

Support for minimum legal sales age laws set to 21 across Australia, Canada, England and US: Findings from the 2018 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Although the US has seen a rapid increase in tobacco minimum legal sales age (MLSA) laws set to age 21, there is wide variation across high-income countries and less is known about policy support outside of the US. We examined the prevalence of support for tobacco MLSA 21 laws as well as associations by socio-demographic, smoking, and household characteristics among current and former adult smokers. **Methods:** In this cross-sectional analysis, we used the 2018 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey to examine support for MLSA 21 laws among 12,904 respondents from Australia, Canada, England, and US. **Results:** Support for raising the legal age of purchasing cigarettes/tobacco to 21 ranged from 62.2% in the US to 70.8% in Canada. Endorsement also varied by age, such that 40.6% of 18-20-year-olds supported the policy compared to 69.3% of those aged 60+ years. In the adjusted regression model, there was also higher support among respondents who were female than male, non-white than white, those who did not allow smoking in the household than those that did, and those who had children in the household than those that did not. There were no differences by household income, education, or smoking status. **Conclusions:** Most current and former smokers, including a sizable minority of those aged ≤ 20 years, support raising the legal age of purchasing cigarettes/tobacco to 21. **Implications:** There was strong support for MLSA 21 laws among smokers and former smokers across Australia, Canada, England, and the United States, providing evidence for the increasing public support of the passage of these laws beyond the United States.

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