

Discussion of:
The Effect of Menthol Cigarette Sales Restrictions on Cigarette Sales
and Smoking
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This Paper

- Research Question: What is the impact of menthol cigarette sales restrictions on tobacco use?
- Method and Data:
 - Compare Massachusetts (early adopter) to other states
 - Use Nielsen Scanner Data and BRFSS
- Key Findings:
 - Nielsen Scanner Data:
 - Menthol cigarette sales declined by 328 packs per 1,000 persons
 - Substitution: Non-menthol sales increased by 53 packs per 1,000 persons
 - Total cigarette sales decreased by 311 packs per 1,000 persons
 - BRFSS Data:
 - Menthol ban reduced smoking probability by 0.5 percentage points ($\approx 4\%$)

Comment #1: Research Design for Limited Treated States

- Challenge: Using DID with only one treated state can pose inference issues, even with individual-level data.
- Synthetic Methods:
 - Synthetic Control
 - Synthetic DID (Dench, Pineda-Torres, and Myers, JPUBE)
- Refined DID:
 - Get more policy variation: Utilize large local jurisdictions.
 - Leveraging the fraction of the population affected within a given year.

Comment #2: What's in the Tobacco Policy Controls?

- Regulations for cigarettes and vaping products have been evolving rapidly.
- Key Policy Categories:
 - Vaping-Related Policies:
 - Tobacco 21 (T21) and Minimum Legal Sales Age (MLSA), ENDS taxes, Indoor air laws
 - Cigarette-Related Policies:
 - Cigarette taxes, Indoor air laws, Online sales bans
 - Other Policies:
 - Marijuana legalization
 - Beer tax
- Special Focus: Flavor Restrictions:
 - ENDS flavor bans are often tied to menthol cigarette restrictions (e.g., Cotti et al.).
 - Many states with menthol bans also impose flavor restrictions on vaping products and, in some cases, cigars.
- Challenge: disentangle menthol restriction effect
- Heterogeneity and interplay of these tobacco control policies

Comment #3: Exploring Other Outcomes

- Substitution to vaping:
 - Menthol, flavored, and unflavored vaping products
- Patterns of Use:
 - Habitual behavior: frequency and daily use
- Use of substances:
 - Marijuana and alcohol consumption
- Co-use?
- Border State Effects:
 - Impact of policy spillovers in neighboring states
- Demographic Heterogeneity:
 - Gender, age, and race differences in baseline magnitudes and responses