

SMOKERS SUPPORT FOR RESTRICTING POINT-OF-SALE DISPLAY OF TOBACCO; NATIONAL SURVEY DATA FROM NEW ZEALAND

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Background

Tobacco advertising and promotion is almost wholly banned in New Zealand (NZ).

However, tobacco products are prominently displayed in over 5000 of the most commonly visited retail outlets (e.g. local general stores throughout NZ).

The previous New Zealand government carried out a consultation about point-of-sale tobacco (PoS) display regulation in 2008.

The new National Party led government decided in March 2009 not to introduce legislation to ban PoS displays.

Aim

To determine smokers' support for a ban on PoS tobacco displays in New Zealand.

Methods

Subjects were participants in the first wave of the NZ arm of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Survey (ITC Project).

The NZ ITC cohort is derived from a nationally representative Health Survey (NZHS), which included booster sampling of Maori (indigenous New Zealanders) and people of Pacific Island and Asian ethnic groups.

For wave one, 1376 smokers from the NZHS aged 18+ took part in phone interviews between March 2007 to February 2008.

We asked subjects about their awareness of PoS (cigarette packages noticed on display at the place where they usually buy their tobacco in last month) and support for a complete ban on PoS tobacco product displays.

Results were weighted to reflect the national population of smokers and the complex sample design.

Further details on the survey methods are available elsewhere (Methods Report: <http://www.wnmeds.ac.nz/itcproject.html>)

Results

1. Awareness of PoS displays: Most (61.2%) smokers had seen cigarette packages displayed at the place where they usually buy their tobacco in the last month.

2. Support for PoS display ban: Most (59.7%) of smokers agreed ("somewhat" or "a lot") that there should be complete bans on displays of cigarettes inside shops.

3. Associations with support for a PoS display ban

Support for a ban was greater among Pacific Island smokers (odds ratio [OR] =2.49, 95% CI 1.39 to 4.43), but otherwise did not vary significantly by ethnicity.

No clear trend in support by deprivation quintile, but smokers suffering financial stress (unable to pay important bills on time due to lack of money in last month) were more likely to support a ban (OR=1.64, 95% CI 0.94 to 2.87).

Smokers who were planning to quit in the next month (OR=2.19, 95% CI 1.25 to 3.8) or within the next 6 months (OR=1.99, 95% CI 1.26 to 3.14) were more likely to support a ban compared to smokers who were not planning to quit at all. (Figure 1)

Smokers who had quit between taking part in the NZHS and taking part in the ITC survey were more likely to support a ban (OR=2.35 95% CI 1.43 – 3.89).



Discussion

There was majority support among these NZ smokers for a ban on PoS tobacco product displays.

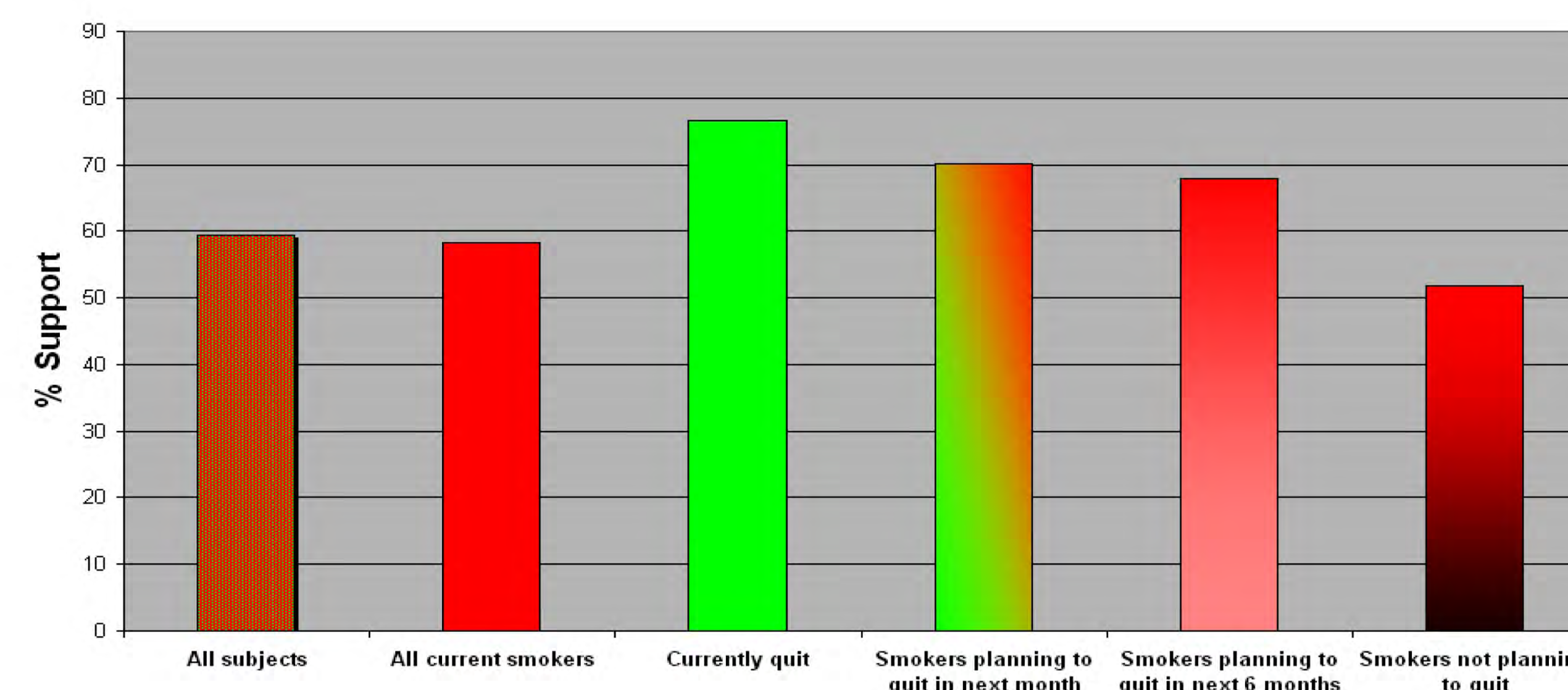
Support was particularly strong among smokers who had recently quit or were planning to do so within six months.

This is consistent with other findings which suggest that smokers who have quit recently or actively wish to quit welcome PoS display bans, as they may make it easier for them to stay quit.

The findings suggest that the NZ government would have strong support for the introduction of a complete ban on tobacco product displays.



Figure 1: Support for a point-of-sale display ban by smoking status and quit intentions



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