

# IT'S LIKE SMOKING A PIECE OF GUM: PERCEPTIONS OF MENTHOL CIGARETTES AMONG TWITTER USERS

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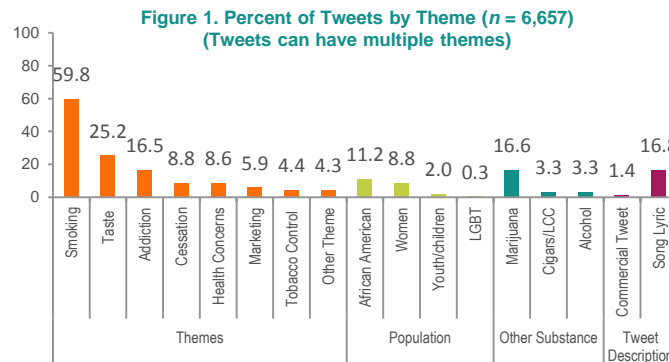
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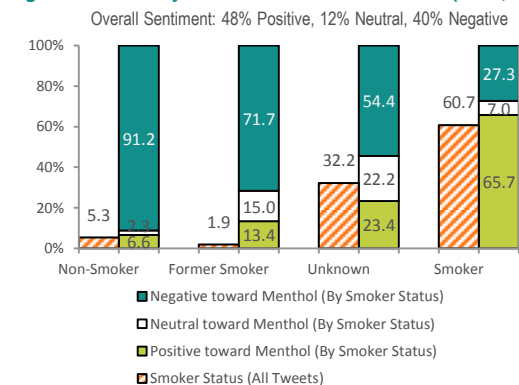
## INTRODUCTION

- Menthol cigarettes are used disproportionately by African-American, female, and adolescent smokers,<sup>1</sup> who have been targeted with menthol marketing.<sup>2</sup>
- Twitter, used disproportionately by younger & racial/ethnic minority populations,<sup>3</sup> provides insight into use and perceptions of menthol cigarettes.
- The purpose is to identify the frequency of content, popular sentiment, social norms, and (mis)perceptions of menthol cigarettes on Twitter to inform communication about these products, particularly to vulnerable subgroups.

## RESULTS



**Figure 2. Tweets by smoker status and sentiment (n = 6,657)**



**Table 1. Tweet Examples by Theme**

Theme	Tweet Examples (Sentiment toward menthol cigarettes +/-)
<b>Smoking</b>	Listening to music and smoking a port so relaxed (+) So pissed off I'm smoking a Newport #stressed #hatelife (-)
<b>Taste</b>	Newports >>>> any other cigarette (+) Menthol cigarettes are disgusting. (-)
<b>Addiction</b>	You know you're addicted to cigarettes when you consider chewing gum and smoking simultaneously. I don't even like menthols. (-)
<b>Health Concerns</b>	Menthol cigarettes are my saviour with this cold (+) these Newport's gone be the death of me I gotta stop smoking them cancer sticks (-)
<b>Cessation</b>	#PleaseDontAskMe to stop smoking. I like newports gottdamn!!!! (+) Day 4 not smoking. I do miss the taste of a Newport but I'd rather smell the ☹️ than fertilize them ☹️ (-)
<b>Tobacco Control</b>	EU are menthol! Now eurocrats want to ban menthol cigarettes in new draconian proposals. They should butt out. (+) Seriously those commercials of the people with the hole in their throat made me quit smoking I haven't had a newport in days (-)
<b>Marketing</b>	i got a coupon for some free camel crush cigs... they werent bad lol (+) It sad when Newports send you a coupon for your birthday wow I need to stop smoking (-)
<b>Marijuana</b>	Menthols are needed after smoking marijuana preferably Newports (+) I need to stop my bad habits -SMOKING weed nd Newport's Ugh!!! (-)
<b>African American</b>	@___: If you black and smoke cigarettes at least smoke Newports (+) Why do black people have a fetish with Newport cigarettes? (-)

## CONCLUSIONS

- Menthol content on Twitter is driven by smokers who are more positive about menthol cigarettes.
- Public health concerns (cessation, health, tobacco control) are dwarfed by this larger conversation.
- Tweets reflect linkage of menthol cigarettes with populations that have historically been targeted by menthol marketing and have a higher use prevalence.
- Twitter users frequently mention marijuana and menthol; popular song lyrics often discuss both together
- Framing public communication about menthol can be guided by public opinions shown through social media.

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