

Young people's perceived access to tobacco

Background

Access to tobacco is recognised as one of the environmental risk factors for young people taking up smoking. The Health Promotion Agency's (HPA's) Youth Insights Survey (YIS) monitors Year 10 students' behaviours, attitudes and knowledge on a range of tobacco-related topics, including perceived access to tobacco. Year 10 students are generally aged 14 to 15 years, and therefore prohibited from purchasing cigarettes and tobacco.

Methodology

Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked whether they thought they could get cigarettes or tobacco from anyone in their family/whānau or home, from their friends, or from a shop. Responses to these questions were compared by smoking status (current smokers: those who smoked at least monthly, compared with never smokers), susceptibility to taking up smoking, ethnicity, gender and school decile status. When looking at the differences by ethnicity, gender, and school decile we have controlled for smoking status. This means that we take into account whether or not a respondent smokes, to ensure that any differences found are not in fact due to smoking status. In addition, when looking at access from family/whānau we controlled for family smoking status (whether none, one, or more than one family member or caregiver smoked), and when looking at access from friends we controlled for close friend smoking status (whether or not some of the respondents' five closest friends smoked).

Further analyses were undertaken to examine changes over time in perceived access to tobacco from family/whānau or home and from friends, as these questions were also asked in 2010.

Only those group and time differences that are statistically significant ($p < .05$) are reported.

Access from family/whānau or home

All participants were asked 'If you wanted to, do you think you could get cigarettes/tobacco from anyone in your family/whānau, or from your home?'. Around one-in-eight (13%, 11-14%) thought they would 'definitely' (3%, 3-4%) or 'probably' (9%, 8-11%) be able to get cigarettes/tobacco from anyone in their family/whānau or from their home if they wanted (Figure 1). Those most likely to perceive they could 'definitely' or 'probably' get cigarettes/tobacco from their family/whānau or from their home were:

- Current smokers (52%), compared with never smokers (6%).

There was a significant decrease in the proportion who thought they could 'definitely' or 'probably' get cigarettes/tobacco from their family/whānau or home between 2010 (16%) and 2012 (13%).

Access from friends

All participants were asked 'If you wanted to, do you think you could get cigarettes/tobacco from any of your friends?'. Forty percent (37-42%) thought they would 'definitely' (13%, 11-14%) or 'probably' (27%, 25-29%) be able to get cigarettes/tobacco from their friends (Figure 1). Those most likely to perceive they could 'definitely' or 'probably' get cigarettes/tobacco from their friends were:

- Current smokers (94%), compared with never smokers (24%).

There was a significant decrease in the proportion who thought they could 'definitely' or 'probably' get cigarettes/tobacco from their friends between 2010 (49%) and 2012 (40%).

Access from a shop

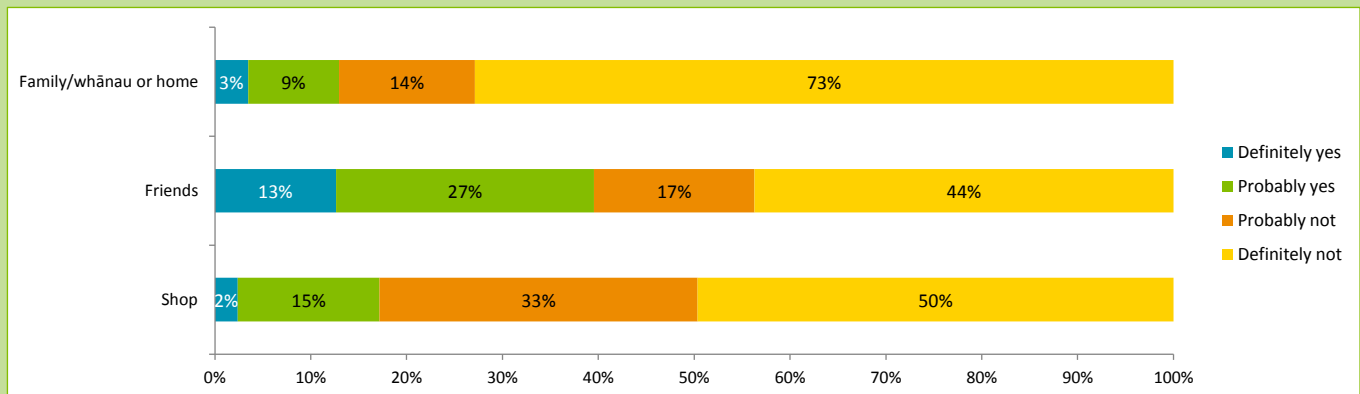
All participants were asked 'If you wanted to, do you think you could get cigarettes/tobacco from a shop (e.g. dairy)?'. Despite being under 18 years and therefore prohibited from purchasing tobacco, one-in-six (17%, 16-19%) thought they would 'definitely' (2%, 2-3%) or 'probably' (15%, 13-16%) be able to get cigarettes/tobacco from a shop such as a dairy (Figure 1). Those most likely to perceive they could 'definitely' or 'probably' get cigarettes/tobacco from a shop were:

- Current smokers (43%), compared with never smokers (13%).

Key points

- Only a minority of young people thought they would be able to access tobacco from their family/whānau or home, friends, or from a shop such as a dairy. Of these, friends were perceived as the most likely source of tobacco, followed by a shop.
- Current smokers, compared with those who had never smoked, were more likely to perceive that they would be able to access tobacco from their family/whānau or home, from their friends, or from a shop.
- Respondents were less likely to think they would be able to access tobacco from family/whānau or friends in 2012 compared with 2010.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who thought that if they wanted to, they could get cigarettes/tobacco from anyone in their family/whānau or from their home, from their friends, or from a shop such as a dairy



Note: Due to rounding, in some cases the proportions add to 100±1

Citation

White, J. (2013). *Young people's perceived access to tobacco. [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 dates 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, 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 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 people 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 who smoked at least monthly, compared with never smokers).
 - Susceptibility to smoking (never smokers who were not susceptible to start smoking, compared with never smokers who were susceptible to start smoking).
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
 - Gender (females, compared with males).
 - School decile status (as a measure of socioeconomic status; low school decile, compared with medium and high).
- A full description of the 2012 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found 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

July 2013

