

The impact of smokefree legislation in Scotland: results from the Scottish ITC Scotland/UK longitudinal surveys

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Abstract

Background: To evaluate how Scotland's smokefree law impacted self-reported secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure in hospitality venues, workplaces and in people's homes. In addition, we examine changes in support for the law, pub and restaurant patronage, smoking cessation indicators and whether any observed changes varied by socioeconomic status.

Methods: A quasi-experimental longitudinal telephone survey of nationally representative samples of smokers and non-smokers interviewed before the Scottish law (February to March 2006) and 1 year later after the law (March 2007) in Scotland (n = 705 smokers and n = 417 non-smokers) and the rest of the UK (n = 1027 smokers and n = 447 non-smokers) where smoking in public places was not regulated at the time.

Results: Dramatic declines in the observance of smoking in pubs, restaurants and workplaces were found in Scotland relative to the rest of the UK. The change in the percent of smokers reporting a smokefree home and number of cigarettes smoked inside the home in the evening was comparable in Scotland and the rest of the UK. Support for smokefree policies increased to a greater extent in Scotland than in the rest of the UK. Self-reported frequency of going to pubs and restaurants was generally comparable between Scotland and the rest of the UK; however, non-smokers in Scotland were more likely to frequent pubs more often. No differences in smoking cessation indicators were observed between countries.

Conclusion: The Scottish smokefree law has been successful in decreasing secondhand smoke exposure while causing none of the hypothesized negative outcomes.

Keywords: Scotland, smokefree, international tobacco control.

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