

Behavior Intentions of Boston Adults after Restaurant and Bar Smoking Bans



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- Objectives** To explore the potential impact of smoke-free policies on restaurant and bar patronage by assessing adult past behaviors and future intentions.
- Methods** Data are from the Massachusetts Adult Tobacco Survey, a monthly survey of the Commonwealth carried out for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This report examines the Boston sub-sample: a representative sample of Boston adults (N=979) surveyed by telephone between March '95 and June '97.
- Results** The majority of respondents indicated that smoke-free policies would not change their patronage patterns. Among the rest, the proportion who predicted that their use of restaurants would change, the proportion predicting an increase in use (31%) was three times greater than those predicting a decrease in use (10%). Among those predicting a change in their use of bars, the proportion predicting an increase was almost two times greater than the proportion predicting a decrease. Non-smokers are much more likely to predict increased use than are smokers. Predictions are consistent with reports of past behavior: 36% percent reported having avoided a place because it was too smoky; only 13% percent reported having avoided a place because smoking was banned. When examined over time, it appears that avoidance of smoky places is increasing, as is the preference for smoke-free restaurants.
- Conclusions** Consistent with studies of sales receipts, this study suggests that smoking bans would have no negative economic consequences for restaurant and bar owners, and could potentially increase bar and restaurant patronage.

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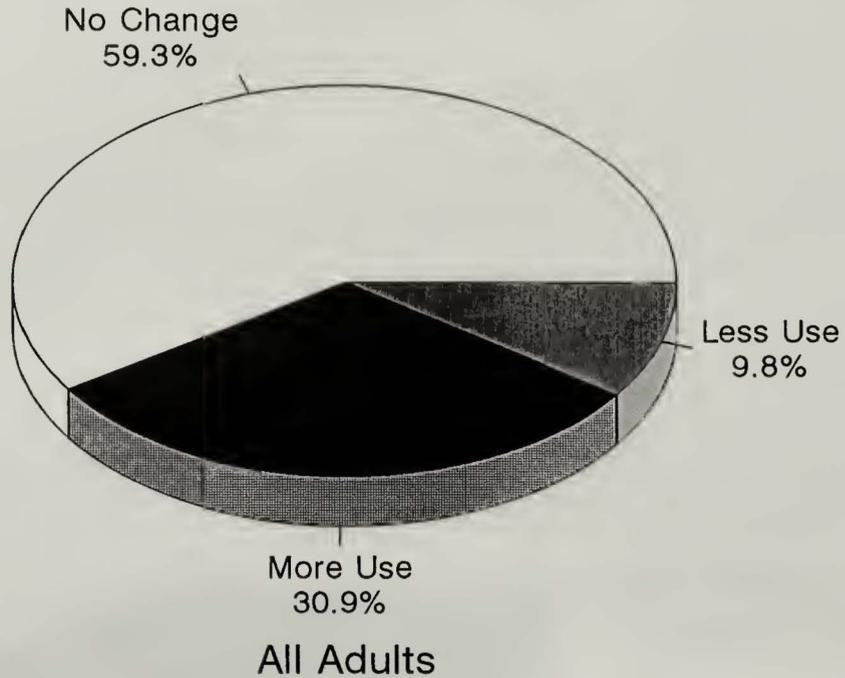
In Boston, nonsmokers outnumber smokers by almost 4 to 1. Nonsmokers make up 78% of the adult population of Boston. Consequently it is the behavior of nonsmokers that will have the largest impact on restaurant revenues.

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Restaurant Use if Smokefree

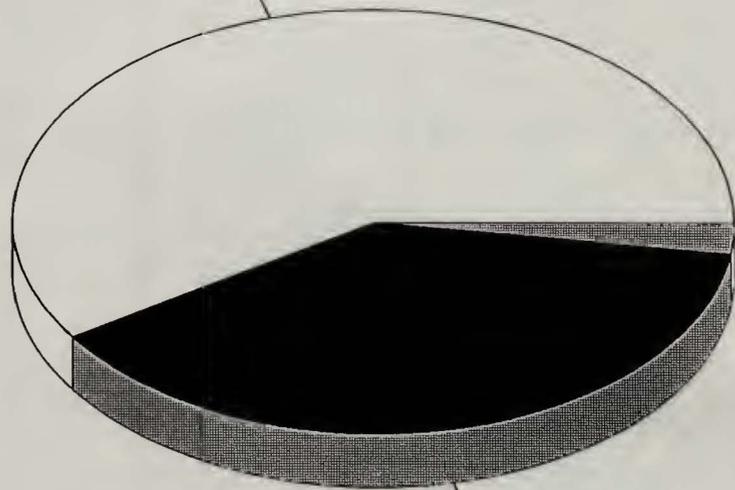
Boston Residents



Restaurant Use if Smokefree

Boston Residents

No Change
59.2%

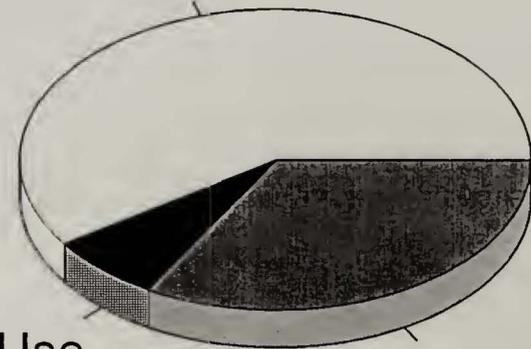


More Use
38.5%

Less Use
2.3%

Nonsmokers

No change
59.4



More Use
7.2

Less Use
33.3

Smokers

Table 1. Boston Adults Beliefs, and Past Behaviors in Relation to Second-hand Smoke:

The 1995-1997 Massachusetts Adult Tobacco Survey

	Total (N=979)	Nonsmokers (N=754)	Smokers (N=225)
Reaction to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)			
Believes ETS can cause cancer in nonsmokers (%)	84.3	88.5	71.0
Believe ETS is harmful to children (%)	95.6	96.4	93.1
Bothered more than "a little" by ETS (%)	63.2	71.7	36.9
Reports of Past Behavior			
Ever avoided a smoky place (%)	36.3	45.1	8.7
Ever avoided a smokefree place (%)	13.0	6.6	33.6