

Which tobacco control policies do smokers support? Findings from the International Tobacco Control Smoking and Vaping Survey

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Abstract

As governments consider policy action to reduce smoking, a key factor in creating political will is the level of public support, particularly among smokers who are most affected by the policies. The goal of this paper is to assess and compare the level of support in Canada, the United States, England, and Australia for five smoking control policies: 1) banning menthol in cigarettes, 2) banning cigarette additives, 3) reducing nicotine in cigarettes to make them less addictive, 4) raising the minimum age to purchase cigarettes to 21 years and older, and 5) requiring pictorial warning labels on cigarette packs (examined in the US only). Data for these analyses come from 8165 daily cigarette smokers who responded to the 2016 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey. In all countries, the highest level of support was for raising the legal age for purchase to 21 years and older (62–70%) and reducing the nicotine content of cigarettes to make them less addictive (57–70%). Smokers who were less dependent on cigarettes and those expressing interest in quitting were more likely to support all policies. When asked how they would respond to a nicotine reduction policy, the most common response given was to try the non-nicotine cigarettes to see how they liked them (42–48%), with the next most common response being to quit smoking entirely (16–24%). The high level of support for these proposed policies among daily smokers provides important evidence for policymakers to counteract claims that such policies would be unpopular.

Recommended Citation

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