

## Young people's desires and attempts to stop smoking

### Background

In March 2011 the New Zealand Government committed to a goal of New Zealand becoming smokefree by the year 2025 (The New Zealand Government, 2011). To reduce smoking prevalence to the 2025 goal of less than 5%, it is important to reduce initiation as well as encourage those who smoke to stop smoking. This fact sheet focuses on young people's desires and attempts to stop smoking.

One of the few 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 about their desires and attempts to stop smoking, and has collected this data since 2006.

### Methodology

Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked about whether they wanted to stop smoking, whether they had tried to quit in the past year (12 months), and whether they were smoking at the time of the survey. Responses were examined by ethnicity, gender, school decile status and early smoking uptake (whether or not respondent first tried a cigarette before age 10). Only those group differences which were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) are reported.

The analyses were restricted to different sub-groups of respondents, depending on the particular population of interest. Analysis on desire to stop smoking was restricted to current smokers (those who smoked at least monthly,  $n=222$ ). Analysis on past year quit attempts was restricted to those who had smoked in the past year ( $n=372$ ). Analysis to determine successful quit attempts was restricted to those who had made a quit attempt in the past year ( $n=251$ ).

Further analyses were undertaken to determine changes over time as these questions were also asked in 2006, 2008 and 2010.

### How many young people want to stop smoking now?

All participants were asked 'Do you want to stop smoking now?'. Of those who were current smokers, around one-half (48%, 40-57%) said yes, they wanted to stop smoking.

The rate of young current smokers wanting to stop smoking has remained stable at around one-half since 2006 (2006 = 50%; 2008 = 53%; 2010 = 53%).

### How many young people have tried to quit smoking?

All participants were asked 'During the past year (12 months), have you ever tried to stop smoking cigarettes?'. Around two-thirds (67%, 58-76%) of those who had smoked during the past year said yes, they had tried to stop smoking in the past year.

The rate of young people who have tried to stop smoking in the past year has remained stable at around two-thirds since 2006 (2006 = 65%; 2008 = 65%; 2010 = 63%).

### How many people who have tried to quit in the past 12 months no longer smoke?

Around one-quarter (23%, 17-36%) of those who said they had tried to stop smoking in the past year now reported that they no longer smoke. Non-Māori who had tried to stop (29%) were two times more likely to no longer smoke, compared with Māori who had tried to stop (14%).

Among those who had tried to stop, the rate of young smokers who successfully stopped in the past 12 months has remained stable at around one-quarter since 2006 (2006 = 22%; 2008 = 23%; 2010 = 28%).

## Key points

- Around one-half of young people who currently smoke want to stop smoking now.
- Around two-thirds of young people who smoked in the past year had tried to stop smoking during that time.
- Around one-quarter of those who had tried to stop smoking in the past year no longer smoked at the time of the survey.
- There has been little change in the rates of young people desiring, attempting, or successfully stopping smoking since 2006.

## References

The New Zealand Government (2011). *Government Response to the Report of the Māori Affairs Committee on its Inquiry into the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori. Final Response*. Presented to the House of Representatives in accordance with Standing Order 248. Wellington: the New Zealand Government.

## Citation

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## About the Youth Insights Survey

- The YIS forms part of the New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (NZYTM), a collaborative effort by the Health Promotion Agency (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).
- 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. Rate 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:
  - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
  - Gender (females, compared with males).
  - School decile status (as a measure of socio-economic status; low school decile, compared with medium and high).
  - Early smoking uptake (those who first tried a cigarette when they were 10 years old or older, compared with those who first tried a cigarette before the age of 10).
- 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. It also enables environments that support health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and reduce personal, social and economic harm.

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