



## Names for cigars or cigarettes used by the Latino consumer in the United States of America

A cigar is a smoked-tobacco product made of cured and fermented leaves rolled into a cylindrical shape. Many types of cigars are available on the market today—they vary in size, shape, flavor, and type of filter and wrapper. These traits often determine the name given to each product.

When the United States instituted a tax increase on cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products, and cigars in 2009 through the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (1), consumption of some smoked-tobacco products rose. In fact, the higher cigarette/cigar tax positioned *small* cigars among the country's most popular tobacco products (2). This was partly a result of manufacturers making their small cigars slightly heavier to qualify for a preferential tax rate, avoiding the higher taxes levied by the 2009 law. Sales of smaller cigars such as "little cigars" and *cigarrillos* have increased tremendously since that time, by 238% and 148%, respectively. The growing popularity of these non-cigarette smoked-tobacco products has been multiplied by their availability for purchase as single units and in different flavors (e.g., apple, strawberry, grape, chocolate, vanilla), which makes them more appealing to youth and young adults.

Much less is known about cigar use in the United States than about cigarette use. Several national tobacco surveys have been conducted, but only a few have made clear distinctions between different types of cigars (3, 4). Moreover, cigar use may have been misreported in these surveys because many consumers can identify the cigar brand, but not the specific type of cigar.

The National Adult Tobacco Survey (5), which measures tobacco consumption and evaluates the short-, mid-, and long-term achievements of the country's tobacco prevention and control programs, is now administered in Spanish (as well as English) to encompass the significant Latino population in the United States. However, Hispanic communities vary greatly according to the immigrants' country of origin. While Mexican immigrants and descendants of Mexican origin account for 64.6% of all Latinos in the United States, Latinos from other countries are gaining and have become the dominant groups in certain areas. For example, whereas Mexicans tend to settle in border states (Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas), Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are the dominant Hispanic groups on the East Coast, especially in the New York–New Jersey area; Cubans are the majority Latino group in Miami; and Salvadorans make up the largest Hispanic community in Washington, D.C.

As expected, there are important lexical variations in spoken Spanish among these groups. Thus, some words used to name different tobacco products, such as *cigarro* and *cigarrillos*, among others, can have different meanings to individuals coming from different Hispanophone countries. Therefore, the importance of these variations among Hispanic populations must be considered when designing data collection instruments

in Spanish. In many cross-national tobacco surveys conducted by international agencies, such as the Pan American Health Organization (Washington, D.C., United States), the Spanish language used for each country differs by varying degrees according to differences in vocabulary and structure. These adjustments are made to ensure that respondents throughout Latin America understand the questions as intended.

In an empirical exercise, members of our group, the *Coalición de Odontólogos de Latinoamérica y del Caribe para la Prevención y Cesación del Tabaquismo* (Coalition of Dentists for Tobacco Prevention and Cessation in Latin America and the Caribbean), researched the different names used for cigars in several countries of Latin America. Members based in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela gathered information about the names of different types of cigars sold in local tobacco shops. The data collected showed that, in several Latin American countries, the term *cigarro* is used interchangeably for both cigarettes and cigars. The term *cigarro* is also used interchangeably for different types of cigars, regardless of their size. Furthermore, the term *cigarrillo* means *cigarette* (rather than *cigar*) in most Spanish-speaking countries.

On the basis of these findings, we suggest that researchers use care in designing and translating into Spanish any data collection instrument that assesses cigar use among the Hispanic population living in the United States. Since tobacco control efforts at local and national levels may be directed according to these data, it is imperative that they be accurate; therefore, illustrations should be included with tobacco-related questions, especially those that regard product type and non-cigarettes specifically.

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