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Smoking Profile of Woodside Juvenile Detention Center and Interventional Goal-Setting Workshop

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ABSTRACT
We studied smoking status among teenage residents at the Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center (Woodside) in Vermont. Using a modified CDC survey and focus groups, we found that short-term detention residents (S group) were significantly more likely to be “smokers” than the long-term treatment residents (L group). All residents reported that stress had an important impact on their lives. Based on our findings, we implemented a goal setting workshop for both L and S groups.

INTRODUCTION
In the United States, 89% of current adult smokers began smoking before the age of 18 (1). Much effort has been made to investigate and implement smoking cessation programs among the adolescent population, particularly those adolescents at the greatest risk for dependent tobacco use (2). 16% of enrolled Vermont students in grades eight through twelve reported smoking cigarettes in the past thirty days (3). Youth in detention centers are more prone to engage in substance use and are at an increased risk for developing substance abuse disorders (4).

OBJECTIVE
The aim was to profile the smoking habits and motivations of youth living at Woodside, and to create an appropriate smoking cessation/prevention intervention.

METHODS
Study participants (n=19) were youth residing at Woodside between August and December, 2007. Participants were from both S and L groups at Woodside. The first phase of this two-phase study involved administering a smoking survey which included applicable questions from the CDC Youth Tobacco Survey. In the second phase, we led focus groups with the youth participants to gain additional insight into the nature of smoking in their lives, as well as to gather qualitative information about concurrent health concerns, high-risk behaviors and future goals.

RESULTS
Demographic
• 18 males and 1 female, age range from 14 to 17.
• 8 males in L group, 10 males and 1 female in the S group.
• 90% identified as White; 20% identified as Black, Hispanic, or Asian.
• 82% of S group and 38% of L group reported living at Woodside ~ one month.

Youth Tobacco Survey Results
• All had tried smoking, but members of S group were significantly more likely to consider themselves smokers (p = 0.02).
• S group was significantly more likely than the L Group to have 1) smoked cigarettes daily, 2) smoked more than 26 cigarettes in their entire life and 3) believe they will be smoking 5 years from now (respectively, p = 0.001, p = 0.003, p = 0.02).
• 89% of participants live with smokers.

Focus Group Results
Smoking Behavior
• Key reasons for smoking: family influence, surrounding environment and stress.
• All smokers used other recreational drugs.
• Most smokers had a family member who smoked cigarettes, drank alcohol and/or used other recreational drugs.

Life at Woodside
• Residents reported better eating and exercise habits at Woodside.
• Many described Woodside as a boring place.

Woodside influence on smoking cessation
• Many did not see smoking as a big deal.
• Some reported that Woodside staff offered support and advice.
• Some experienced decreased craving while at Woodside and improved athletic performance.

Future Goals and Long Term Consequences:
• Many had not thought about goals.
• Most did not have role models.
• Those with concrete goals tended to include “not smoking” in their plan.

DISCUSSION
We found that the S and L groups had unique smoking profiles. The S group had more smokers and could potentially benefit from a smoking cessation program. Conversely, the L group had more non-smokers and might benefit from a prevention program. Overall, the three most common reasons the youth smoke are: negative environmental influences; overwhelming stress; and improving the effects of other drugs.

LESSONS LEARNED
Woodside youth...
• have battled adversity their entire lives and manage a tremendous amount of stress.
• are highly influenced by family, friends and their environment.
• identify smoking as relatively unimportant in the environment of larger more pressing life issues.