

BACKGROUND

-In November 2019, NYS enacted the Adolescent Tobacco Prevention Use Act (ATPUA), raising the age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21¹ (also known as T21 laws)
 -OTC NRT are not tobacco products and are legally available for purchase to anyone over 18, and are an FDA approved method of smoking cessation
 -Many pharmacies associated ATPUA with an increase in age to purchase OTC NRT
 -A preliminary study done in January 2020 explored this phenomenon and found that 56% of chain pharmacy stores they contacted increased the age to purchase OTC NRT from 18 to 21 following T21 laws, as well as 15% of independent pharmacies increased their sales age²

RESEARCH QUESTION

-What are the sales practices of OTC NRT within chain pharmacy stores and independent pharmacies following T21 laws, and what role do their district managers play in those sales?

REFERENCES

1. The Official Website of New York State. *Governor Cuomo Announces New York's Law to Raise Tobacco and E-Cigarette Sales Age from 18 to 21*
<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-yorks-law-raise-tobacco-and-e-cigarette-sales-age-18-21-goes>
2. Kaur M, Lewis, E, Baghinyan A, Vaughan P, Ossip DJ, McIntosh S, McNulty (April, 2020). *Local Sales Practices of Over the Counter Nicotine Replacement Therapies in Monroe County, NY*. Presented at the 2020 Undergraduate Research Exposition, University of Rochester

METHODS

-CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Tops, and Wegmans were called for their district manager contact information
 -A set of questions were written for district managers, independent pharmacies, and chain pharmacy stores
 -Members of Pharmacy Society of Rochester and URM Pharmacy were consulted on the best approach for data collection
 -A random number generator was used to choose 2 of each chain store to call within Monroe County
 -The 10 chain stores along with the 6 independent pharmacies were called and asked a series of questions regarding their sales practices
 -District Managers were contacted either by phone or email, though no answers were received
 -Answers were recorded in a table

TABLE 1- Answers Collected from Chain pharmacy Stores

	What age do you sell OTC NRT?	Did the T21 laws impact sales age?	Do you have frequent contact with your district managers?	How much advice do pharmacists offer guidance in OTC NRT use?
CVS 1	21	yes	yes	only for prescription
CVS 2	21	not sure	yes	only for prescription
Wegmans 1	18	unsure	unsure	only for prescription
Wegmans 2	18	yes	no	only for prescription
Tops 1	21	unsure	no	only for prescription
Tops 2	21	no	no	only for prescription
Rite Aid 1	21	yes	yes	a few times a week people ask for guidance
Rite Aid 2	21	yes	yes	only for prescription
Walgreens 1	18	unsure	yes	only for prescription
Walgreens 2	21	yes	yes	occasionally people ask for help

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RESULTS

-70% of chain stores reported that they only sell OTC NRT to individuals over 21
 -42% of that 70% reported that they only sell to individuals over 21 because of the T21 laws
 -60% of the chain stores reported they have frequent contact with their district managers
 -All 6 independent pharmacies reported that they do not carry NRT over the counter because there is not enough demand for them
 -All pharmacists in the independent pharmacies and 80% of chain store pharmacists reported that they only offer guidance on NRT use if it is purchased as a prescription

DISCUSSION

-Many pharmacies are wrongfully prohibiting many individuals ages 18-20 who are addicted to nicotine from purchasing NRT's
 -District managers are most likely being told that their stores cannot sell OTC NRT to anyone under 21 years old and that incorrect information is being passed down to their stores
 -The miscommunication between health policy agencies and pharmacy employees needs to be minimized so that NRT's can continue to be legally purchased by individuals 18 and older
 -More pharmacist guidance is needed as that could help many smokers have more successful efforts in quitting