

# Health knowledge and perception of risks among Chinese smokers and non-smokers: findings from the Wave 1 ITC China Survey

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## Abstract

**Background** Awareness of health risks of smoking is strongly associated with smoking behaviour. However, there are no population-based studies of smoking-related health knowledge in China.

**Objective** The aim of current study was to use a population-based sample from the International Tobacco Control China Wave 1 survey to examine variations between current, former and never smokers' health knowledge about smoking and the impact of health knowledge awareness on smokers' intention to quit.

**Methods** A face-to-face interview was conducted with 5986 adult smokers and non-smokers from six cities in China. Respondents were asked whether they believed smoking causes heart disease, stroke, impotence, lung cancer, emphysema, stained teeth, premature ageing in smokers and lung cancer in non-smokers. Current smokers were also asked additional questions on how smoking affects their current and future health as well as whether they had plans to quit smoking and if they believe they would have health benefit from quitting.

**Findings** The overall awareness of health risks of smoking in China was low compared to developed countries. Current smokers in China were less likely than non-smokers and former smokers to acknowledge the consequences of smoking. Current smokers who were more aware of the health consequences of smoking were more likely to intend to quit smoking.

**Conclusion** These findings highlight the need to increase awareness about the health effects of smoking in China, particularly among current smokers to increase quitting.

## Recommended Citation:

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