The Tobacco Industry and Health Equity: A Contradiction in Terms!

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Achieving Racial and Health Equity in the COVID Era Conference
Tobacco Industry Through a Health Equity Lens
Virtual Session
September 30, 2020
The African Americanization of Menthol Cigarettes

60 Years of Predatory Marketing . . . .
And Counting
African American Menthol Use Skyrockets!

Tobacco Industry’s Assault on the African American Community  (1960s & 70s)

• 91% of Advertising Budget for TV (B&W)
• Use of Male Actors with more Black features
  • Tripled Cigarette Advertising in Ebony
    • “Menthols got a brand new bag”
      • Cool Jazz; Cool Lexicon
        • Philanthropy
          (Gardiner, 2004)
Salem refreshes your taste

- menthol fresh
- rich tobacco taste
- modern filter, too
"Your cigarette's not tasting cool enough
Till you come up to Kool"

"Feel extra coolness in your throat..."
says Elston Howard

"Extra coolness no other cigarette can offer. Taste a new freshness that lasts all through the day... Kool after Kool after Kool. Believe me," says Yankee Star Elston Howard, "I know!"

Take Elston Howard's advice. "Try just one carton of Kool. You'll never go back to those hot and dry-tasting cigarettes again!"

©1962, BROWN & WILLIAMSON TOBACCO CORPORATION. The Mark of Quality in Tobacco Products.
Cool ain’t Cold. Newport is.

A whole new bag of menthol smoking
filter kings & 100’s

1970 Ebony magazine advertisement
Alive with pleasure!

Newport

After all, if smoking isn't a pleasure, why bother?

Menthol Wars: The 1980s and the Fight for Market Share

• Cigarette Sampling *Vans*
  
  • Kool, Newport, Salem, Benson & Hedges
  • Free Cigarette Samples
  • High Traffic Areas: Parks, Known Street Corners, Daily Routes
    • (Yerger, Przewoznik and Malone, 2007)
Newport pleasure!
ENTICING
Inviting and surprising, MOCHA TABOO will entice you with its sweet indulgence

Kool
SMOOTH FUSIONS
FROM THE HOUSE OF MENTHOL

MINTIQUE, CARIBBEAN CHILL, MOCHA TABOO, MIDNIGHT, BERRY 65, 15 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine, BLOW KINGS, 17 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine, per cigarette by FTC method. The amount of tar and nicotine you get from this product varies depending on how you smoke it. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette. For more information visit www.KoolsInc.com

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.
Menthol: What it is

What it Does
The Ultimate Candy Flavoring; Menthol Helps The Poison Go Down Easier

- Chief Constituent of Peppermint Oil; Minty-Candy Taste; Masks the Harshness of Smoking

- Cooling Sensation; activates taste buds; cold receptors; increases throat grab

- Anesthetic effects; Mimics Bronchial Dilatation; easier to inhale; deeper inhalation; more nicotine taken in.

- Mentholated cigarette smoking inhibits nicotine metabolism

- Independent Sensory Activation Neurotransmitters

- Increases Salivary Flow; Transbuccal Drug absorption

- Greater Cell Permeability (Ferris, 2004; Benowitz, 2004)
Melanin and Nicotine

• Melanin is the substance that gives color to our skin

• Nicotine is stored in tissues that contain melanin

• The darker your skin means that more nicotine is stored in your body (King et al., 2009)
Predation:

“the action of attacking or plundering, where a predator (the tobacco industry) feeds on its prey (the African American Community and other marginalized groups)”
Focus vs. Non-Focus Communities  (Wright, 2009)

- **Focus Communities: Inner-city, Colored and Poor**
  - Less expensive, more desirable promotions
    - Buy 1, Get X Free
    - Summer/ Holidays

- **Non-focus Communities: Upscale, suburban, rural and white**
  - More expensive, less desirable promotions
    - Buy 2, Get X Free
    - Buy 3, Get X Free

- **Menthol Cigarettes Cheaper**
  - Non-focus- 50 cents off/ pack ($5.00 off/ ctn)
  - Focus- $1.00-$1.50 off/ pack ($10.00-15.00 off/ ctn)
Predatory Marketing Patterns (Henriksen, 2011)

As the % African American students increased, proportion menthol ads increased:

- Enrollment = 7% AA: 25.4%
- Enrollment = 17% AA: 31.3%
- Enrollment = 27% AA: 37.2%
Menthol Cigarettes: Cheaper for African Americans

• For each 10% increase in the proportion of African American students:
  
  • Newport discount 1.5 times greater
  • The proportion of menthol advertising increased by 5.9%,
  • Newport promotion were 42% higher and
  • The cost of Newport was 12 cents lower!

(Henriksen, et al., 2011)
## Storefront Cigarette Advertising Differs by Racial/Ethnic Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Brookline</th>
<th>Dorchester</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Retailer w/ Ads</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>85.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Ads</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Ads</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menthol Ads</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Price</td>
<td>$4.94</td>
<td>$4.55</td>
<td>! ! !</td>
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(Seidenberg, et al., 2010)
The Fight To Ban Menthol

Still A Burning Issue
Uptown Cigarettes: For Black Folks 1989-1990

• Reynolds Targeted Philadelphia Black Community in 1989 for 1990 February Launch of Uptown Cigarettes

• Local Coalition Led by African Americans and Other Health Groups Exposed this Predatory Marketing

• Louis Sullivan, Secretary of HHS calls out R.J. Reynolds; Reynolds Withdraws Uptown
Show Ya Right
Brand X Menthol Cigarettes 1995

• Red, Black and Green Packaging

• Capitalize on X Identification with Malcolm X

• Launched in Boston by Stowebridge Brook Distributors of Charlestown, Mass. 1995

• Community Based Opposition Forced the Suspension of sales
Red, Black & Green

www.cigarettespedia.com
Kool Mixx Campaign 2004

- Attempt to Capitalize on Hip-Hop in the Black Community
- Nation-wide Contests on Mixing, Scratching and DJing to Culminate in a National Contest in Chicago
- Local Opposition by African American Groups
- Lawsuit Brought by Attorneys General of NY, Mass and Illinois Blocked the National Meeting in Chicago
KOOL Cigarette Packs

KOOL MIXX SPECIAL EDITION PACKS
Menthol A Sacrificial Lamb
A Deal with the Devil?

- **Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act**
  - Proposed in 2008; Enacted in 2009
  - Dealers: Philip Morris, Southern Senators and representatives of the tobacco control movement
  - Eliminate 13 flavors in cigarettes
  - Excluded Menthol!!
    - African Americans, Women, Youth, Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, LGBTQ folks, Puerto Ricans, Behavioral Health issues
Major Moments in the Fight Against Menthol

- 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act
  - 2013 Chicago
  - 2016 Deeming Regulations
  - 2018 San Francisco
  - 2019 Pallone Bill Passes US House of Representatives
  - 2020 Massachusetts
  - 2020 FDA Sued
  - 2020 California SB-793
Menthol Restrictions 2020

- 207 Jurisdictions  Flavor Restrictions
- 65 Jurisdictions  Menthol Restrictions
- 2 States  Flavor/ Menthol Restrictions
  - Massachusetts: Exempted Establishments that allows Smoking
  - California: Exempted Hookah, Premium Cigars, and Pipe Tobacco

Take Home Message: Menthol is a Social Justice Issue!

• The disproportionate marketing and targeting of candy-flavored poison to African Americans and other specially oppressed sectors of our society, is out-right discriminatory and genocidal.

  • Poorest; least informed; fewest resources; indeed the definition of preying on the most vulnerable sections of our society.
If Menthol Were Banned 100,000s of Lives would be saved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010 – 2050</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Menthol Smokers</td>
<td>323,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Menthol Smokers</td>
<td>91,744</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>323,107</td>
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<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>478,154</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>633,252</td>
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<td>(Levy, et al., 2011)</td>
<td>237,317</td>
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What’s at Stake?
Thank You!

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AATCLC

*Saving Black Lives*

www.savingblacklives.org