

## Parenting and smoking

### Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010

#### Background

Parental attitudes and behaviours about smoking influence whether their children take up smoking. Research has shown that adolescents who had at least one parent who smoked were three times more likely to be daily smokers, compared with those whose parents did not smoke.<sup>1</sup> Another study also found a lower chance of adolescents smoking if they thought their parents disapprove of smoking.<sup>2</sup>

To understand parents' and caregivers' perceptions of their roles and to understand what they do to protect their children from taking up smoking, the Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) asked parents and caregivers of children aged 5- to 16-years-old a series of questions.

#### Overview of key findings

- The majority (90%) of parents/caregivers thought that they had influence over whether their child starts to smoke or not.
- Around three in four (76%) parents/caregivers thought that they were able to prevent their child from starting to smoke.
- About one-half (47%) of parents/caregivers said they had set rules with their child about *not* smoking.
- Around six in 10 (61%) parents/caregivers 'sometimes', 'often', or 'very often' told their child that they don't want him/her to smoke.
- Almost all parents/caregivers (97%) thought their child did not smoke at the time of the survey.

#### Research details

##### Methodology

Respondents who were a parent or a caregiver of a child aged 5- to 16-years-old were asked a set of specific questions on parenting and smoking:

- As a parent or caregiver, do you have any influence over whether (*your child*) starts to smoke cigarettes or tobacco (yes/no)?
- Do you think that you are able to prevent (*your child*) from starting smoking cigarettes or tobacco (yes/no)?
- Do you have set rules with (*your child*) about not smoking cigarettes or tobacco (yes/no)?
- How often do you tell (*your child*) that you don't want him/her to smoke cigarettes or tobacco (never/rarely/sometimes/often/very often)?
- Which of the following best describes how often you think (*your child*) smokes now (never tried, tried in the past but stopped/ yes - occasionally or socially/ yes - at least once a week/ yes - at least once a day)?

Non-response to some of the questions was high. This was due to some parents/caregivers thinking that the questions were irrelevant to their children because they were still too young to start smoking, or already smoke. Those respondents were excluded from the analysis, hence the reduced sample size.<sup>3</sup>

Data from respondents who provided a valid response was summarised and compared by smoking status, ethnicity, neighbourhood deprivation status, gender, and educational background of parents/caregivers, as well as age of child. Statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) are reported.

## Parenting and smoking

### Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010 (continued)

#### Detailed findings

##### *Do parents/caregivers think they have influence over their child's uptake of smoking?*

The majority (90%) of parents/caregivers thought that they have influence over whether their child starts to smoke cigarettes or tobacco.

Parents/caregivers who were more likely to answer 'yes' were:

- People of European/Other ethnicity (94%), compared with Māori (87%), Pacific (76%), and Asian (77%) people.
- People living in neighbourhoods of low deprivation status (95%), compared with those living in neighbourhoods of high deprivation status (86%).
- People with children aged 5 to 7 years (95%) and 8 to 12 years (89%), compared with those with children aged 13 to 16 years (85%).

There were no differences by parental smoking status, gender, or educational level.

##### *Do parents/caregivers think they are able to prevent their child from starting smoking?*

Around three in four (76%) parents/caregivers thought that they are able to prevent their child from starting smoking.

Parents/caregivers who were more likely to think this way were:

- Never smokers (87%), compared with current smokers (66%) and past smokers (68%).
- Asian people (92%), compared with those of European/Other ethnicity (74%).

There were no differences by parental neighbourhood deprivation status, gender, or educational level, or the age of the child.

##### *Do parents/caregivers have set rules about not smoking?*

Around one-half (47%) of parents/caregivers said they have set rules with their child about not smoking, while the remaining (53%) do not.

Parents/caregivers who were more likely to have set rules were:

- Māori (61%) and Pacific people (64%), compared with those of European/Other ethnicity (42%).
- People with no formal qualifications (60%), compared with those with university qualifications (43%).

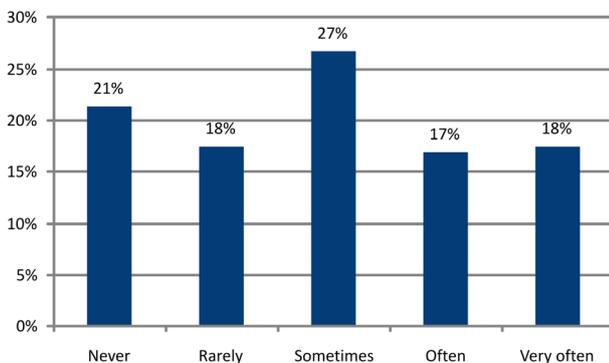
There were no differences by parental smoking status, neighbourhood deprivation status, or gender, or age of child.

## Parenting and smoking Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010 (continued)

### How often do parents/caregivers tell their child they don't want him/her to smoke?

When asked how often they tell their child they don't want him/her to smoke, around six in 10 (62%) parents/caregivers said 'sometimes' (27%), 'often' (17%), or 'very often' (18%). Around four in 10 (39%) said they 'never' (21%) or 'rarely' (18%) tell them (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: How often parents/caregivers tell their child that they don't want him/her to smoke



Parents/caregivers who were more likely to answer 'sometimes', 'often', or 'very often' were:

- Current smokers (75%), compared with never smokers (54%).

- Pacific people (75%), compared with those of European/Other ethnicity (59%).
- People with no formal qualifications (77%), compared with those with university qualifications (58%).

There were no differences by parental neighbourhood deprivation status, gender, or age of child.

### Do parents/caregivers think that their child smokes now?

Almost all parents/caregivers (97%) did not think their child smokes now and this included 2% of the parents/caregivers sample who thought their child had experimented with smoking in the past but stopped smoking now. The remaining 3% of parents/caregivers thought their child currently smokes. Parents/caregivers who were more likely to think that their child does not currently smoke were:

- People with university qualifications (99.5%), compared with those with no formal qualifications (92%) and those with School Certificate/NCEA level 1 (96%).

There were no differences by smoking status, ethnicity, neighbourhood deprivation level, or gender.<sup>4</sup>

## Parenting and smoking Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010 (continued)

### About the Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The 2010 HLS consisted of a sample of 1,740 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over, who provided information about their health behaviours and attitudes relating to tobacco, sun safety, healthy eating, gambling, and alcohol.
- In 2010, the parent/caregiver sample, with a response rate of 55%, included 485 people of European/Other ethnicity, 168 Māori, 67 Pacific peoples and 100 Asian people (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- Invalid responses were excluded from the analysis.
- For this analysis, odds ratios were undertaken to compare proportions collected by the 2010 HLS. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to  $\alpha=.05$ .
- Comparison groups were as follows:
  - Smoking status of parents/caregivers (current smokers: those who smoked at least monthly and past smokers: those who had ever smoked but did not smoke at the time of the survey, compared with never smokers).
  - Ethnicity of parents/caregivers (Māori, Pacific, and Asian people, compared with people of European/Other ethnicity).
  - Neighbourhood deprivation status of parents/caregivers (high: NZDep2006 8-10 and medium: NZDep2006 4-7, compared with low: NZDep2006 1-3).
  - Gender of parents/caregivers (female, compared with male).
  - Educational background of parents/caregivers (no formal qualifications, School Certificate/NCEA level 1, and UE/NCEA levels 2-3/trade certificates, compared with university qualifications).
  - Age of child (8-12 years, and 13-16 years, compared with 5-7 years).
- A full description of the 2010 HLS survey methodology and further HLS publications can be found online at [www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html](http://www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html).

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Paynter, J. (2007). *National Year 10 ASH snapshot survey, 1999-2007: Trends in tobacco use by students aged 14-15 years*. Wellington: Ministry of Health, Action on Smoking and Health, Health Sponsorship Council.
- <sup>2</sup> Sargent, J.D., & Dalton, M. (2001). Does parental disapproval of smoking prevent adolescents from becoming established smokers? *Paediatrics*, 108, 1256-1262.
- <sup>3</sup> The removal of non-response reduced the number of participants answering these questions to 818, 813, 614, 756 and 819.
- <sup>4</sup> Statistical differences by age of child were not calculated due to an empty cell in the 5-7 years age group.

#### About the HSC

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

#### Citation

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