

Where are young smokers accessing cigarettes?

Background

Access to tobacco is recognised as one of the environmental risk factors for young people taking up smoking. As well as directly communicating with young people, tobacco control activities should also communicate with key audiences who can ultimately influence young people and their access to tobacco, such as friends, parents/caregivers, and their wider family/whānau.

One of the key 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 their access to tobacco from social (friends, parents/caregivers, family/whānau) and commercial sources.

Methodology

Participants in the 2012 YIS were asked about where they got their cigarettes from, as well as how often they bought tobacco from a range of commercial outlets. Analyses were restricted to current smokers (n=222), and responses were examined by ethnicity and gender. When looking at the differences by ethnicity and gender we controlled for family (whether none, one, or more than one family member or caregiver smoked) and close friend (whether or not some of the respondents' five closest friends smoked) smoking status. This means that we took into account the smoking status of family and friends, to ensure that any differences found are not in fact due to their smoking status. Source of cigarettes was also examined by parental and family/whānau smoking status.

Frequency of buying cigarettes from commercial outlets was also asked in 2006, 2008 and 2010, therefore further analysis was undertaken on these questions to examine changes over time.

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

Source of Cigarettes

Participants were asked 'During the past 30 days (one month), how did you usually get your own cigarettes?', and could select multiple responses from a list of both social and commercial sources. The percentage of current smokers who said they usually got cigarettes from each source in the past month is shown in Figure 1. Social sources of cigarettes were common for this group of underage¹ smokers, with just over one-half (55%, 47-62%) of current smokers saying that during the past month they usually got their cigarettes given to them by friends or peers, and around one-third buying them from friends or peers (33%, 26-40%) or taking them from a parent or caregiver without asking (30%, 23-37%).

There were several group differences in usual source of cigarettes:

- Young people who were more likely to have usually got their cigarettes by taking them from a parent or caregiver without asking were:
 - Māori (40%), compared with non-Māori (19%).
 - Those whose parents both smoked (39%), compared with those for whom neither smoked (17%). The rate for those who had one parent who smoked was 29%.
 - Those who had two or more family members who smoked (35%), compared with those who had no family members who smoked (13%). The rate for those who had one family member who smoked was 18%.
- Females (25%) were more likely than males (14%) to have usually got their cigarettes from an older brother or sister.
- Māori (23%) were more likely than non-Māori (8%) to have usually had their cigarettes given to them by a parent or caregiver.

¹ Under the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act 2003 the sale of cigarettes and tobacco is prohibited to people under 18 years of age.

Frequency of cigarette purchases from commercial outlets

Participants were asked 'Which places did you buy cigarettes from in the past 30 days (one month)?'. The following commercial outlets were listed: dairy, liquor store/hotel, service station, supermarket, takeaway shop, vending machine, and 'other' shop. The percentage of current smokers who said they bought cigarettes in the past month from each of these outlets four or more times, one to three times, or no times is shown in Figure 2.

There were several group differences in frequency of cigarette purchases by current smokers from particular commercial outlets:

- Māori (60%) were more likely than non-Māori (39%) to have purchased cigarettes from a dairy at least once in the past month.

- Males (16%) were more likely than females (2%) to have purchased cigarettes from a takeaway shop at least once in the past month.

There were also several differences over time:

- In 2012, one-half (50%) of current smokers bought cigarettes from a dairy at least once in the past month. This rate is lower than in 2008 (64%), but similar to 2010 (49%) and 2006 (55%).
- In 2012, one-in-five (21%) current smokers bought cigarettes from a service station at least once in the past month. This rate is lower than in 2008 (32%) and 2006 (30%), but similar to 2010 (25%).
- In 2012, one-in-five (19%) current smokers bought cigarettes from a supermarket at least once in the past month. This rate is lower than in 2008 (28%), but similar to 2010 (21%) and 2006 (18%).

Figure 1: Percentage of current smokers who said they usually got cigarettes from each source in the past month

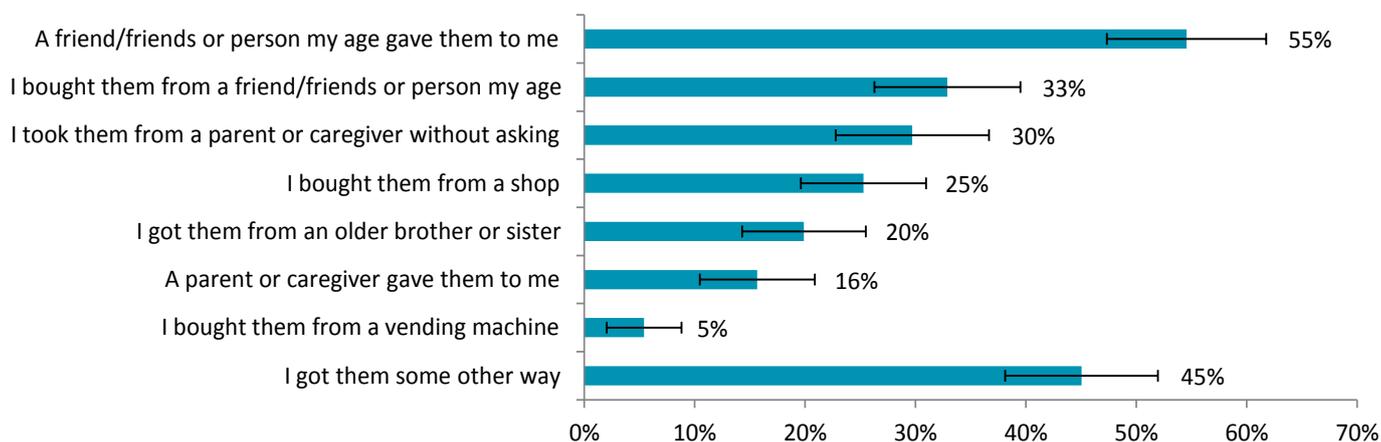
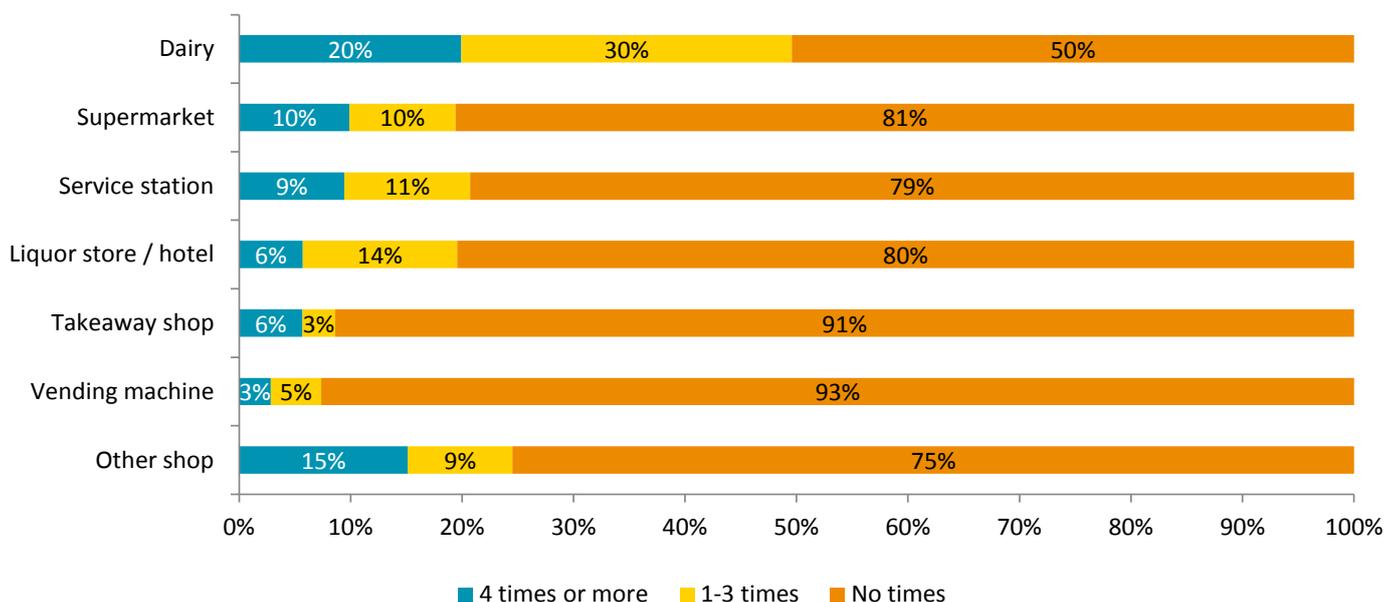


Figure 2: Percentage of current smokers who bought cigarettes four or more times, one to three times, or no times, from each commercial outlet in the past month



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

Key points

- Social sources of cigarettes were common, with just over one-half of current smokers saying that during the past month they usually got their cigarettes given to them by friends or peers.
- Dairies were the most frequented commercial outlet for cigarette purchases. One-half of current smokers had bought cigarettes from a dairy at least once in the past month, and one-in-five current smokers had done this four times or more.
- The proportion of current smokers who had bought cigarettes at least once in the past month from a dairy, service station, or supermarket in 2012 was similar to 2010, but lower than in 2008.

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 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:
 - Ethnicity (Māori, compared with non-Māori).
 - Gender (females, compared with males).
 - Parental smoking status (those who indicated that both their parents smoked, compared with those who said one parent smoked or neither parent smoked).
 - Family smoking status (those who indicated that two of 'father', 'mother', 'grandparent(s)', 'other caregiver – eg step father or mother, foster parents', 'older brother(s)', and 'older sister(s)' smoked, compared with those who indicated that just one of these people smoked or that none of these people smoked).
- 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>

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