

Perceptions of quitting difficulty 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 taking up smoking. Previous research has examined the relationship between awareness of the health risks of tobacco and smoking initiation, but there is little research on the relationship between perceived quitting difficulty and smoking initiation. In the 2010 YIS respondents were asked about their perceptions of how difficult it is to quit.

Overview of key findings

- Around four in 10 young people thought quitting would definitely be difficult, and around four in 10 thought it would probably be difficult. Around one in 10 thought it would probably not be difficult, and around one in 10 thought it would definitely not be difficult.
- Young people who had never tried smoking, particularly those defined as not susceptible to start smoking in the future, were more likely to think that quitting would be difficult. This suggests that understanding the difficulty of quitting may be a protective factor against smoking uptake.
- Young people who had tried to quit or had quit smoking, and those who had parents who smoked, were also more likely to think that quitting would be difficult. This suggests that personal experience of quitting leads to a better understanding of the difficulty of quitting.
- Females were also more likely to think that quitting would be difficult.

Further information on young people's cessation knowledge, attitudes and behaviors can be found at www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html.

Methodology

Respondents were asked **once someone has started smoking, do you think it would be difficult to quit?** Response options were 'definitely not', 'probably not', 'probably yes', and 'definitely yes'.

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

- 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).
- Quit smoking status (those who had tried to stop smoking in the past year, compared with those who had not. The base was those who gave either of those response options to the question about whether they had tried to quit).
- Parent/caregiver smoking status (those who had indicated that one of their parents smoked and both of their parents smoked, compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smoked).
- Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
- Gender.

Detailed findings

Around four in 10 respondents answered 'probably yes' (43%) and around four in 10 answered 'definitely yes' (42%) when asked **once someone**

Perceptions of quitting difficulty Youth Insights Survey 2010 (continued)

has started smoking, do you think it would be difficult to quit? Around one in 10 answered 'probably not' (9%) and around one in 10 answered 'definitely not' (6%).

Those who were more likely to respond 'definitely yes' were:

- Never smokers (46%), compared with current smokers (36%).
- Non-susceptible never smokers (47%), compared with susceptible never smokers (41%).

- Those who had tried to quit smoking (40%), compared with those who had not (29%).
- Those who had indicated that one of their parents smoked (45%), compared with those who had indicated that neither parent smoked (38%).
- Females (46%), compared with males (39%).

There were no differences by ethnicity.

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.

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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