



Attitudes to outdoor smokefree policies in the USA and Canada

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Objective

To review the published survey data on public support for smokefree outdoor regulations in the USA and Canada.

Methods

English-language articles and reports identified using Medline, Google Scholar, and Google up to December 2014. Population-based surveys of the adult general population within the USA and Canada, with a minimum sample size of 500. For details see¹.

Results

- Relevant data were found from 89 cross-sectional surveys between 1993 and 2014.
- Support varied by type of area: Support for smokefree regulations was highest for school grounds (range: 57% to 95%) playgrounds (89% to 91%) and building entrances (45% to 89%), and lowest for outdoor workplaces (12% to 46%) and sidewalks (31% to 49%) – see also Table 1.
- Lower support by smokers, but substantial for some types of areas: For some outdoor places there was majority smoker support (eg, at least 77% support for smokefree school grounds in US state surveys after 2004).
- Increasing support over time: Trend data indicated increasing general public and smoker support for smokefree regulations over time (eg, USA general support from 67% in 2003 to 78% in 2008 for smokefree school grounds; for parks, see Figure 1). Median support for smokefree outdoor event increased from 20% in 1993-99 to 56% in 2010-13, see Table 1.
- Women more supportive: Women were more supportive of smokefree outdoor regulations than men in all 51 results with relevant data.
- Lower support from Whites: Support was generally lower among Whites compared to other ethnic groups.
- Incomplete coverage: Data were only found for 26 US states and six Canadian provinces (excluding questions about school grounds, for only 16 of the 50 states) – see Figure 2.

Table 1: Support for smokefree regulations by type of outdoor place and over time^a

Type of place (number of surveys)	All years	1993-1999	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2013
Median % support (range %)					
School grounds and events (39)	89 (57-95)	72 (72)	88 (57-95)	89 (77-94)	85 (76-94)
Building entrances (29)	67 (45-89)	No surveys	63 (54-67)	69 (45-80)	67 (55-89)
Parks (20)	39 (25-61)	No surveys	32 (25-38)	39 (35-55)	44 (34-61)
Outdoor events (21)	31 (19-77)	20 (16-39)	24 (21-27)	40 (30-62)	56 (29-77)

^aWhere there is a minimum of 20 surveys during 1993-2013 about regulations for a type of place. Median values should be treated as only relatively simplistic indicators of likely changes over time.

Figure 1: Public support for smokefree parks from a repeated national USA survey (with added trend line)²⁻⁸

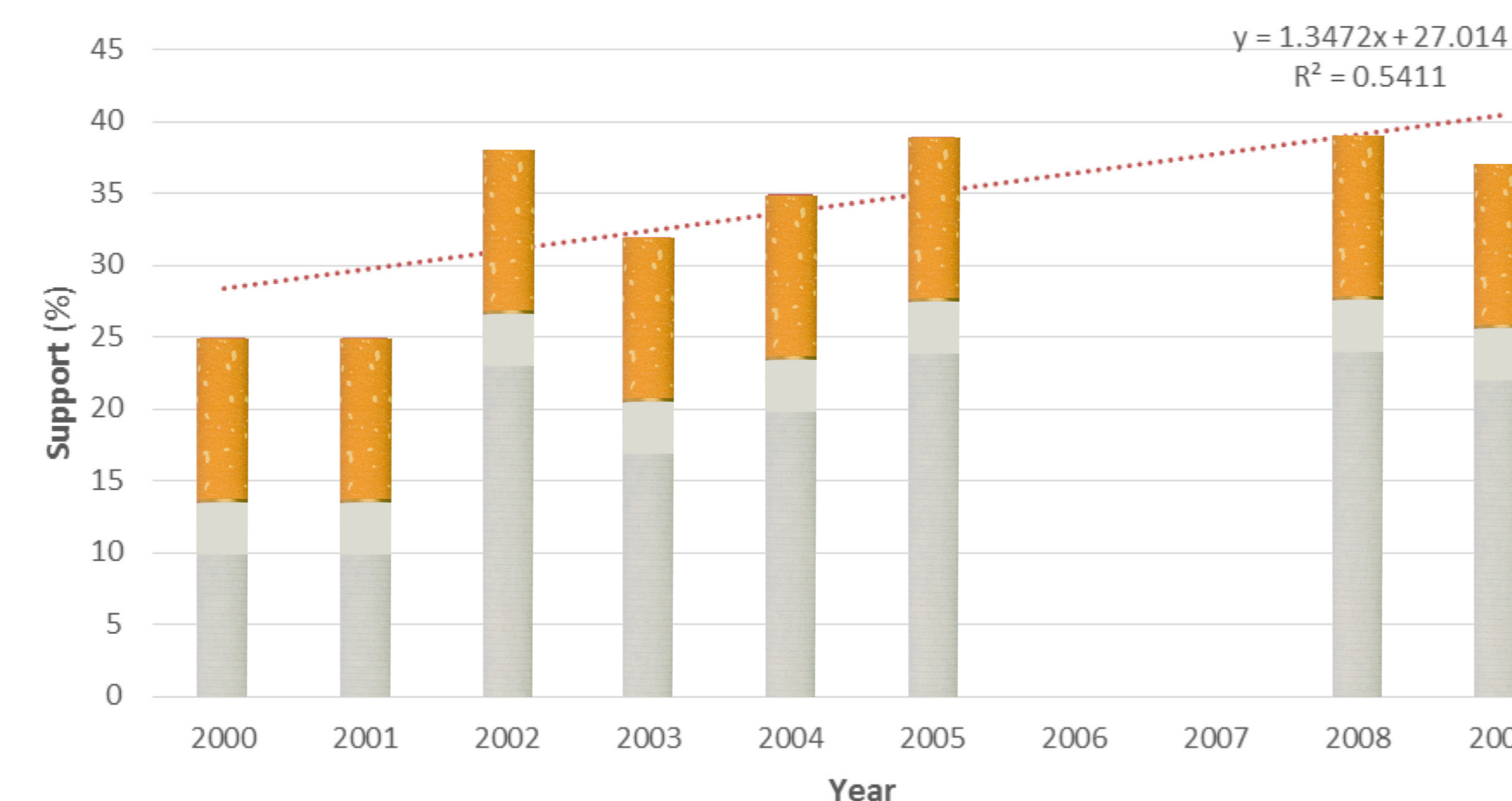
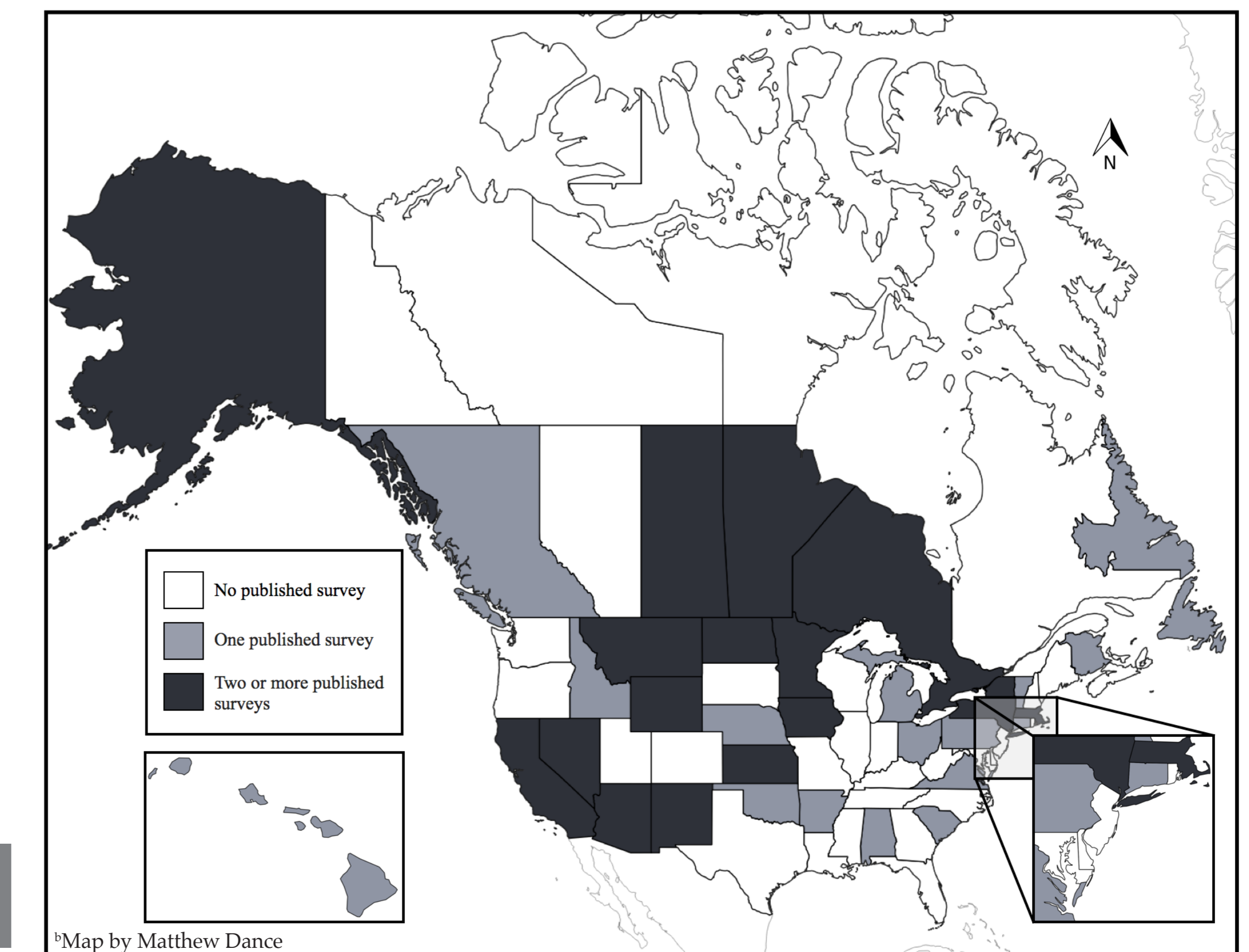


Figure 2: States and provinces for which published survey data were found^b



^bMap by Matthew Dance

Discussion

- Outdoor smokefree regulations can achieve majority public support, including from smokers.
- Substantial and growing public support for outdoor smokefree regulations indicates opportunities for policy action and effective implementation.
- High levels of public support have created opportunities to use smokefree outdoor policies in State and locality marketing (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Maine State website image⁹



References

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