Helping American Indians Quit Smoking

The project added cultural tailoring to standard, evidence-based treatment for American Indian smokers.

**Description:** In many American Indian (AI) tribes, there is a long history of using naturally-grown tobacco for ceremonial and sacred purposes. To address the special cultural and historical role of tobacco in AI communities, the Menominee Smoking Cessation Clinical Trial tested the efficacy and safety of a culturally-tailored smoking cessation treatment versus a standard cessation treatment to help AI smokers in the Menominee community quit the use of commercial tobacco.

**Relevance:** Prevalence rates of smoking in Wisconsin AI communities are significantly higher than rates of smoking in other racial and ethnic groups. These high rates of smoking in AI communities have resulted in health disparities as reflected in high rates of smoking-related cancer and heart disease.

**Results:** Researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW-Milwaukee partnered with the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin to develop the culturally-tailored cessation treatment. The project recruited 103 AI smokers through the Menominee Tribal Clinic in Keshena to participate in a clinical trial known as START (Stop Tobacco Abuse Renew Tradition). The study was the first to report long-term (six-month) abstinence rates for AI smokers who used the cessation medication varenicline (Chantix), along with evidence-based cessation counseling which was provided by a Menominee AI counselor. A key finding was that study participants who had more smokers in their immediate and extended family had a significantly harder time quitting smoking. The study also offered preliminary evidence that varenicline can be safely used with this population. Qualitative results show promise for future tailoring of smoking prevention and cessation approaches in tribal communities. This partnership led to a National Cancer Institute funded pilot study, and discussions about research collaborations with two additional Wisconsin tribes. Two manuscripts are under review.

### Menominee Smoking Cessation Clinical Trial

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