

Cigarette gifting among non-smokers in China: Findings from the International Tobacco Control China Survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Cigarette gifting is commonly practiced in China and has contributed to the social acceptability and high prevalence of cigarette smoking in the country. As a result, nonsmokers in China are particularly susceptible to smoking. While previous studies have examined cigarette gifting behaviors among smokers, little is known about cigarette gifting among nonsmokers.

Aims and Methods: This study aimed to examine the percentage and correlates of giving and receiving cigarettes as gifts among adult nonsmokers in China. We analyzed nonsmokers (N = 1813) aged ≥18 years using data from the International Tobacco Control China Wave 5 Survey. Descriptive statistics summarized the characteristics of those who gave and received cigarettes as gifts. Multivariable logistic regression models were used to identify factors associated with the two behaviors.

Results: Among nonsmokers, 9.9% reported giving cigarettes as gifts to family or friends in the last 6 months. A higher level of knowledge about smoking harms was associated with lower adjusted odds of gifting cigarettes. Nonsmokers aged 25–39 years, with middle income, positive attitude toward cigarette gifts, exposure to anti-smoking information, and exposure to smoking promotion, and those who reported receiving cigarettes as gifts from family or friends were more likely to give cigarettes as gifts. A total of 6.6% of nonsmokers reported receiving cigarettes as gifts in the last 6 months. High education, neutral or positive attitude toward cigarette gifts, exposure to anti-smoking information, exposure to smoking promotion, and having smoking friends were associated with receiving cigarettes as gifts.

Conclusions: It is concerning that Chinese cultural norms that support cigarette gifting have extended to giving nonsmokers cigarettes as gifts. Effective anti-smoking messages are needed. Changing the norms around cigarette gifting and increasing knowledge about smoking harms should help reduce cigarette gifting among nonsmokers.

Implications: Easy access to cigarettes received as gifts, along with the wide acceptance of smoking in China, places Chinese nonsmokers in a risky position. More educational campaigns targeting nonsmokers to proactively prevent them from smoking are called for. The ineffectiveness of existing anti-smoking information highlights the need for more effective anti-smoking messages. That attitude toward cigarette gifts is the strongest predictor of giving cigarettes as gifts suggests the need for interventions to reverse the positive attitude about cigarette gifting to decrease the popularity of this activity.

Recommended Citation

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