

The relation between number of smoking friends, and quit intentions, attempts, and success: Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Four Country Survey

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Abstract

Smokers who inhabit social contexts with a greater number of smokers may be exposed to more positive norms toward smoking and more cues to smoke. This study examines the relation between number of smoking friends and changes in number of smoking friends, and smoking cessation outcomes. Data were drawn from Wave 1 (2002) and Wave 2 (2003) of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Project Four Country Survey, a longitudinal cohort survey of nationally representative samples of adult smokers in Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, and United States (N = 6,321). Smokers with fewer smoking friends at Wave 1 were more likely to intend to quit at Wave 1 and were more likely to succeed in their attempts to quit at Wave 2. Compared with smokers who experienced no change in their number of smoking friends, smokers who lost smoking friends were more likely to intend to quit at Wave 2, attempt to quit between Wave 1 and Wave 2, and succeed in their quit attempts at Wave 2. Smokers who inhabit social contexts with a greater number of smokers may be less likely to successfully quit. Quitting may be particularly unlikely among smokers who do not experience a loss in the number of smokers in their social context.

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