



Employment at Smoke-Free Workplaces in Milwaukee-Racine and Wisconsin, 1995-2002

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to examine the prevalence of smoke-free workplaces in the cities of Milwaukee and Racine, and more generally, in the state of Wisconsin. Overall trends in smoke-free workplaces across the labor force are presented. In addition, analyses were conducted to identify sociodemographic groups most and least likely to be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace in the Milwaukee-Racine area.

Methods

The data used in this analysis are from the 1995/1996, 1998/1999, and 2001/2002 Current Population Survey Tobacco Use Supplements (CPS-TUS). The Bureau of Labor Statistics has conducted the CPS monthly for more than 50 years. Though the major purpose of the survey is to study labor force employment and unemployment, several demographic and educational supplements are also attached to the main surveys regularly, and other policy related supplements are conducted periodically. The sample consists of randomly selected households (and all eligible individuals in the households) from the United States to represent the nation, its states, and specific areas. Multiple individuals, age 15 years and older, within one household may be included in the sample. Each selected household was interviewed for four consecutive

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months per year, and then for the corresponding months in the next year. Interviews were conducted using both in-person and telephone interviews. Utilization of in-person interviews is proposed to achieve better coverage of poorer households. In addition, the CPS uses proxy respondents (as a last resort, when a selected participant is not available for subsequent interviews).

The data in this report were collected in May 1995, September 1995, January 1996, May 1998, September 1998, January 1999, June 2001, November 2001 and February 2002. Since the sampling strata are defined within state boundaries, analyzing single state data is appropriate. All analyses are weighted by a personal non-response weight designed by the CPS, and also adjusted to the state's population in the 1990 Census. In the current study, we selected respondents older than 18. The total weighted sample size is 13,334 for the state of Wisconsin, and 4,708 for Milwaukee-Racine area.

Basic geographic and demographic variables were collected in the main component – the labor force component. Tobacco-related questions were collected only in the Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey. The item of interest in the present study is workplace smoking policies (measured by percent working in smoke-free places; for the subsample of respondents who were employed at the time of the surveys). For the Milwaukee-Racine area, analyses included examining whether employment in a smoke-free workplace varied by age, race/ethnicity, sex, and education.

Results

Figure 1 shows the percentage of workers that reported working in smoke-free environments in Wisconsin and the Milwaukee-Racine area from 1995/96 to 2001/02. While the proportion working in smoke-free environments was lower in Milwaukee and Racine in 1995/96, the rates were higher by 2001/02. The relative percent change for Wisconsin was 11.3% between 1995/96 and 2001/02 (increased from 62.0% to 69.0%); for the Milwaukee-Racine area, the relative percent change was 21.3% (increased from 58.6% to 71.1%). Perhaps most noteworthy – there appears to have been an upward trend in the percentage of Wisconsinites employed in smoke-free businesses, with approximately 70% of the Wisconsin workforce covered by smoke-free workplace policies by 2001/02.

While a fair amount of progress has been made in providing smoke-free environments for workers in the Milwaukee-Racine area, a few sociodemographic differences are discernable. Figure 2 shows the percentage of workers in the Milwaukee-Racine area working in smoke-free establishments by selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Middle-aged and older Milwaukee-Racine residents were more likely to work in smoke-free places (75.2%, 73.3%, and 71.3%, respectively), compared to the two youngest groups (68.9% and 63.3%, respectively). African-American employees were most likely to work in environments with smoke-free policies (80.0%), followed by Whites (71.1%), while Hispanics were least likely to work in a smoke-free environment (54.7%). Females were more likely to be employed at a smoke-free workplace than males (74.8% vs. 66.8%). With regards to education, a near linear trend was noted, with only 60.2% of those with less than a high school education working in a

smoke-free workplace, compared to 68.3% of those with a high school education or some college, and 79.6% of college graduates (bachelor's degree or higher). These relationships remained significant in multivariate analysis, while also controlling for income, home ownership, marital status, and smoking status (data not shown).

Limitations

There are a few limitations associated with the current study. For example, the sample size for some minority groups in the Milwaukee-Racine area were too small to analyze separately (i.e., Asians and Native Americans). Another limitation involves the more complex interrelationship of sociodemographic factors with smoking policies in the workplace. The current analysis does not control for these factors. Subsequent multiple logistic regression analyses (data not shown) revealed that employees in the Milwaukee-Racine area were significantly less likely to be employed in smoke-free workplaces compared to employees across the state, during the 1995-2002 period, after several sociodemographic characteristics were taken into account (age, gender, education, income, home ownership, marital status, and smoking status). This suggests that after taking these factors into account, the Milwaukee-Racine area is slightly behind that of the overall state with regards to smoke-free workplace policies. More sophisticated analyses may tease out and further explain these more intricate relationships.

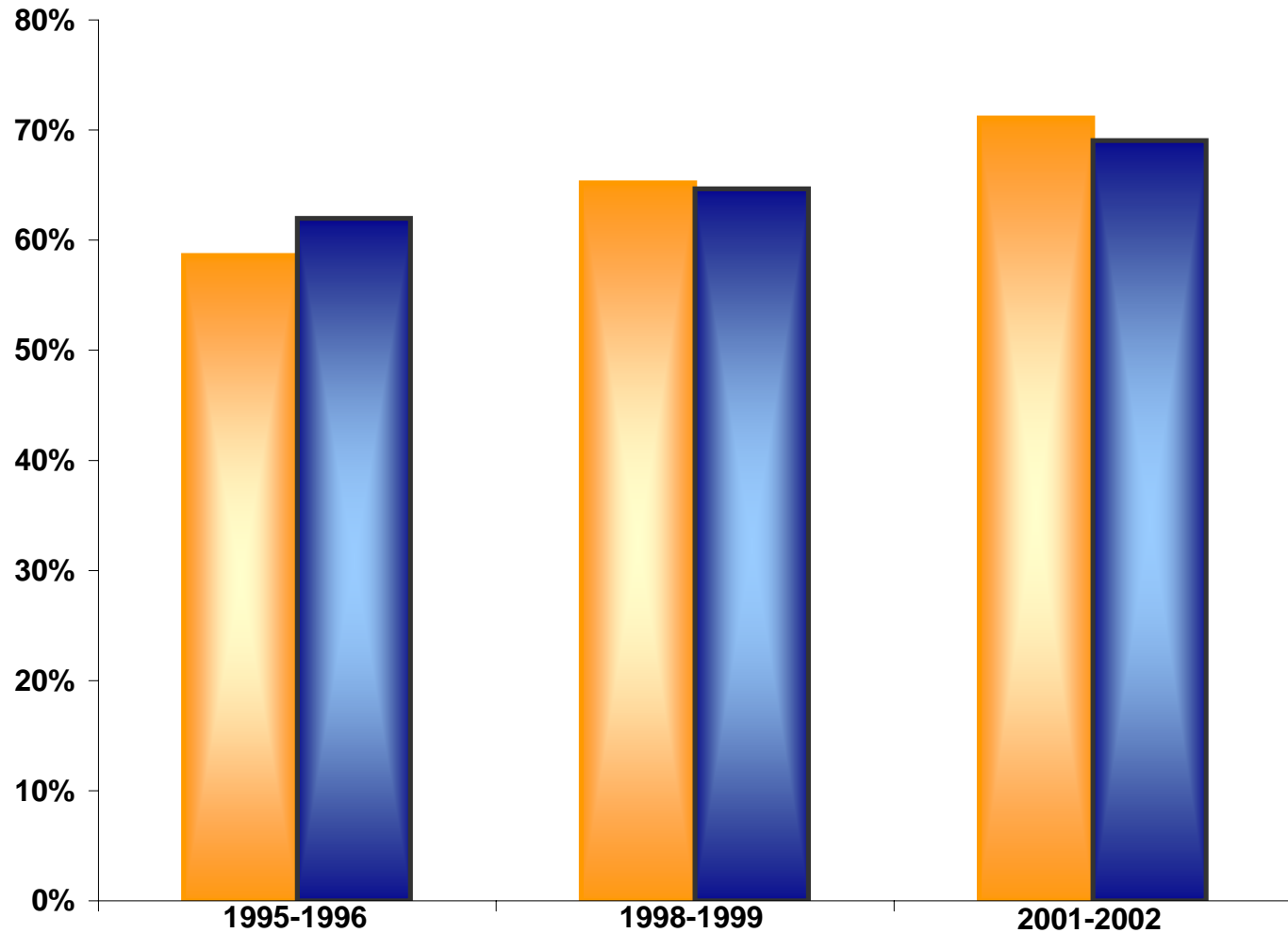
Conclusions

Overall, the percentage of Wisconsin and Milwaukee-Racine workers employed in smoke-free workplaces has increased between 1995/96 to 2001/02. More than two-thirds of these workers are employed in businesses covered by smoke-free workplace policies. However, coverage is not equal across all sociodemographic groups. Younger cohorts are less likely to work in smoke-free businesses, as are males and Hispanics. In particular, individuals with lower levels of education are less likely to work in smoke-free environments, compared to employees that have obtained greater levels of education. Accordingly, policies aimed at providing smoke-free environments for workers in the Milwaukee-Racine area should pay particular attention to how these groups may be impacted.

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Figure 1. Percent Employed at Smoke-Free Workplaces, Milwaukee-Racine and Wisconsin, 1995-2002



Milwaukee-Racine	58.6%	65.2%	71.1%
Wisconsin	62.0%	64.7%	69.0%

Figure 2. Percent Employed at Smoke-Free Workplaces, by Age, Race/Ethnicity, Sex and Education - Milwaukee-Racine, 2001-2002

