

**MENTHOL PLUS.
A MAJOR CATEGORY OF
CIGARETTE FOUND AMONG
CONCEPT DESCRIPTOR
CIGARETTES FROM MEXICO**

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Background

Tobacco companies sell cigarettes with “concept” descriptor names that suggest sensation and/or flavor properties (e.g., Marlboro “Velvet Fusion”). What are the identities and levels of flavor chemicals in these cigarettes?

Methods

- 33 filter cigarette variants from 27 packs (including two sampler packs with 4 variations each) from Canada and Mexico were analyzed (rod+filter) for 177 flavor chemicals plus triacetin (a filter plasticizer and possible flavorant)
- 5 brands of U.S. mentholated filter cigarettes also analyzed

Results

- 27 cigarettes (all from Mexico) were “menthol-plus”: significant menthol plus varying amounts of total other flavor chemicals (TOFCs) (excludes triacetin). For 7 of the 27, TOFCs > 1.0 mg/cigarette; for 14, total fruit flavor compounds (TFFCs) > 1.0 mg/cigarette

Mexican tobacco companies that use concept descriptors on their packs are spiking cigarettes with menthol and other flavor chemicals.

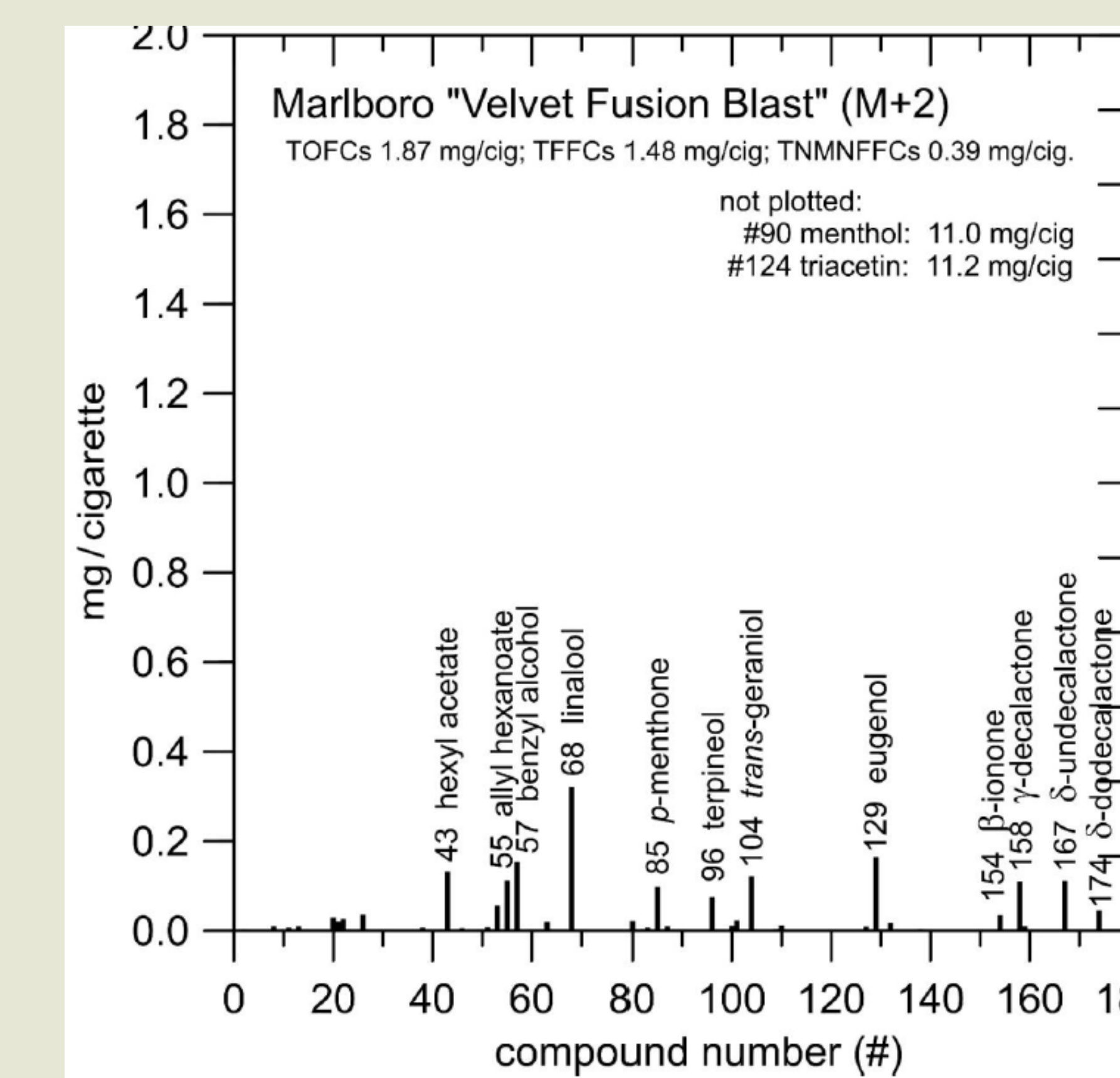


Figure . Four example packs from the 27 examined in this study. a. Lucky Strike “Convertibles” Blue; b. Marlboro “Velvet Fusion Blast”; c. Benson & Hedges “Polar Pearls”; and d. Pall Mall “XL Mystery”.

Given the scale of the problem posed by menthol alone, health officials seeking to decrease the appeal of smoked tobacco should examine the extent to which “concept descriptor” cigarettes using “menthol-plus” flavor profiling together with artful descriptors are furthering the problem of smoked tobacco.¹

Results (cont'd)

- 1 Mexican variant was “menthol-only”. All menthol-plus and menthol-only cigarettes contained 1 or 2 optional-crush capsules in their filters (crushed prior to analysis)
- All 5 Canadian brand variants were “non-flavored” (Canada bans all flavor additives, including menthol)
- All 5 U.S. brand variants were “menthol-only” (the U.S. bans characterizing flavors except menthol)



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The authors have no conflicts to declare.

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