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↓ Americans Get Fatter, Drunker

And yet Americans are smoking less and exercising more

By Mark Fischetti | Sep 18, 2012

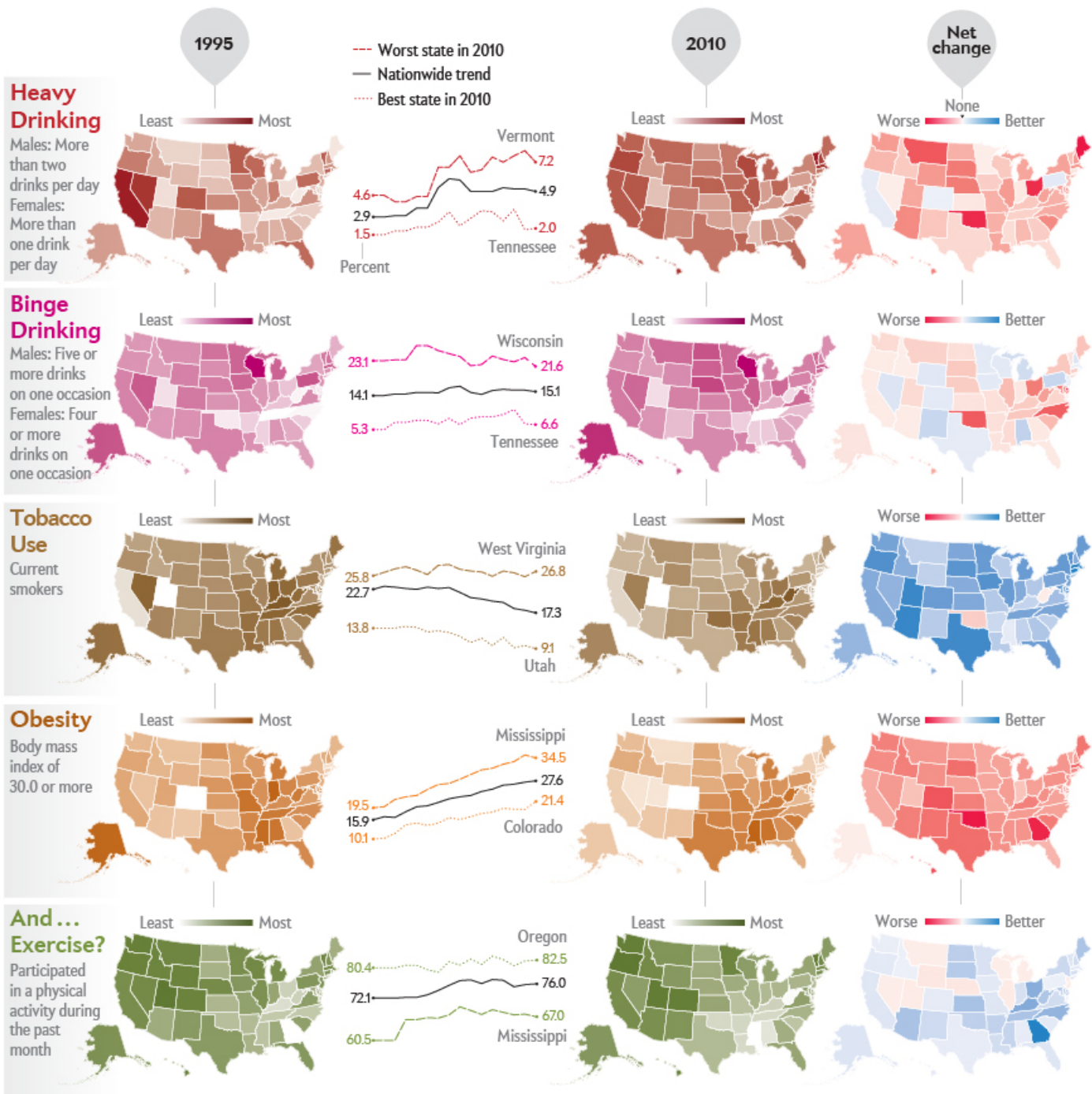
Lost in the U.S. health care debate is whether the country's citizens are hurting themselves with bad habits. The bottom line is mixed, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Americans are imbibing alcohol and overeating more yet are smoking less (*black lines in center graphs*).

Some of the behaviors have patterns; others do not. Obesity is heaviest in the Southeast (*2010 maps*). Smoking is concentrated there as well. Excess drinking is high in the Northeast.

Comparing 2010 and 1995 figures provides the greatest insight into trends (*maps, far right*). Heavy drinking has worsened in 47 states, and obesity has expanded in every state. Tobacco use has declined in all states except Oklahoma and West Virginia. The “good” habit, exercise, is up in many places—even in the Southeast, where it has lagged.

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Graphic by Pitch Interactive; Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Database, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Full details for each state are available at ScientificAmerican.com/oct2012/graphic-science

This article was originally published with the title "Fatter, Drunker Nation."

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