

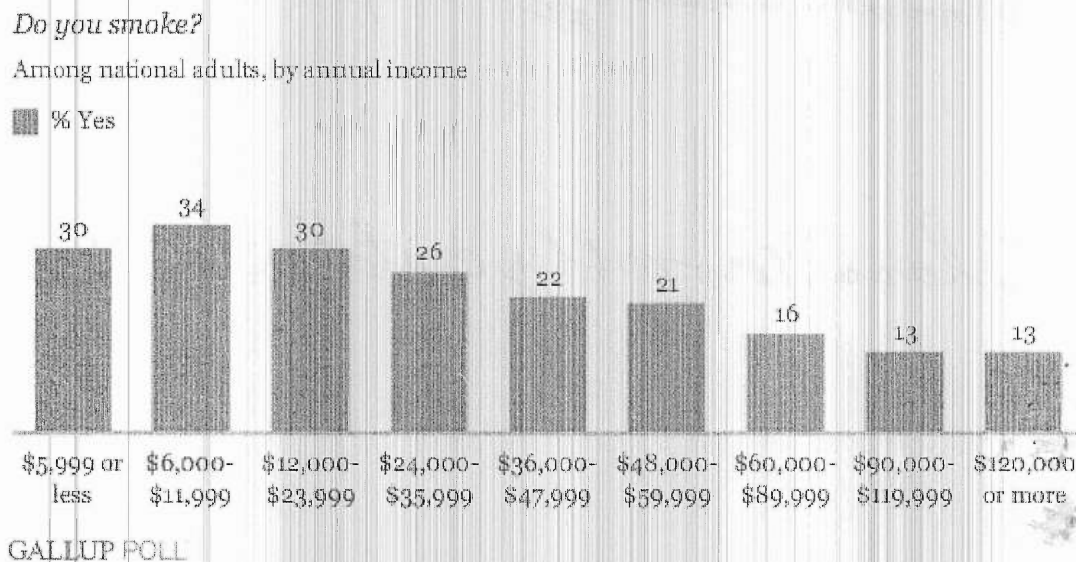
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Among Americans, Smoking Decreases as Income Increases

Gradual pattern is consistent across eight earnings brackets

by Rob Goszkowski

Washington, D.C. -- The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is helping to crystallize the relationship between income and smoking in the United States.



While researchers for Gallup and the Centers for Disease Control have previously documented higher smoking rates among lower-income Americans, the current results based on interviews with more than 75,000 individuals across the United States allow for a closer examination of the relationship between household income and smoking behavior.

Nationwide, the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index reveals that 21% of Americans say they smoke. As the accompanying graph illustrates, the likelihood of smoking generally increases as annual incomes decrease. One exception to this pattern occurs among those making less than \$6,000 per year, an income bracket often skewed because many in that bracket are students. Among those making \$6,000 to \$11,999 per year, 34% say they smoke, while only 13% in the top two income brackets (those with incomes of at least \$90,000 per year) say the same -- a 21 percentage-point gap.

The Well-Being Index also confirms distinctions in U.S. smoking rates relating to gender and race. Among respondents, 23% of men and 19% of women say they smoke. Blacks are the most likely to smoke (23%) and Asians are least likely to smoke (12%). Hispanics and whites fall in between, at 17% and 20%, respectively.

Interestingly, smoking rates in the United States are similar to those around the world. Across 118 different countries Gallup surveyed in 2006 and 2007, a median percentage of 22% said they smoked the day before the survey. At the high end, 50% of people in Turkey said they smoked. At the low end, 6% in Nigeria said the