

Parental attitudes and rules about smoking

Youth Insights Survey 2010

Background

The Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors the broad spectrum of risk and protective factors that relate to the number of young people who take up smoking. Parents and caregivers are recognised as having a significant impact on their children's smoking behaviour. There is evidence to show that young people's perceptions of parental attitudes about smoking may be an even stronger influence than parental smoking behaviour.¹ Therefore, it is important to monitor these perceptions. In the 2010 YIS, respondents were asked whether their parents would be upset if they were caught smoking, and whether their parents had rules with them about not smoking.

Overview of key findings

Around eight in 10 young people said their parents would be upset if they were caught smoking. Those who were more likely to say this were those with non-smoking parents, and those who had never smoked, particularly those who were defined as not susceptible to start smoking in the future.

Around six in 10 said that their parents had set rules with them about not smoking. Young people who were more likely to say this were those who had never smoked, particularly those who were defined as not susceptible to start smoking in the future. Young people were equally likely to say that their parents had set rules with them about not smoking, regardless of whether their parents smoked or not.

Methodology

Respondents were asked to 'agree', 'disagree', or indicate 'don't know' in response to the following statements:

- **My parents or caregivers would be upset if I was caught smoking cigarettes/tobacco.**
- **My parents or caregivers have set rules with me about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco.**

Overall responses are reported. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in 'agree' responses are then reported by:

- Parental smoking status (those who had indicated that both of their parents smoked, compared with those who had indicated that one parent smoked).
- Smoking status (current smokers: those who smoked at least monthly, compared with those who had never tried smoking).
- Smoking susceptibility (non-susceptible never smokers, compared with susceptible never smokers, as defined by answers to a validated measure of susceptibility to smoking uptake. The base was those who had never tried smoking).
- Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
- Gender.

Detailed findings

What proportion of young people said that their parents would be upset if they were caught smoking?

Eight in 10 (84%) respondents 'agreed' that **my parents or caregivers would be upset if I was caught smoking cigarettes/tobacco**. Under one in 10 (6%) 'disagreed', and one in 10 (10%) responded 'don't know'. Those who were more likely to 'agree' were:

- Those who had indicated that neither of their parents smoked (88%), compared with those who had indicated that one (81%) or both (68%) of their parents smoked.

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- Never smokers (91%), compared with current smokers (57%).
- Non-susceptible never smokers (92%), compared with susceptible never smokers (86%).
- Non-Māori (87%), compared with Māori (75%). However, this was not significant when controlling for respondent smoking status.

What proportion of young people said that their parents had rules with them about not smoking?

Around six in 10 (57%) respondents 'agreed' that **my parents or caregivers have set rules with me about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco**. Around two in 10 (23%) 'disagreed', and two in 10 (20%) responded 'don't know'. Those who were more likely to 'agree' were:

- Never smokers (59%), compared with current smokers (48%).

About the Survey

- The YIS survey forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by HSC 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.
- The YIS collects data on smoking-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, as well as data on students' interests, lifestyles, activities, and 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 2010 YIS was conducted with a sample of 3,197 Year 10 students (14- to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 79%, the student level response rate 85%, and the overall response rate was 65%. The sample included 1,708 NZ European, 639 Māori, 332 Pacific, 337 Asian people and 158 people of 'Other' ethnicity (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the population of 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 $\alpha=.05$.
- A full description of the 2010 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html.

References

- ¹ Sargent, J.D. & Dalton, M. (2001). Does parental disapproval of smoking prevent adolescents from becoming established smokers? *Pediatrics*, 108, 1256-1262.

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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