

Smokefree policies for *outdoor* public places:

What are the ethical issues?



World Congress on Public Health
Melbourne, April 2017

George Thomson, Louise Delany, Nick Wilson
University of Otago, Wellington, NZ

Aims

For smokefree policies in *outdoor* public places:

- Assess the potential ethical issues
- Assess the benefits

Argument: Ethical issues exist, but:

1. Criticisms may lack nuance
2. Issues can be mitigated
3. Issues significantly outweighed by benefits



Potential issues

(1) Stigmatisation of smokers?

- Smokefree policies may mainly be perceived by smokers as:
 - Signalling that *smokers* are undesirable
 - Or*
 - Signalling that *smoking* is undesirable
- ‘Dual stigmatisation’ by smoking and poverty

Stigma from outdoor policies?



- ‘*may [create] a sense of powerlessness in people’s ability to quit*’

Kirsten Bell et al. *Soc Health Ill* 2010;32 (6)914–929



- ‘*denormalization raises .. ethical concerns*’

James Colgrove et al. *NEJM* 2011;364;25



- ‘*[consequences] may include stigma, humiliation, and discrimination*’

Ronald Bayer et al. *Health Affairs* 2013; 32(7):1291-1298

- **Only survey found:** smokers (75%) and non-smokers (69%) agreed that smokefree Vancouver parks would increase stigma

Okali et al. *Health Policy* 2013;111:127-34

Stigma? Some responses

Do critics sufficiently recognise?

- the ambivalence about smoking by many smokers

Wilson et al. *Addict Behav.* 2013;38(2):1541-9

Menniga et al *Br J Health Psychol.* 2011;16(3):580-91

- the wish of most smokers to quit, and to have environmental constraints such as smokefree policies to help them quit and stay quit



Potential issues

(2) Unintended consequences



Any increased private *indoor* smoking?

- **NO:** Evidence from China, Wales, Spain, USA & 15 low/middle income countries indicates that *indoor or car* smokefree laws *do not* increase smoking in homes

Ye et al. *BMC Public Health*. 2015;29;15:982;

Moore et al. *BMJ Open*. 2015;30;5(1):e006914;

Sureda et al *PLoS One*. 2014;27;9(2):e89430.

Nazar et al. *Prev Med*. 2014;59:47-53.

Cheng et al. *Tob Control*. 2015;24(2):168-74.

- No studies found of the indoor effects of *outdoor* smokefree policies

Potential issues (3) Inequities from policies?

Issues with larger urban smokefree areas (streets, malls, parks, beaches):

- **Less mobile** smokers less able to get outside of smokefree areas (especially apartment dwellers)
- If smokefree policies are used as means to move **homeless or unwanted groups** away
- Issues when the responsibility focus is only on the smoker, rather than jurisdictions & venue managers



Need for policy implementation to be about helping smokers 7

Potential issues (4)

Harm to smokers from smokefree policies?

Reduction in:

- Autonomy – reduced independence?
- Freedom of choice and activity?
- Ability to satisfy addiction?

Assessment

Nicotine addiction also reduces autonomy and choice



Benefits of smokefree outdoor policies

Reduction of:

1. Cues to smoke for those trying to quit or stay quit

2. The normalisation of smoking

- Reinforces the place of smoking in a culture
- Increases risk of smoking for youth



3. Secondhand smoke risks in some environments:

- Over 10m from smokers
- Drift inside from smoking at entrances and windows

Hwang et al. *Nicotine Tob Res* 2014;16:478-84

Van der Deen et al. *N Z Med J* 2014;127:43-52

More on benefits

Smoker's right to quit

- 60-80% of smokers (USA, E Europe, Turkey, Thailand) want to quit

CDC. *Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2011;11;60(44):1513-9

Footman et al. *Nicotine Tob Res* 2013;15(9):1628-1633

Albayrak et al. *J Addictions Nursing.* 2015; 26 (1):41-46

Benjakul et al. *BMC Public Health* 2013, 13:277

Smoker approval of some outdoor policies

- **USA & Canada:** for smokefree child-related areas **generally over 50%**

Thomson et al. *Tob Control* 2016;25(5):506-16.

- **Italy:** support for smokefree school grounds **68%**, hospital grounds **55%**

Gallus et al. *Tob Control* 2012;21:59e62

- **France:** **75%** support for smokefree café outdoors

Kennedy et al. *Euro J Public Health* 2012; 22, S1, 29-34

Increased ability to quit smoking because of *outdoor* smokefree policies

- Californian smokers in towns with smokefree park/patio laws are more likely to attempt quitting

Zablocki et al. *Prev Med* 2014;59:73-8

- Ontario smokefree bar/restaurant outdoor areas help smokers quit and not relapse

Chaiton et al *Tob Control* 2016;25(1):83-8



Discussion



- Ethical issues need to be mitigated by appropriate policy implementation
- Issues significantly outweighed by benefits, and this is seen by some smokers
- Response ‘proportionate’ to the scale of tobacco harm? (6% of lost DALYs worldwide)
- Need for more nuanced surveys re stigma and outdoor policies (similar to Stuber)

Contact: george.thomson@otago.ac.nz