

In Fact: Young people's desires and attempts to stop smoking – 2014

Background

The New Zealand Government has committed to a goal of New Zealand becoming smokefree by the year 2025, where less than 5% of the population smokes (The New Zealand Government, 2011). Encouraging and enabling people to stop smoking are key strategies towards meeting the 2025 goal. It is particularly important to reduce smoking rates among young people because earlier initiation of smoking tobacco has been shown to lead to heavier tobacco use and a greater risk of continued smoking (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994).

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 about their desires and attempts to stop smoking, and has collected this data since 2006. This fact sheet focuses on young people's desires and attempts to stop smoking between 2006 and 2014.

Methodology

Participants in the 2014 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 and school decile status. See the 'About the Youth Insights Survey' section for more detail and the relevant comparison groups.

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, $n = 218$). Analysis on past year quit attempts was restricted to those who had smoked in the past year ($n = 332$). Analysis to determine successful quit attempts was restricted to those who had made a quit attempt in the past year ($n = 214$).

Further analyses were undertaken to determine changes over time as these questions were also asked in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

Current smokers' desire to quit

Respondents were asked, "Do you want to stop smoking now?" Of those who were current smokers, just under one-half (45%, 36-53%) said yes, they wanted to stop smoking.

Students who were current smokers at mid decile schools (50%) were more likely to want to stop smoking compared with those at high decile schools (32%). The rate of current smokers wanting to stop smoking at low decile schools was 48%, however this was not significantly different from the rates at either high decile or mid decile schools.

There were no statistically significant differences in likelihood of wanting to stop smoking by gender or ethnicity.

The rate of young current smokers wanting to stop smoking has not significantly changed between 2006 and 2014 (2006 = 50%; 2008 = 53%; 2010 = 53%; 2012 = 48%; 2014 = 45%).

Past year quit attempts

Respondents were asked, "During the past year (12 months), have you ever tried to stop smoking cigarettes?" Sixty-one percent (52-71%) of those who had smoked during the past year said yes, they had tried to stop smoking in the past year.

There were no statistically significant differences in past year smokers' likelihood of having tried to quit smoking by gender, ethnicity or school decile status.

The rate of young people who have tried to stop smoking in the past year has not significantly changed between 2006 and 2014 (2006 = 65%; 2008 = 65%; 2010 = 63%; 2012 = 67%; 2014 = 61%).

Successfulness of past year smoking quit attempts

One in five (20%, 14-27%) of those who said they had tried to stop smoking in the past year also reported that they now no longer smoke. Among those who had tried to stop smoking in the past year, those most likely to report they no longer smoked at the time of the survey were:

- males (30%), compared with females (15%)
- students at high decile (35%) or mid decile (25%) schools, compared with students at low decile schools (9%).

Among those who had tried to stop, the rate of young smokers who successfully stopped in the past 12 months has not significantly changed between 2006 and 2014 (2006 = 22%; 2008 = 23%; 2010 = 28%; 2012 = 23%; 2014 = 20%).

Key points

- Nearly half of young people who currently smoke want to stop smoking now.
- Six in ten of those young people who had smoked in the past year had tried to stop smoking during that time.
- One-fifth 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.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1994). *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

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 2014 YIS was conducted with a sample of 2,919 Year 10 students (14 to 15-year-olds). The school-level response rate was 76%, the student level response rate 84%, and the overall response rate was 64%. The sample included 1,352 NZ European, 700 Māori, 321 Pacific, 353 Asian, and 193 people of 'Other' ethnicity (prioritised ethnicity). Eight percent (n = 218) 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, jack-knife proportions and 95% confidence intervals were produced. Odds ratios were undertaken to compare responses between groups and across time. 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 (high decile schools, compared with mid decile schools and low decile schools). School decile status was used as an indicator of socioeconomic status; low decile schools have a greater proportion of students from low-socioeconomic communities.
- A full description of the 2014 YIS methodology and further YIS publications can be found at <http://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications>.

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