

# Unequal risks, unmet needs: the tobacco burden for Pacific peoples in New Zealand

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## **Abstract**

**AIM:** To review the available published literature and documentary material relevant to smoking by Pacific peoples in New Zealand.

**METHODS:** Electronic databases and websites were searched using a range of search words.

**RESULTS:** Over 30% of Pacific adults in New Zealand reporting being smokers in the 2006 Census, compared to 21% of the whole adult population. Smoking by Pacific women increased from 23% in 1996 to 27% in the 2006 census. Other survey data indicates some fall in the prevalence of daily smoking from 35% in 2002/3 to 26% in 2006/7. The prevalence of smoking by Pacific Year-10 students declined sharply during 1999-2007, from 29% to 16%. Smoking inside the homes of Pacific students has declined during 2001-7, from 35% to 26%. We found little government attention to smoking by Pacific peoples, and no specific central government plan for Pacific tobacco control.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The threat to health from smoking and secondhand smoke exposure is higher for Pacific peoples and contributes to health inequalities in New Zealand. There is a need for tobacco control interventions specific to Pacific peoples, with some policy shortcomings needing to be urgently addressed. A central government plan for Pacific tobacco control is required. Some progress has occurred, particularly in the decrease of smoking by Pacific youth, and the increase in smokefree Pacific homes.

## **Recommended Citation**

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