

Support for smoke-free policies among smokers and non-smokers in six cities in China: ITC China Survey

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Abstract

Objective: To examine levels of support for comprehensive smoke-free policies in six large Chinese cities.

Methods: Data from Wave 1 of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) China Survey (April–August 2006) were analysed. The ITC China Survey employed a multistage sampling design in Beijing, Shenyang, Shanghai, Changsha, Guangzhou and Yinchuan (none of which has comprehensive smoke-free policies in place). Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4815 smokers and 1270 non-smokers. Multivariate logistic regression models were used to identify factors associated with support for comprehensive smoke-free policies.

Results: About one in two Chinese urban smokers and four in five non-smokers believed that secondhand smoke (SHS) causes lung cancer. The majority of respondents supported comprehensive smoke-free policies in hospitals, schools and public transport vehicles while support for smoke-free workplaces, restaurants and bars was lower. Levels of support were generally comparable between smokers and non-smokers. Support for comprehensive smoke-free policies was positively associated with knowledge about the harm of SHS. Respondents who worked in a smoke-free worksite or who frequented smoke-free indoor entertainment places were more likely to support comprehensive smoking restriction in bars and restaurants.

Conclusion: Considerable support for smoke-free policies exists in these six large cities in China. Greater public education about the dangers of SHS may further increase support. Experiencing the benefits of smoke-free indoor entertainment places and/or workplaces increases support for these policies and suggests that some initial smoke-free policy implementation may hasten the diffusion of these public health policies.

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