

Young people's opinion on the sale of tobacco in New Zealand

Background

In March 2011, the New Zealand Government committed to a goal of New Zealand becoming 'smokefree' by the year 2025, where less than five percent of the population smokes. One strategy towards meeting this goal is to reduce the availability of tobacco in New Zealand (The New Zealand Government, 2011). The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes and knowledge on a range of tobacco-related topics, including about their opinions on the sale of tobacco.

Methodology

To regularly monitor young people's opinions about tobacco control and aid the development of appropriate health promotion strategies, respondents in the 2012 YIS answered a question about their opinion on the sale of tobacco in New Zealand.

Responses to this question were examined by:

- smoking status
 1. never smoked
 2. current smokers (smoke at least monthly)
 3. ex (no longer smoke) and experimental (smoke less often than monthly) smokers
- susceptibility to smoking
 1. non-susceptible never smokers (who said they would 'definitely not' accept a cigarette offered by their best friend or smoke a cigarette during the next 12 months)
 2. susceptible never smokers
- ethnicity
- gender.

When looking at the differences by ethnicity and gender we have controlled for smoking status. This means that we take into account whether or not a respondent smokes, to ensure that any differences found by ethnicity or gender are not in fact due to the respondent's own smoking status.

Opinion about the sale of tobacco in New Zealand

All respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that 'cigarettes and tobacco should not be sold in NZ'. More than half (57%, 55-59%) agreed, while around one-in-five disagreed (21%, 19-23%) or didn't know (22%, 20-24%). Those more likely to 'agree' were:

- never smokers (65%), compared with ex/experimental smokers (50%); and both never and ex/experimental smokers, compared with current smokers (11%)
- non-susceptible never smokers (69%), compared with susceptible never smokers (44%).

There were no differences in agreement by ethnicity or gender when smoking status was taken into account.

Key points

- More than half (57%) of young people agreed that cigarettes and tobacco should not be sold in New Zealand.
- Young people who had never smoked and were not susceptible to taking up smoking were the most likely to agree that cigarettes and tobacco should not be sold in New Zealand.

About the Youth Insights Survey

- The YIS forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH).
- The YIS is a nationwide paper-based survey conducted in schools every two years, first carried out in its current form in 2006 and dating back to 1995 in different formats.
- The YIS collects data on smoking-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, media use, and responses to tobacco control initiatives. It monitors a broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to smoking uptake among young people.
- The 2012 YIS was conducted with a sample of 3,143 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 77%, the student level response rate 82%, and the overall response rate was 65%. The sample included 1,589 NZ European, 704 Māori, 295 Pacific, 340 Asian, and 199 people of 'Other' ethnicity (prioritised ethnicity). Seven percent (n = 222) were current smokers (smoke daily, weekly or monthly).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the population of New Zealand Year 10 school students.
- For this analysis, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were undertaken to compare responses between groups. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Smoking status (current smokers, compared with ex/experimental smokers and never smokers).
 - Smoking susceptibility (susceptible never smokers, compared with non-susceptible never smokers; as determined by answers to the questions 'If one of your best friends offered you a cigarette, would you smoke it?' and 'At any time during the next year (12 months) do you think you will smoke a cigarette?', where non-susceptible never smokers answered 'definitely not' to both questions, and susceptible never smokers answered anything except 'definitely not').
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
 - Gender (females, compared with males).
- A full description of the 2012 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

About the HPA

The HPA is a Crown entity that leads and delivers innovative, high quality and cost-effective programmes and activities that promote health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles and prevent disease, illness and injury. The HPA also enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles and reduce personal, social and economic harm.

References

The New Zealand Government (2011). *Government Response to the Report of the Māori Affairs Committee on its Inquiry into the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori. Final Response*. Presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with Standing Order 248. Wellington: the New Zealand Government.

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