

What prompts quitting, and what types of quitting support do people use? Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010

Background

One of the New Zealand government's six health targets is better help for people who smoke to quit smoking. It is, therefore, important to understand what prompts people to quit and what types of quitting support they use, so that quit messages and initiatives can be developed appropriately.

The Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) collected information from those who tried to quit smoking in the past 12 months about what prompted their most recent quit attempt, whether they have received quit advice from a health professional, and what quit support they used.

Research details

Methodology

Current smokers (those who smoked at least monthly) who had tried to quit smoking in the past 12 months (n=237) and recent quitters (those who had quit smoking in the past 12 months (n=47) were asked:

- Who or what prompted you to do this?
- During the last 12 months, has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional advised you to quit smoking (yes/no)?
- Please identify any help, advice, programmes and products used to help you quit during your last quit attempt. Please say as many as apply.

The first and the last questions were open-ended and verbatim responses were recorded. Responses were then grouped into one or more categories. Due to the low response in some categories, comparisons across sub-groups were not possible.

Findings

What prompted people to make a quit attempt?

Current smokers and recent quitters who had tried to quit/had quit in the past 12 months mentioned a number of reasons for why they made their most recent quit attempt. Responses mentioned by at least 5% of respondents were:

- health-related reasons (43%)
- they wanted to quit/were sick of smoking (36%)
- encouragement or pressure from friends/family (15%)
- financial reasons (12%)
- quitting for children/grandchildren (11%)
- friend/family members diagnosed with a smoking-related disease (5%).

Were people advised to quit by a health professional?

One in three (33%) current smokers and recent quitters who had tried to quit/had quit in the past 12 months had been advised by a doctor, a nurse or another health professional to quit smoking in the past 12 months.

What prompts quitting, and what types of quitting support do people use? Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010 (continued)

What type of cessation support did people use?

Current smokers and recent quitters who had tried to quit/had quit in the past 12 months mentioned a number of formal and informal cessation support services they received during their most recent quit attempt. Responses mentioned by at least 5% of respondents were:

- nicotine replacement products, including patches, gum, lozenges and inhalers (35%)

- friends/family (33%)
- the Quitline (21%)
- general practitioners (18%)
- a self-help book (6%).

About three in 10 (31%) respondents said they did not receive any support or advice from any persons, programmes or products during their most recent quit attempt.

About the Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The 2010 HLS consisted of a sample of 1,740 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 2010, the main sample, with a response rate of 57%, included 866 people of European/Other ethnicity, 460 Māori, 301 Pacific peoples and 113 Asian people (prioritised ethnicity).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- A full description of the 2010 HLS survey methodology and further HLS publications can be found online 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

Li, J., & Tu, D. (2011). *What prompts quitting, and what types of quitting support do people use? – Health and Lifestyles Survey 2010* [In Fact]. Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council. Retrieved from www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html

Research and Evaluation Unit, HSC
PO Box 2142, Wellington 6011, New Zealand
www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html, research@hsc.org.nz
August 2011

