and successfully quit. These students listed health as a significant motivator, followed by price, “grossness” (smell, breath, etc) and a conflict with their values, “I wanted to be life-affirmative and smoking did not fit in with my alleged values”

Community Health takes the position that choosing to smoke, cut down, quit, or never take up smoking to begin with are all personal decisions that each individual has the right to make. Our hope is to increase respectful communication around smoking issues on campus, and offer useful resources in this area, including support to students who are interested in quitting or cutting back. According to the survey, 34% of the students who smoked wanted to quit, and this number rose to 52% when asked if they would like to cut back. Based on the



interests of students as displayed in the graph, Community Health plans to offer a matching funds program for Nicorette or other over-the counter quit aids, as well as host a screening and open discussion later this semester. We will also look into offering a class on self-hypnosis. Students who would like to consider prescription medication to help them quit may make an appointment with Health Services x5458 to discuss this option.

Quitting or cutting back is not easy, and respondents named a number of obstacles, with particular emphasis on the role of stress, addiction, and the lack of desire (coupled with the enjoyable aspects of smoking). If you decide you do want to quit or cut down, the following tips may be helpful:

- Make a commitment and set a quit date
- Concentrate on your reasons for quitting/cutting back (motivation is the strongest predictor of change)
- Create a support system for yourself and try to reduce your exposure to people who are smoking
- Consider “replacements” such as quitting aids (Nicorette, the patch, etc) or attend to oral withdrawal by using toothpicks or chewing gum
- Anticipate and plan for difficulties
- Be good to yourself!

If you have questions or comments about this article, or would like to see more detailed results from the smoking survey, come by and talk to us, or email jgifford@hampshire.edu