PATH

Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health

A collaboration between the NIH and FDA

The PATH Study is a nationally representative, longitudinal study of tobacco use, its determinants, and its impacts.

PATH Study Timeline

2011 Contract Award

2012 Start of the PATH Study

2013

2014

Wave 1 Sept. 2013 – Dec. 2014
Adults (18 years or older): 32,320
Youth (12–17 years old): 13,651
Interviews were conducted in person.

2015

Wave 2 Oct. 2014 – Oct. 2015
Adults (18 years or older): 28,362
Youth (12–17 years old): 12,172
Interviews were conducted in person.

2016

Wave 3 Oct. 2015 – Oct. 2016
Adults (18 years or older): 28,148
Youth (12–17 years old): 11,814
Interviews were conducted in person.

2017

Wave 4 Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2018
Includes Replenishment
Adults (18 years or older): 33,822
Youth (12–17 years old): 14,798
Interviews were conducted in person.

2018

Wave 4.5 Dec. 2017 – Nov. 2018
Youth Only Special Data Collection
Youth (12–17 years old): 13,131
Interviews were conducted in person.

2019

Wave 5 Dec. 2018 – Nov. 2019
Adults (18 years or older): 34,309
Youth (12–17 years old): 12,098
Interviews were conducted in person.

2020

Wave 5.5 July – Dec. 2020
Youth and Young Adult Special Data Collection
Young Adults (18–19 years old): 3,628
Youth (13–17 years old): 7,129

PATH Study Adult Telephone Survey (PATH-ATS)
Sept. – Dec. 2020
Adults (20 years or older): 8,874
Wave 5.5 in-person data collection was halted, and interviews were conducted via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021

Wave 6 Mar. – Nov. 2021
Adults (18 years or older): 30,516
Youth (14–17 years old): 5,652
Interviews were conducted in person and via telephone due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022

Wave 7 Jan. 2022 – April 2023
Includes Replenishment
Adults (18 years or older): 30,801
Youth (12–17 years old): 10,834
Interviews were conducted in person and via telephone. Selected participants completed a Web pilot test.

2023

Wave 7.5 Apr. 2023 – Dec. 2023
Youth and Young Adult Special Data Collection
Adults (18–22 years old): 7,961
Youth (12–17 years old): 8,949
Interviews were conducted in person and via telephone.

2024

Wave 8 Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2024
Adults (18 years or older): 31,477
Youth (12–17 years old): 8,002
Interviews were conducted in person and via the Web.

2025

Wave 8.5 Feb. 2025 – Dec. 2025
Youth and Young Adult Special Data Collection
Adults (18–24 years old): TBD
Youth (12–17 years old): TBD
Interviews were conducted in person and via the Web.

2026

Wave 9 Feb. 2026 – Dec. 2026
Adults (18 years or older): TBD
Youth (12-17 years old): TBD
Interviews were conducted in person and via the Web.

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Designed to Assess

Tobacco Use

Initiation · Dependence · Cessation · Relapse

- Tobacco product use, dependence, and associated factors
- Polytobacco use and switching between tobacco products

Health Impacts

caused by, worsened by, or associated with tobacco use

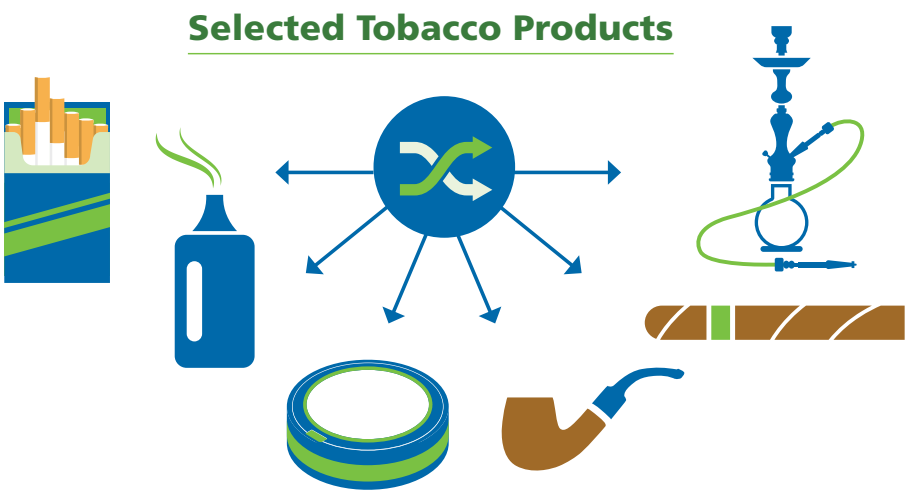
- Exposures and potential harm from tobacco use and their related biomarkers
- Comorbid conditions

Changes

in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs

- Example research question: What makes people susceptible to using a tobacco product?

Selected Tobacco Products



PATH Study Design Features

- Nationally representative sample of U.S. civilian, non-institutionalized individuals, age 13 years and older
- Probability based design that takes advantage of two self-response modes to enhance representativeness
  - Multimode data collection annually or biennially
  - All sampled persons are first asked to respond online completing a web instrument, with a probability-based subsample of web nonrespondents followed-up in-person and asked to complete an ACASI instrument

In-home or web data collection annually or biennially

Questionnaires administered in person via Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI)

Researchers can track changes between waves — including frequency of tobacco product use and product switching — among subgroups such as youth, young adults, people reporting daily and non-daily use, and people who use various types of tobacco products.

Biological Specimens

Wave	Adult urine	Youth urine	Adult blood
1	21,801	N/A	14,520
2	13,696	N/A	908
3	14,979	N/A	835
4	21,046	13,097	3,608
5	12,102	10,584	2,040
6	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	12,812	497	N/A
8	11,579	127	4,923

A subset of PATH Study participant samples were analyzed for biomarkers of exposure and biomarkers of potential harm as part of the Wave 1, Wave 4, and Wave 7 Biomarker Cores. As described below, resultant data is available in the Biomarker Restricted Use Files at the National Addiction & Health Data Archive Program (NAHDAP).

Access to PATH Study Data

Data, instruments, and codebooks are maintained by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), NAHDAP. They are available at: **https//doi.org/10.3886/Series606.**

The PATH Study Biospecimen Access Program has provided the research community with access to urine, serum, plasma and genomic DNA (gDNA) collected from PATH Study participants in waves where biospecimens were collected.

Policies and procedures to access biospecimens are available at: **https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/sites/nahdap/procedures-and-forms.**

Online Data Tables are available at: **https//www.icpsr.umich.edu/sites/nahdap/posts/path-study-data-tables-and-figures.**

Publications

1,236* **Number of PATH Study–Related Publications** (as of 12/31/2025)

*The number represents publications that use or refer to PATH Study data, papers that use or analyze statistical or other methods employed by the PATH Study, and also includes other PATH-related publications which cite PATH Study measures or methods to inform other study designs.

Examples of PATH Study papers are available at **https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/search/publications?q=PATH+Study.**

Highlighted Methods Papers

Longitudinal uses of the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health Study. *Tobacco Regulatory Science,* 7(1), Jan. 2021. In this paper, the authors describe the methods of Waves 2 and 3 of the PATH Study, and provide recommendations for how to conduct longitudinal analyses with these data.

Design and methods of the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health "PATH Study." *Tobacco Control,* 26(4), Jul. 2017. This paper describes the methods and conceptual framework for the PATH Study's Wave 1 data collection. The paper concludes that cumulative, population-based data, generated over time by the PATH Study, will contribute to the evidence base to inform FDA's regulatory mission under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act and efforts to reduce the Nation's burden of tobacco-related death and disease.