

In Fact: Acceptability of exposure to second-hand smoke among young people – 2014

Background

Young people who are exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke are at increased risk of adverse health consequences such as respiratory illness and cancer (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). Furthermore, perception of the danger of second-hand smoke appears to be protective against smoking initiation among young people (Song, Glantz & Halpern-Felsher, 2009).

One of the main sources of New Zealand data on youth smoking is the Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS). The YIS monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes and knowledge on a range of tobacco-related topics, including their opinions on the acceptability of exposure to second-hand smoke.

Methodology

Respondents in the 2014 YIS were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that, "It's not okay for other people to smoke around me where I can breathe their smoke".

Agreement was examined by gender, ethnicity, smoking status¹ and susceptibility to smoking (among never smokers)² (see the 'About the Youth Insights Survey' section for more detail and relevant comparison groups). When looking at differences by gender and ethnicity, we have controlled for smoking status. This means that we took into account whether or not the respondent

smoked to ensure that any difference found by gender or ethnicity is not in fact due to the respondent's smoking status. Only statistically significant ($p < .05$) differences between groups are reported.

Agreement with this statement was also assessed in 2012, therefore further analysis was undertaken to examine change over time.

Acceptability of exposure to second-hand smoke

Seventy percent (68-72%) agreed that it is not okay for other people to smoke around them where they could breathe the smoke. Fifteen percent (13-16%) disagreed, and the remainder (15%, 13-16%) answered 'don't know'.

Those who were more likely to agree were:

- never smokers (79%), compared with ex/experimental smokers (54%) and current smokers (28%); and ex/experimental smokers compared with current smokers (Figure 1)
- non-susceptible never smokers (83%), compared with susceptible never smokers (63%).

Between 2012 (74%) and 2014 (70%), there was a significant decrease in the proportion of respondents who agreed that it is not okay for other people to smoke around them where they could breathe the smoke.

¹ Never smoked, current smokers (smoke at least monthly), and ex-smokers (no longer smoke) and experimental smokers (smoke less often than monthly).

² 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.

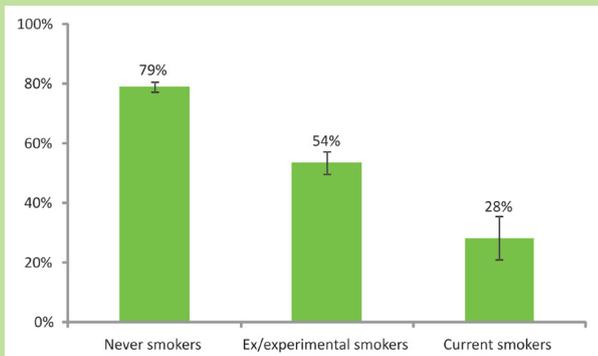


Figure 1. Proportion of respondents who agreed that it is not okay for other people to smoke around them where they can breathe the smoke, by smoking status, 2014

Key points

- More than two-thirds (70%) of young people felt that it is not okay for other people to smoke around them where they can breathe the smoke.
- Different patterns in response were seen by smoking status, with those who had never smoked showing the highest rate of agreement.
- While remaining high, the proportion of young people who agreed with the statement has decreased since 2012.

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 the broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to smoking uptake among young people.
- The 2014 YIS was conducted with a sample of 2,919 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 76%, the student level response rate 84%, and the overall response rate was 64%. The sample included 1,352 NZ European, 700 Māori, 321 Pacific, 353 Asian, and 193 people of 'Other' ethnicity (prioritised ethnicity). Eight percent ($n = 218$) 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, jack-knife proportions and 95% confidence intervals were calculated first. Multivariate logistic regression was then used 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:
 - Gender (females, compared with males).
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
 - Smoking status (never smokers, compared with ex/experimental smokers and current smokers). Ex/experimental smokers had smoked a cigarette, but no longer smoke or smoke less often than once a month. Current smokers reported smoking at least once a month or more often.
 - Susceptibility to smoking (never smokers who were not susceptible to start smoking, compared with never smokers who were susceptible to start smoking). Non-susceptible never smokers answered 'definitely not' 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?" Susceptible never smokers answered anything except 'definitely not' to these two questions.
- A full description of the 2014 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

References

- Song, A.V., Glantz, S.A. & Halpern-Felsher, B.L. (2009). Perceptions of second-hand smoke risks predict future adolescent smoking initiation. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 45*, 618-625.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *The health consequences of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke: A report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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