Smoking & Obesity

Lifestyle or Public Health Problem
Health policy includes a variety of activities

**Public Health**
- Focus on population
- Sanitation
- Disease control
- Infant mortality
- Nutrition
- Occupational health
- Environmental health

**Health Care**
- Focus on treatment of the individual
- Access
- Service delivery
- Standards for practice and treatment
- Funding
- Accountability
### Decisions...Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individual Decisions</th>
<th>Collective Decisions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private Decisions</td>
<td>I can choose, alone &amp; without interference</td>
<td>Choices are made by the community &amp; are binding on all</td>
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<tr>
<td>My choice has no consequence for your welfare</td>
<td><strong>Liberty of the Individual:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tyranny of the Majority:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Should I smoke?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How much should I weigh?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Decisions</td>
<td><strong>Theft by the Minority:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Liberty of the Group:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My choices affect your welfare</td>
<td>• Smoking in public places</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health care for the morbidly obese. For smokers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Smoking

Personal Right or Public Menace?
Consequences of Smoking

- Almost 500,000 deaths per year
- 30% of all cancers
  - Lung, kidney, pancreas, cervix, stomach
- Heart disease
- Emphysema
- Stroke
Impact on Non-Smokers

• ~50,000/yr die from secondary smoke effects
  – 40,000 from coronary disease
Financial Costs of Smoking

• > $80 billion/yr in direct health costs
  – $4 billion/yr lost wages
• Smoking is responsible for approximately 10% of total U.S. health care costs.
• Federal and state funds pay more than 43% of all smoking-attributable medical care expenditures.
Smoking

• Is it a public problem? Should government get involved?
  – Why? Why not?
  – What is the public interest in this issue?

• What kinds of action are acceptable?
  – By government?
  – By other groups?
  – By individuals?

• How should we balance public concern and involvement versus individual choice and individual liberty/responsibility?
Forms of Government Action

- Markets
- Information
- Laws
- Services
- Rules
- Rights
- Voluntary Action

Do Nothing
Obesity

Lifestyle Choice or Public Burden?
Overweight vs. Obesity

- Overweight: BMI > 25
- Obese: BMI > 30

**Percentage of American Adults Overweight**
- 1960 – 2004: stable ~ 32%

**Percentage of Americans Adults Obese**
- 1960 = 13%
- 2004 > 31%

**Percentage of American Children Overweight**
- ~15%
Overweight & Obese American Adults over Age 20

![Bar chart showing the percent of obese and overweight individuals among males, females, and both genders.]

- Males: Approximately 40% obese, 20% overweight
- Females: Approximately 30% obese, 30% overweight
- Both: Approximately 45% obese, 25% overweight
Causes of Obesity

- Genetic factors
- Environmental factors
- Psychological factors
- Disease
Consequences of Obesity

- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Cancer risk
- Psychological & social effects
Costs of Obesity

- ~300,000 deaths per year
- ~$100 billion in health care costs
  - ~$4 billion in lost wages
Obesity

• Is it a public problem? Should government get involved?
  – Why? Why not?
  – What is the *public interest* in this issue?
• What kinds of action are acceptable?
  – By government?
  – By other groups?
  – By individuals?
• How should we balance public concern and involvement versus individual choice and individual liberty/responsibility?
Forms of Government Action

- Laws
- Information
- Markets
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- Rules
- Rights
- Do Nothing
- Voluntary Action
Anti-Smoking Laws

• Ban smoking in specific settings
  – Public buildings & places
    • Government buildings
    • Schools
  – Private spaces
    • Bars & restaurants
    • hospitals
Affecting Markets: Anti-Smoking Taxes

Price

Product Demand

Product Supply

Quantity

q2

q1

p2

p1
Government Services

• Science Funding
  – Therapies
  – Drugs

• Subsidize School Nutrition Programs