

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Surgeon General's Report: Cigarette Ads Cause Youth to Start Smoking

*UC Merced professor contributes to a chapter in today's U.S. Surgeon General's Report that concludes that despite restrictions, tobacco advertising continues to influence young smokers*

MERCED, Calif. — Cigarette advertising and promotion cause youth to start smoking and facilitate progression to regular use, according to a U.S. Surgeon General's Report [released](#) today.

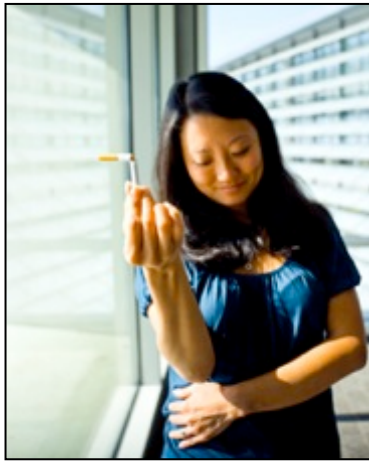
UC Merced Professor Anna V. Song collaborated with other researchers from around the world to contribute to the fifth chapter of the report, "Advertising and Other Promotional Activities Used by the Tobacco Companies to Promote Tobacco Use Among Young People." It's the first time a UC Merced professor has contributed to a Surgeon General's report.

### Quick Facts

- Cigarette advertising and promotion continue to cause youth to start smoking and facilitate progression to regular use, according to the Surgeon General's report.
- UC Merced psychology Professor Anna V. Song and other researchers contributed to the report.
- This is the first time a UC Merced professor has contributed to the Surgeon General's report.

The report concludes that even though tobacco companies are restricted from advertising to children, tobacco-marketing activities continue to influence youth to start smoking and continue smoking. The report considers a wide range of information, ranging from the epidemiology of adolescent tobacco use to economics to internal tobacco company documents describing the importance of new smokers.

"We tend to think that just because Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man are gone, youth are protected from tobacco marketing and advertising — this is not the case," Song said.



"There is strong evidence demonstrating that youth are still influenced by tobacco ads and marketing campaigns, even if they are not obviously directed towards them. These marketing efforts are very effective in getting young people to feel positively towards cigarettes and cigarette brands and start smoking."

Cigarette companies need to recruit to new smokers, and their advertising campaigns appeal to the aspirations of adolescents, the report concludes, adding that children appear to be more responsive to advertising than adults.

Tobacco companies market cigarettes to young adult trendsetters, the report also observes. A 2010 study found that R.J. Reynolds developed its marketing campaigns to better suit the lifestyle, image identity and attitudes of hip trendsetters and that Camel's brand identity shifted to more closely convey the hipster persona.

"Young people want to be popular, to be seen as an individual by their friends, and to resemble those they most admire," report concludes. "Cigarette advertising purposefully exploits these adolescent desires, using imagery to create the impression of popularity, individuality and kinship."

The report also highlights the fact that smoking in the movies acts through similar psychological channels to cause youth to start smoking.

The Surgeon General serves as the country's doctor by providing the United States with the best scientific information available on how to improve their health and reduce the risk of illness and injury.

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*UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. The campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of*

*advanced research and as a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the university is expected to grow rapidly, topping out at about 25,000 students within 30 years.*