

Research methods of 'Talking about the Smokes': An International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Thomas, D.P., Briggs, V., Couzos, S., Dvey, M., Hunt, J., Panaretto, K., Van der Sterren, A., Stevens, M., Nicholson, A.K., & Borland, R.

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To describe the research methods and baseline sample of the Talking About The Smokes (TATS) project.

DESIGN: The TATS project is a collaboration between research institutions and Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs) and their state and national representative bodies. It is one of the studies within the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project, enabling national and international comparisons. It includes a prospective longitudinal study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smokers and recent ex-smokers; a survey of non-smokers; repeated cross-sectional surveys of ACCHS staff; and descriptions of the tobacco policies and practices at the ACCHSs. Community members completed face-to-face surveys; staff completed surveys on paper or online. We compared potential biases and the distribution of variables common to the main community baseline sample and unweighted and weighted results of the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). The baseline survey (Wave 1) was conducted between April 2012 and October 2013.

SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS: 2522 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 35 locations (the communities served by 34 ACCHSs and one community in the Torres Strait), and 645 staff in the ACCHSs.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES: Sociodemographic and general health indicators, smoking status, number of cigarettes smoked per day and quit attempts.

RESULTS: The main community baseline sample closely matched the distribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the weighted NATSISS by age, sex, jurisdiction and remoteness. There were inconsistent differences in some sociodemographic factors between our sample and the NATSISS: our sample had higher proportions of unemployed people, but also higher proportions who had completed Year 12 and who lived in more advantaged areas. In both surveys, similar percentages of smokers reported having attempted to quit in the past year, and daily smokers reported similar numbers of cigarettes smoked per day.

CONCLUSION: The TATS project provides a detailed and nationally representative description of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoking behaviour, attitudes, knowledge and exposure to tobacco control activities and policies, and their association with quitting.

Recommended Citation

Thomas, D.P., Briggs, V., Couzos, S., Dvey, M., Hunt, J., Panaretto, K., Van der Sterren, A., Stevens, M., Nicholson, A.K., & Borland, R. (2015). Research methods of 'Talking about the Smokes': An International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 202 (10), 5-12.

Link To PDF: https://www.mja.com.au/system/files/issues/202_10/tho00874.pdf