

Achieving the goals of healthy China 2030 depend on increasing smoking cessation in China: Comparative findings from the ITC Project in China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea

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Abstract

Tobacco smoking is the number one preventable cause of disease and death in China as it is globally. Indeed, the toll of smoking in China is much greater than its status as the world's most populous country. There is a persistent and continuing need for China to implement the measures specified in the global tobacco control treaty, the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which China ratified in 2005. The theme for the 2021 WHO World No Tobacco Day focuses on the need to support smoking cessation. This article presents findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project cohort surveys in China, in comparison to ITC cohort surveys in two neighboring countries: Japan and the Republic of Korea. These findings demonstrate that smokers in China very much want to quit, but these intentions are not being translated into quit attempts, relative to smokers in Japan and the Republic of Korea. Additionally, about 80% of Chinese smokers want the Chinese government to do more to control smoking. These findings reaffirm the need for China to implement strong, evidence-based measures to reduce smoking. The objective of Healthy China 2030 to reduce deaths from non-communicable diseases by 30% can be achieved by reducing smoking prevalence from its current 26.6% to 20%, and this reduction can be achieved through strong implementation of FCTC measures.

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