

# Evaluation of smoke-free policies in seven cities in China: Longitudinal findings from the ITC China Project (2007-2012)

Fong, G.T., Sansone, G.C., Yan, M., Craig, L., Quah, A.C.K., & Jiang, Y.

## **Abstract**

**BACKGROUND:** China is the world's largest consumer of tobacco, with hundreds of millions of people exposed daily to secondhand smoke (SHS). Comprehensive smoke-free policies are the only effective way to protect the population from the harms of SHS. China does not have a comprehensive national smoke-free law but some local-level regulations have been implemented.

**OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate local level smoke-free regulations across 7 cities in China by measuring the prevalence of smoking in public places (workplaces, restaurants and bars), and support for smoke-free policies over time.

**METHODS:** Data were from waves 2 to 4 of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) China Survey (2007-2012), a face-to-face cohort survey of approximately 800 smokers in each of 7 cities in mainland China. Multivariate logistic regression models estimated with generalised estimating equations were used to test the changes in variables over time.

**RESULTS:** As of 2012, over three-quarters of respondents were exposed to smoking in bars; more than two-thirds were exposed to smoking in restaurants and more than half were exposed to smoking in indoor workplaces. Small decreases in the prevalence of smoking were found overall from waves 2 to 4 for indoor workplaces, restaurants and bars, although the decline was minimal for bars. Support for complete smoking bans increased over time for each venue, although it was lowest for bars.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Existing partial smoking bans across China have had minimal impact on reducing smoking in public places. A strongly enforced, comprehensive national smoke-free law is urgently needed in order to achieve greater public health gains.

## **Recommended Citation**

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