

Predictors of What Smokers Say They Will Do in Response to Future Price Increases. Findings From the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Four Country Survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Given the impact of higher tobacco prices on smoking cessation, we studied the role of future cigarette prices on forming expectation about smoking behavior.

Methods: Using a random sample of 9,058 adult cigarette smokers from the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom collected in 2002, we examined predictors of what smokers say they will do in response to a hypothetical 50% increase in the price they paid for their last cigarette purchase. A series of regression analyses examined factors associated with intentions that have a positive impact on health, that is, intentions to quit and/or to consume fewer cigarettes.

Results: The quit and/or smoke less intentions were more pronounced among those who lived in areas with higher average cigarette prices and who paid higher prices for their brand of choice during the last purchase. The magnitude of the price increase is a more important predictor of an intention to quit/smoke less compared with the average cigarette price.

Conclusions: The availability of alternative (cheaper) cigarette sources may reduce but would not eliminate the impact of higher prices/taxes on smokers' expected behavior that has been linked to actual quit intentions and quitting in follow-up surveys.

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