

Young people's perceptions of their parents' attitudes and rules about smoking

Background

Young people's perceptions of parental attitudes and rules about smoking are associated with youth smoking, and these perceptions may be an even stronger influence on youth smoking than parental smoking behaviour (Sargent & Dalton, 2001). One of the key 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 perceptions of parental attitudes and rules about smoking, and has collected this data since 2006.

Methodology

Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked to 'agree' or 'disagree', or to 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 were examined before assessing potential differences in the proportion of respondents agreeing with the above statements by:

- smoking status¹
- susceptibility to smoking²
- parental smoking status
- past-year quit attempts
- ethnicity
- gender.

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

Further analyses were undertaken to examine changes over time in young people's perceptions of parental attitudes and rules about smoking as these questions were also asked in 2006, 2008, and 2010.

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

In 2012, around nine in 10 (88%, 87-90%) participants agreed that 'my parents or caregivers would be upset if I was caught smoking cigarettes/tobacco'. Four percent (4-5%) disagreed, and 8% (6-9%) responded 'don't know'. Those who were more likely to agree were:

- never smokers (93%), compared with both ex/experimental smokers (85%) and current smokers (57%)
- ex/experimental smokers (85%), compared with current smokers (57%)
- young people who had indicated that neither parent smoked (92%), compared with those who had indicated that one (82%) or both (78%) of their parents smoked
- females (90%), compared with males (86%)
- non-Māori (90%), compared with Māori (81%). However the difference was no longer significant when controlling for respondent and parental smoking status.³

Figure 1 shows that over time, there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of young people agreeing that their parents or caregivers would be upset if they were caught smoking. Statistical tests confirmed that young people were more likely to 'agree' with this statement in 2012 compared with each of the previous years.

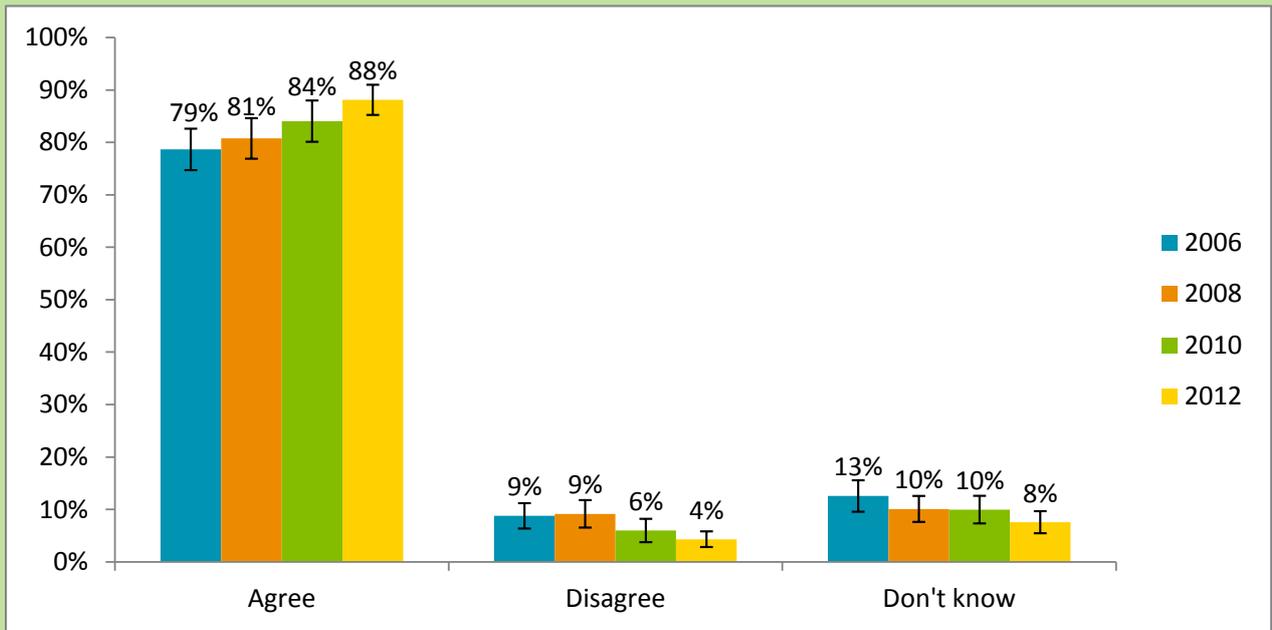


Figure 1: Responses to 'my parents or caregivers would be upset if I was caught smoking cigarettes/tobacco', from 2006 to 2012

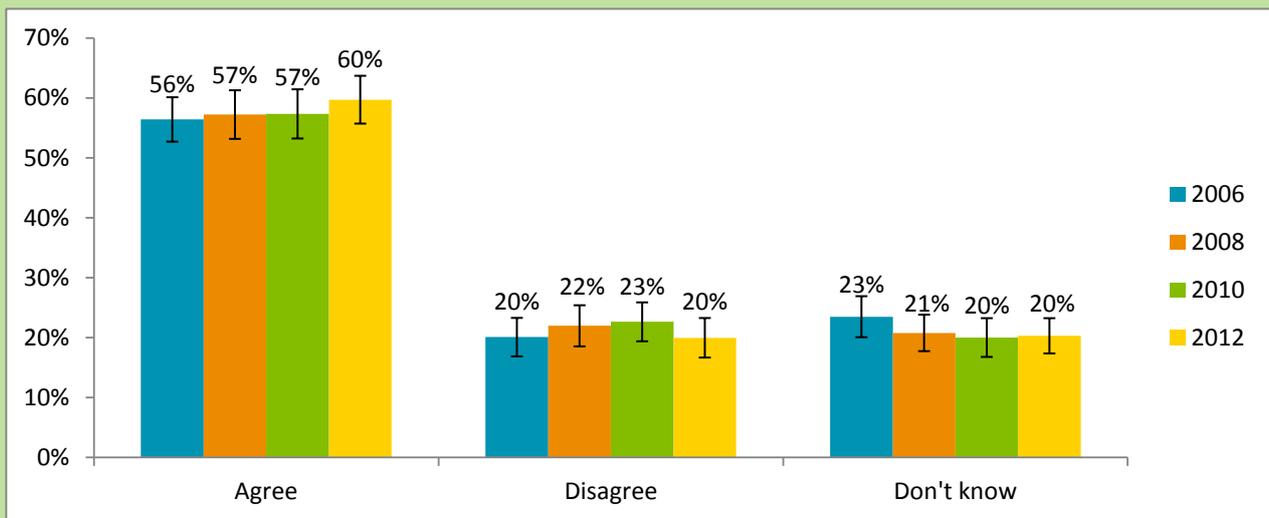


Figure 2: Responses to 'my parents or caregivers have set rules with me about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco', from 2006 to 2012

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

In 2012, six in 10 (60%, 58-62%) participants agreed that 'my parents or caregivers have set rules with me about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco'. Two in 10 (20%, 18-22%) disagreed and another two in 10 (20%, 19-22%) responded 'don't know'. Those who were more likely to agree were:

- non-susceptible never smokers (62%), compared with susceptible never smokers (50%)
- young people who had tried to quit smoking in the past year (60%, 54-67%), compared with those who had not (48%, 40-57%).

Young people were more likely to 'agree' that their parents or caregivers had set rules about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco in 2012 than they were in 2006 (Figure 2).

Key points

- Around nine in 10 young people said their parents would be upset if they were caught smoking. Those who were most likely to say this were those with non-smoking parents, and those who had never smoked.
- Six in 10 young people said that their parents had set rules with them about not smoking. Those who were more likely to say this were never smokers who were defined as not susceptible to start smoking in the future, and those who had tried to quit smoking during the past year. 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.
- Young people were more likely to 'agree' that their parents or caregivers would be upset if they were caught smoking in 2012 compared with all previous years. Young people were also more likely to 'agree' that their parents or caregivers had set rules about not smoking cigarettes/tobacco in 2012 compared with 2006, but had similar agreement to 2008 and 2010.

References

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

Footnotes

¹ Never smoked, current smokers (smoke at least monthly), 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.

³ Whether or not a respondent or their parent(s) smokes is taken into account to ensure that any differences found are not due to respondents' own smoking status, or the smoking status of their parent(s).

Citation

Eathorne, A., & White, J. (2014). *Young people's perceptions of their parents' attitudes and rules about smoking. [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 both their parents smoked, compared with those who said that one parent smoked or that neither of their parents smoked).
 - Past-year quit attempts (those who had tried to stop smoking in the past year, compared with those who had not).
 - 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.

Research and Evaluation Unit

Health Promotion Agency, PO Box 2142, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

<http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>

research@hpa.org.nz

May 2014

ISSN 2350-2991