

Awareness and Prevalence of Nicotine Pouches Among Representative Underage Samples in the United States.

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Abstract

Objectives: Survey underage nicotine pouch awareness and prevalence across representative samples in the United States.
Methods: Data collection involved multiple representative underage samples from 2021-2023 across multiple age groupings of youth and underage adults surveyed on awareness, ever, past year, and current use of nicotine pouches.
Results: Across underage samples, there was moderate awareness (25.1-54.8%) and low prevalence of ever (0.8-5.6%), past year (0.6-2.9%), and 30-day use (0.2-1.9%) of nicotine pouches. From 2021-2023 awareness and ever use remained stable while past 30-day use had small nonsignificant increases.
Implications: Nicotine pouches have moderate awareness and low prevalence of use among underage individuals. Monitoring and prevention efforts should focus on novel oral nicotine products in the youth and underage adult space.

Introduction

- Oral nicotine products have been marketed for several years¹, yet research on their prevalence is in its infancy.
- Nicotine pouches are one of the fastest growing tobacco product categories, with sales of nicotine pouches in the United States increasing over 641% from 2019 to 2021.²
- While underage use of these novel products is a top concern, the research studies that have investigated underage use of nicotine pouches thus far suggest that these products have limited use among youth and underage adults.
- The project aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of underage nicotine pouch awareness and use in the United States.

Methods

Study Objective: Estimate the awareness and prevalence of nicotine pouches among youth and underage adults by examining data from representative samples in the United States.
Participants: Data gathered from multiple representative underage samples, including the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), Monitoring The Future (MTF), The Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH), and the Altria Client Services Underage Tobacco Use Survey (UTUS) from 2021-2023 (when available). Data sets included participants ranging from 11-20 years of age.
Study Design: Participants were surveyed online regarding awareness, ever use, past year use, and past 30-day use of nicotine pouches.

Results

- Across samples in 2023, underage awareness of nicotine pouches ranged from 25.1-54.8% (Table 1).
- Prevalence metrics across samples in 2023 remained low with ever use of nicotine pouches being under 6% and both past year use and current use being under 3% (Table 1).
- In samples with repeated cross-sectional waves from 2021-2023, nicotine pouch awareness and ever use remained stable while past 30-day use had small nonsignificant increases (Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Conclusion

- While there have been increases in awareness and use over the past years, recent 2023 representative underage data demonstrate there is moderate awareness of nicotine pouches and a low prevalence of ever, past year, and 30-day use.
- Monitoring and prevention efforts should focus on novel oral nicotine products among youth and underage adults.

References

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- Birdsey, J. (2023). Tobacco product use among US middle and high school students—National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2023. MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 72.
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Recent representative data demonstrate moderate awareness of nicotine pouches and a low prevalence of underage use.

Figure 1. Awareness of Nicotine Pouches Among Underage Populations, 2021-2023

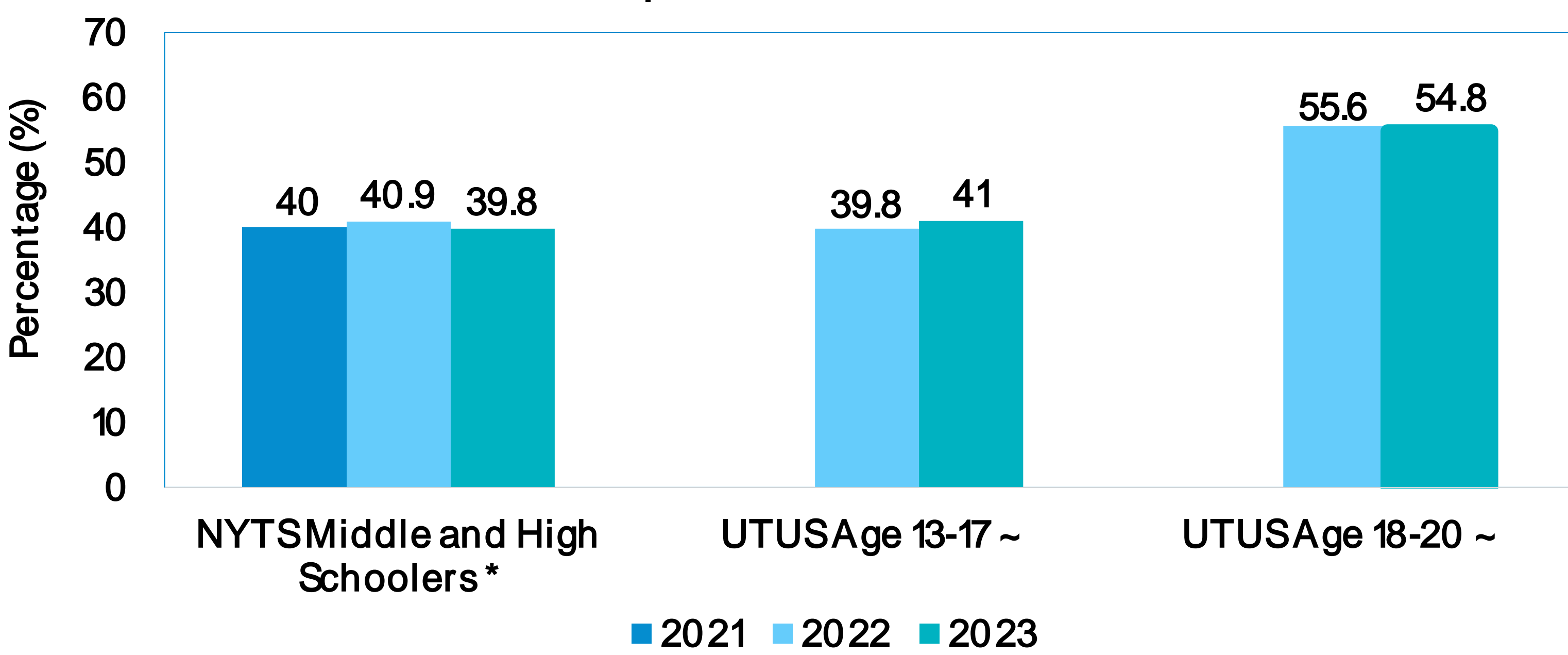
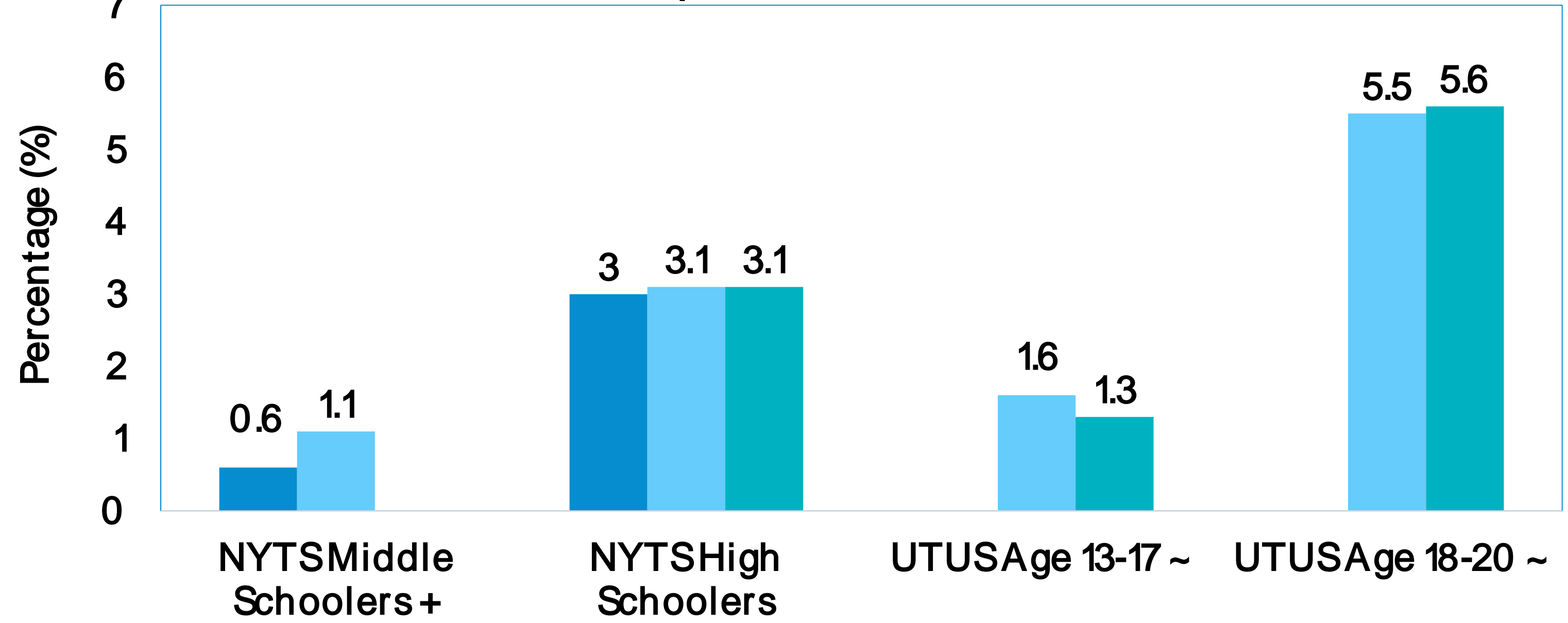


Figure 2. Ever Use of Nicotine Pouches Among Underage Populations, 2021-2023



*Nicotine pouch awareness in the NYTS was combined for middle and high school students.
+Nicotine pouch ever and past 30-day use in the NYTS for middle schoolers were statistically unreliable because of an unweighted denominator <50 or a relative standard error >30%³.
~UTUS 2022 awareness, ever, and past-30-day use metrics were for oral tobacco derived nicotine (OTDN) and included nicotine pouches.
Notes: When comparing UTUS to the NYTS, it is worth noting that NYTS data are generally collected in the first half of the year. Data collection for 2021 NYTS occurred from January 18, 2021–May 21, 2021. Data collection for 2022 NYTS occurred from January 18, 2022–May 31, 2022. For the 2023 NYTS, data collection occurred from March 9, 2023–June 16, 2023. There was no significant difference across years for all data and all measures based on overlapping confidence intervals.

Figure 3. Past 30-Day Nicotine Pouch Use Among Underage Populations, 2021-2023

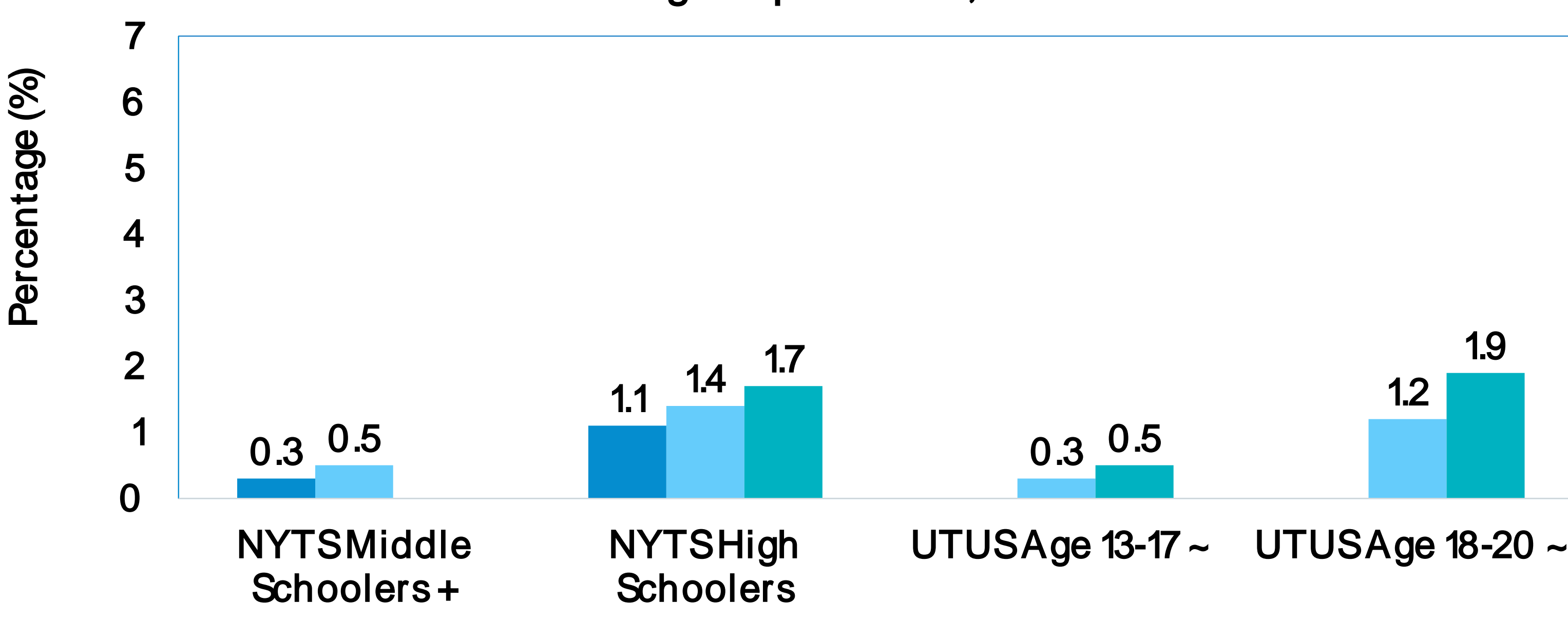


Table 1. Awareness and Prevalence Metrics of Nicotine Pouches, 2023

	NYTS, 2023 ^a Nicotine Pouches		PATH, 2022-2023 (Wave 7) ^a Nicotine Pouches		MTF, 2023 ^f Nicotine Pouches			UTUS, 2023 ^b Nicotine Pouches/OTDN	
	Middle Schoolers (n=11,067)	High Schoolers (n=10,879)	Age 12-17 (n=10,650)	Age 18-20 (n=4,723)	8 th Grade (n=6,240)	10 th Grade (n=8,494)	12 th Grade (n=7,584)	Age 13-17 (n=3,339)	Age 18-20 (n=2,319)
Awareness Have you ever seen or heard of...?	39.8% ^{b, c} (37.3-42.4)		25.1% (24.1-26.1)	27.6% (26.1-29.2)	~	~	~	41.0% ⁱ (39.1-42.9)	54.8% ⁱ (52.4-57.2)
Ever Use Have you ever used... even one time?	— ^d	3.1% (2.5-3.5)	0.8% (0.7-1.0)	4.2% (3.6-5.0)	1.2% [#]	2.6% [#]	3.6% [#]	1.3% ⁱ (1.0-1.9)	5.6% ⁱ (4.6-6.9)
Past Year Use Used within the past 12 months	~	~	~	~	0.6% [#]	1.9% [#]	2.9% [#]	~	~
Current Use Used within past 30 days	— ^d	1.7% (1.2-2.5)	0.2% (0.1-0.3)	1.1% (0.8-1.5)	0.4% [#]	1.1% [#]	1.4% [#]	0.5% ⁱ (0.3-0.8)	1.9% ⁱ (1.3-2.8)

^a NYTS 2023 middle schoolers defined by self-reported grade level 6-8 and high schoolers as grade 9-12, respectively. ³
^b Values in parentheses denote the 95% confidence intervals.
^c Based on ALCS analysis of NYTS 2023.
^d Dashes indicate that the data in this subgroup were statistically unreliable because of an unweighted denominator <50 or a relative standard error >30%. ³
^e Based on ALCS analysis of PATH Wave 7 Youth restricted dataset.
^f MTF 2023 data comes from publicly available online dashboard.⁴
^g Confidence Intervals were not included in MTF report.
^h Based on ALCS analysis of UTUS 2023 data. UTUS is fielded on a quarterly basis.
ⁱ UTUS 2023 included methodological language asking about nicotine pouch awareness and ever use specifically, but nicotine pouch was not included in the language for past 30-day use, simply oral tobacco derived nicotine (OTDN) products.



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