Our most recent two papers using the follow-up surveys are about the impact of social networks on quitting and the individual predictors and reasons for starting and sustaining quit attempts.

Social networks

Health staff could consider encouraging smokers to draw on their few non-smoking friends and family members as role models to increase their confidence that they will successfully quit.

We found that most of the close friends and family members of smokers also smoked. As in other settings, having more family and friends who smoke is an obstacle to quitting. But smokers also benefit from considerable support and encouragement to quit from their family and friends.

There is growing research evidence that health behaviours, such as smoking and quitting, spread through social networks. However, literature reviews have not been able to find conclusive evidence of peer-support, partner-support or family-based smoking cessation programs.

Predictors of starting and sustaining quit attempts

Health staff could focus more on increasing smokers’ confidence that they can successfully quit. This belief that quitting will not be too hard predicts whether smokers will be able to stay quit once they have started a quit attempt.

Health staff need to rethink current messages that just encourage smokers to keep making quit attempts by increasing smokers’ motivation to quit.

Smokers are not giving up trying after unsuccessful attempts, but remain motivated to try again. But this motivation to quit and having made more quit attempts in the past does not predict eventual success in staying quit.

We found that different factors predict starting and sustaining quit attempts among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers. This builds on our earlier paper examining the association between social determinants and quitting (see Policy and Practice Brief Volume 2, Issue 1 January 2017).

Health concerns, price and setting an example to children were the most common reasons given by smokers and ex-smokers for quitting. This perceived motivation to quit to set an example for children is more common than in other settings, and has been and can be used in local and national media campaigns.
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