

Smokers' expectations of future smoking

Background

Findings from the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Study) indicate that a large majority of smokers feel regret for ever starting smoking (ie, 74% in China, 89% in Australia, 91% in Canada and United States).¹⁻² The addictive nature of tobacco can make quitting difficult for some people. Overseas studies have assessed smokers' self-efficacy to quit smoking, and found that young smokers in particular are confident that they could stop smoking if they wished.³⁻⁴

The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) provides insight into New Zealanders' tobacco-related behaviours and attitudes. This factsheet uses data from the 2014 HLS to assist with understanding current smokers' expectations of future smoking.

Methodology

In the 2014 HLS, current smokers (n=578) answered two questions about their expectation of future smoking: "Do you think you will be smoking three months from now?", and "Do you think you will be smoking in 2025?" (Yes/No/Don't know). For both questions, the proportion of current smokers who answered 'yes' were examined by ethnicity, neighbourhood deprivation, age, gender, daily smoking status, quit attempts in the past 12 months, and awareness of the Smokefree 2025 goal. See the 'About the Health and Lifestyles Survey' section for the relevant comparison groups.

Only statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences between groups are reported.

Results

Do you think you will be smoking three months from now?

Around seven in ten (68%, 60%-75%) answered 'yes', and two in ten (21%, 14-28%) answered 'no' that they would be smoking in three months. The remaining respondents said they 'don't know' (12%, 7-16%) (see Figure 1).

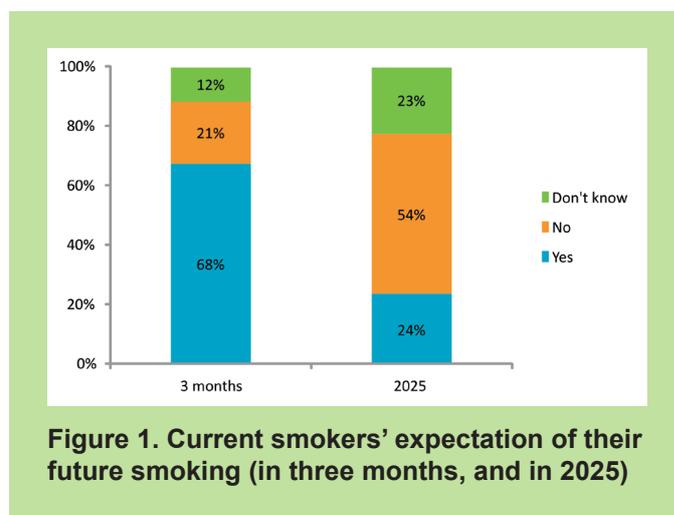


Figure 1. Current smokers' expectation of their future smoking (in three months, and in 2025)

Respondents who were less likely to believe they will still be smoking in three months were:

- people living in a neighbourhood of medium deprivation level (52%), compared with those living in a neighbourhood of low deprivation level (83%)
- non-daily smokers (42%), compared with daily smokers (70%).

Do you think you will be smoking in 2025?

Around one in four (24%, 17-30%) answered 'yes' and one in two (54%, 46-62%) answered 'no' that they would be smoking in 2025. One in four (23%, 16-29%) said they 'don't know' (see Figure 1).

Respondents who were less likely to believe they will still be smoking in 2025 were:

- young adults aged 15 to 24-years-old, compared with all older age groups (see Table 1)

- non-daily smokers (2%), compared with daily smokers (26%)
- people who had made a quit attempt in the past 12 months (12%), compared with those who had not tried to quit (31%).

Table 1: Proportion of current smokers who believed they will still be smoking in 2025 by age group and odds ratio from logistic regression model

Age group	%	Odds ratio (95% CI)
15-24 years	4.8%	Ref
25-34 years	21.8%	5.57 (1.42-21.94)
35-54 years	28.6%	8.03 (3.04-21.23)
55+ years	28.4%	7.94 (2.83-22.33)

Key points

- Around two-thirds (68%) of current smokers believed they would still be smoking in three months, while only one quarter (24%) believed they would still be smoking in 2025.
- A notable proportion of current smokers were unsure whether they would still be smoking in the future.
- For both measures on expectation of future smoking, current smokers who had tried to quit in the past 12 months were more confident that they will stop smoking, when compared with those who had not tried to quit in the past 12 months.
- Young adults aged 15 to 24-years-old, compared with all older age groups are less likely to believe they still would be smoking in 2025.

References

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Citation

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About the Health and Lifestyles Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years since 2008.
- The 2014 HLS consisted of a sample of 2,594 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over, who provided information about their health behaviours and attitudes relating to tobacco, sun safety, healthy eating, gambling, alcohol, exercise, immunisation, mental health, breast feeding, and cancer screening. The response rate was 73.2%.
- The 2014 HLS sample included 1420 European/Other people, 564 Māori, 393 Pacific people, and 217 Asian people (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) according to 2013 Census data to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- For this analysis, jack-knife proportions and associated 95% confidence intervals were calculated first. Logistic regression was then used to compare responses between groups. The significance level was set to $\alpha=0.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Ethnicity (Māori, Pacific, and Asian, compared with European/Other)
 - Neighbourhood deprivation status (New Zealand Deprivation Index 8 to 10 and 4 to 7, compared with New Zealand Deprivation Index 1 to 3)
 - Age (25 to 34, 35 to 54, 55+ years, compared to 15 to 24-year-olds)
 - Gender (males, compared with females)
 - Daily smoking status (daily smokers, compared with non-daily smokers)
 - Quit attempts in the past 12 months (individuals who had made no quit attempt in the past 12 months, compared with individuals who had at least one quit attempt in the past 12 months)
 - Awareness of the Smokefree 2025 national goal (those who were aware of the goal, compared with those who were not).
- A full description of the 2014 HLS methodology and further HLS publications can be found online at www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications.

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