

Support by New Zealand smokers for new types of smokefree areas: National survey data

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Abstract

AIMS: To describe smoker support for new smokefree laws covering cars and outdoor settings, in a national sample of New Zealand (NZ) smokers.

METHODS: The NZ arm of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Survey (ITC Project) uses as its sampling frame the NZ Health Survey (a nationally-representative sample interviewed face-to-face). From this sample we surveyed by telephone adult smokers (n=1376). Along with adjustment for the complex sample design, there was weighting of the results to attempt to adjust for the non-response at various points (i.e. there was an overall response rate of 33%).

RESULTS: A majority of this national sample of smokers supported three new smokefree areas (albeit with some potential for response bias not adequately addressed by the weighting process). That is, only a minority agreed that smoking should be allowed: in cars with pre-school children (3%), anywhere in outdoor eating areas (22%), and at council-owned playgrounds (32%) (with a more equivocal minority for "within 5 metres of the entrance to public buildings" (48%)). These attitudes were generally compatible with the findings that most of these smokers (87%) reported trying to minimise the amount that non-smokers were exposed to their cigarette smoke, and reported never smoking in a car with non-smokers (73%). Nevertheless, there were still domains where most smokers thought smoking should be allowed-- e.g. on lifeguard-patrolled beaches (55%) and in at least some of the outdoor seating areas of restaurants/cafes (51%) and pubs (83%).

CONCLUSIONS: There was majority support by these New Zealand smokers for three new types of smokefree areas not covered by current smokefree legislation (including in cars and some outdoor areas). These findings suggest it is a reasonable option for central government and local government authorities to further study and consider new smokefree laws.

Recommended Citation

Wilson, N., Blakely, T., Edwards, R., Weerasekera, D., Thomson, G. (2009). Support by New Zealand smokers for new types of smokefree areas: National survey data. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 122 (1303), 80-89.

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