

Public opinion on removing tobacco displays

Background

The Smoke-free Environments (Controls and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2011 (the Amendment Act) amended the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 to prohibit the display of tobacco products at any sales outlet.¹ The provision came into force on 23 July 2012. More specifically, the amended Act requires sellers of tobacco to ensure that tobacco products are not visible to the public, either inside or outside their premises. The new provisions require that anyone offering tobacco products for sale (retail or wholesale) must not allow any part of a tobacco product, tobacco package or tobacco carton to be for any reason visible to the public, except to the extent necessary to deliver it to the customer or to the retail premises.

Methodology

To regularly monitor public opinion about tobacco control and aid the development of appropriate health promotion strategies, respondents in the 2008, 2010, and 2012 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) answered a question on their opinion on the removal of tobacco displays. In 2012, the survey was in the field between May and July 2012, overlapping with the introduction of the amendment. Responses to this question were compared by smoking status (current smokers: those who smoked at least monthly, ex-smokers, and never smokers), ethnicity, neighbourhood deprivation status, age, gender, and educational background. Statistically significant differences by group ($p < .05$) are reported.

Opinion about removing tobacco displays

In 2012, all respondents were asked about their level of agreement with the statement that 'There should be complete bans on displays of cigarettes and tobacco inside shops'. Responses were collected on a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Around seven in 10 (72%, 70-75%) respondents 'agreed' (49%, 46-52%) or 'strongly agreed' (23%, 21-26%) with this statement. One in 10 (10%, 8-12%) 'neither agreed nor disagreed'.

Respondents who were more likely to 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the statement were:

- Never smokers (80%), compared with current smokers (53%).

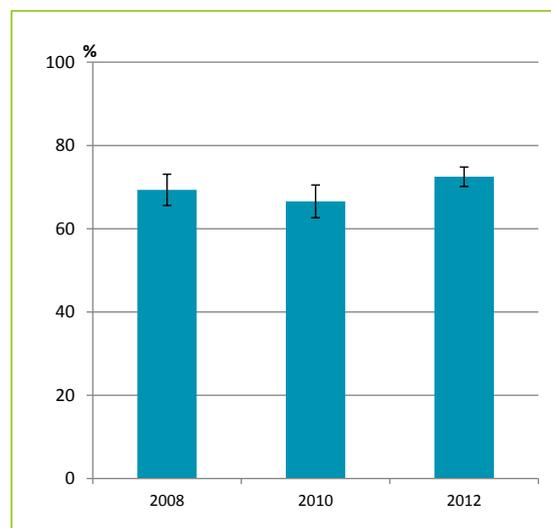
- European/Other (73%), compared with Māori (64%).
- Those with university qualifications (76%), compared with those with no formal qualifications (65%).

Opinion over time

All respondents were asked about their level of agreement with the statement that 'There should be complete bans on displays of cigarettes and tobacco inside shops' in the 2008, 2010, and 2012 HLS. Responses were again collected on a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. We compared the level of agreement ('strongly agree' and 'agree' combined) across the three surveys.

In 2012, around seven in 10 (72%, 70-75%) respondents 'agreed'. This was compared with two-thirds of respondents in 2008 (69%, 66-73%) and 2010 (67%, 63-71%). There was a significant increase in the proportion of people agreeing with the statement in 2012 compared with 2010 (relative risk ratio = 1.09, 1.01 - 1.17).

Figure 1. Proportion of respondents who agreed with having complete bans on tobacco displays in 2008, 2010 and 2012



Key points

- In 2012, around seven in 10 New Zealand adults agreed that there should be a complete ban of displays of cigarettes and tobacco inside of shops. Different response patterns by smoking status, ethnicity, and educational background were found.
- Levels of agreement have remained high for the period of observation.
- There was a small but significant increase in the proportion of New Zealand adults agreeing with this between 2010 and 2012.

References

1. The New Zealand Government (2011). *Smoke-free Environments (Controls and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2011. Public Act 2011, no. 53.* Wellington: the New Zealand Government.

Citation

Newcombe, R., & Li, J. (2013). *Public opinion on removing tobacco displays.* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

About the Health and Lifestyles Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The 2012 HLS consisted of a sample of 2,672 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 2012, the main sample, with a response rate of 86.3%, included 1,539 people of European/Other ethnicity, 619 Māori, 387 Pacific peoples and 127 Asian people (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- For this analysis, proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. The significance level used for statistical analyses was set to $\alpha=0.05$.
- Comparison groups for these analyses were as follows:
 - Smoking status (current smokers and ex-smokers, compared with never smokers).
 - Ethnicity (Māori, Pacific and Asian compared with European/Other ethnicity).
 - Neighbourhood deprivation status (NZDep 8-10 and NZDep 4-7, compared with NZDep 1-3).
 - Age (25-34 years, 35-54 years, and 55+ years, compared with 15-24 years).
 - Gender.
 - Educational background (no formal qualifications, School Certificate/NCEA level 1, and UE/NCEA levels 2-3/trade certificates, compared with university qualifications).

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