

## Offer and acceptance of tobacco among young people

### Background

In New Zealand it is illegal to sell tobacco products to people under the age of 18 years, yet young people continue to smoke. It is therefore important to better understand non-commercial ways in which young people access tobacco. This fact sheet uses data from the Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) – which monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes and knowledge on a range of tobacco-related topics – to examine how many young people are being offered tobacco by others, how many are accepting or refusing those offers, and whether there are particular sub-groups of young people who are more likely to be offered tobacco and/or to accept it.

### Methodology

Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked whether they had accepted a cigarette/tobacco someone had offered them in the past year (12 months). Response options were 'I have not been offered a cigarette/tobacco in the past year', 'yes', and 'no'.

The proportion of respondents who had been offered a cigarette/tobacco was calculated by dividing the number of respondents who said 'yes' or 'no' to the above question by the total number of respondents. The proportion of respondents who accepted the offer of tobacco was calculated by dividing the number of respondents who said 'yes' to the above question by the number of respondents who had been offered tobacco in the past year (n=1,639).

Responses to the question about being offered cigarettes/tobacco were examined by:

- smoking status<sup>1</sup>
- susceptibility to smoking<sup>2</sup>
- parental smoking status
- ethnicity
- gender.

Further analyses were undertaken to examine changes over time in offers and acceptance of cigarettes/tobacco among young people as this question was also asked in 2010.

Only those differences that were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) are reported.

### How many young people were offered tobacco?

Just over a half (55%, 52-57%) of respondents indicated that they had been offered cigarettes/tobacco in the past year.

Those who were more likely to indicate having been offered cigarettes/tobacco were:

- current smokers (99%), compared with ex/experimental smokers (82%) and never smokers (41%)
- ex/experimental smokers, compared with never smokers
- susceptible never smokers (53%), compared with non-susceptible never smokers (38%)
- young people who indicated that one parent smoked (63%), compared with those who indicated that neither parent smoked (49%). This was still significant when controlling for the respondent's own smoking status<sup>3</sup>
- Māori (72%), compared with non-Māori (49%). This was still significant when controlling for the respondent's own smoking status.

## Of those who were offered tobacco, who were more likely to accept?

Of those who indicated that they were offered cigarettes/tobacco in the past year, three in 10 (30%, 27-32%) accepted the offer.

Those who were more likely to indicate having accepted the offer were:

- current smokers (95%), compared with ex/experimental smokers (50%)
- females (34%), compared with males (25%). This was still significant when controlling for respondent smoking status.

No never-smokers accepted the offer of cigarettes/tobacco.

## Were there any differences over time in the offer and acceptance of tobacco among young people?

Young people were just as likely to have been offered cigarettes/tobacco in 2012 (55%) as in 2010 (54%). However, young people were significantly less likely to have accepted the offer of tobacco in 2012 (30%) than they were in 2010 (42%), and this was still significant when controlling for the respondent's own smoking status.

### Key points

- Just over one-half of young people had been offered cigarettes/tobacco by someone else in the past year. Of those who had been offered tobacco in the past year, three in 10 accepted the tobacco.
- Almost all young current smokers had been offered cigarettes/tobacco by someone else in the past year, and nearly all of them had accepted the offer. Around four in 10 young people who had never tried smoking had been offered cigarettes/tobacco in the past year, but none had accepted the offer.
- Young Māori were more likely to have been offered cigarettes/tobacco in the past year compared with non-Māori, even when controlling for smoking status. However, of young people who were offered cigarettes/tobacco, Māori and non-Māori were equally likely to accept or reject the offer.
- Young people who had one parent who smoked were more likely to have been offered cigarettes/tobacco in the past year, compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smoked. However, regardless of whether their parents smoked or not, young people who were offered cigarettes/tobacco were equally likely to accept or reject the offer (when controlling for respondent smoking status).
- Young never smokers who were susceptible to smoking were more likely to have been offered cigarettes/tobacco than never smokers who were not susceptible to smoking.
- Although rates of having been offered cigarettes/tobacco were similar in 2010 and 2012, young people were less likely to accept the offer in 2012.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Never smoked, current smokers (smoke at least monthly), and ex smokers (no longer smoke) or experimental smokers (smoke less often than monthly).

<sup>2</sup>Non-susceptible never smokers (would 'definitely not' accept a cigarette offered by their best friend or smoke a cigarette during the next 12 months) and susceptible never smokers.

<sup>3</sup>Whether or not a respondent smokes is taken into account to ensure that any differences found are not due to respondents' own smoking status.

### Citation

Eathorne, A., & White, J. (2014). *Offer and acceptance of tobacco among young people. [In Fact]*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

## About the Youth Insights Survey

- The YIS forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by the 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').
  - Parental smoking status (those who indicated that one parent smoked, compared with those who said that neither parent smoked).
  - 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 online 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. HPA also enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm.

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May 2014

ISSN 2350-2991