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GF has served as an expert witness or consultant for governments defending their country's policies or regulations in litigation and has served as paid expert consultant to the Ministry of Health of Singapore in reviewing the evidence of plain/standardized packaging. All other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Smoking related knowledge, quit attempts and intentions, regret, and perceived addiction among people who smoke in Aotearoa New Zealand: Findings from the ITC NZ (EASE) 2020-21 survey



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BACKGROUND

- Aotearoa New Zealand has a Smokefree Aotearoa goal to reduce smoking prevalence to less than 5% for all peoples by 2025.
- Daily smoking prevalence in 2021/22 was 8%, but was substantially higher among Māori (the Indigenous peoples) (20%) and Pacific peoples (18%).
- There is a comprehensive government action plan to achieve the Smokefree Aotearoa goal, including mandating minimal nicotine levels in smoked tobacco products from 2025.

OBJECTIVE

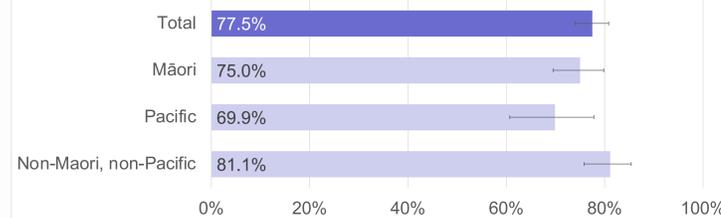
- To assess key knowledge, motivations, beliefs, and behaviors among people who smoked or had recently quit smoking and investigate how these vary by ethnicity.

METHODS

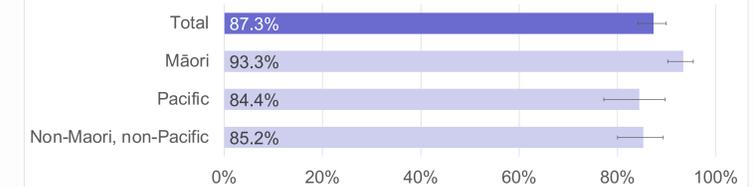
- Data were from Wave 3 of the ITC NZ (EASE) study, conducted online (Oct 2020-Feb 2021).
- Participants were: 700 people who smoked daily, 292 people who smoked less than daily, and 238 people who had recently quit smoking. Participants included 492 Māori and 238 Pacific peoples.
- Estimates were weighted to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's population of people who currently smoke and recently quit smoking, including weighting for age, sex, and ethnicity.

RESULTS

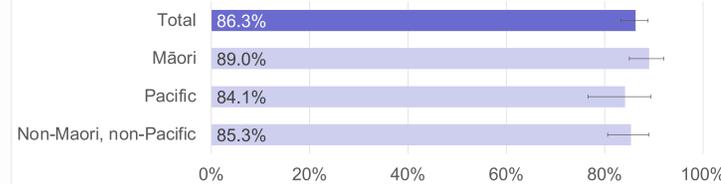
78% of participants who smoked regretted starting to smoke



87% of participants who smoked reported being 'somewhat' or 'very' addicted to smoking

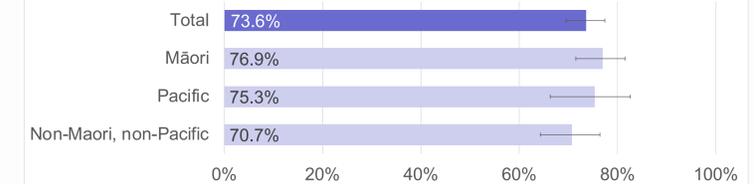


86% of participants who smoked reported trying to quit smoking in the past



51.5% (95% CI 47.4-55.6%) of participants had tried to quit smoking in the last year (Māori: 54.4%, Pacific: 55.0%, Non-Māori, non-Pacific: 49.1%).

74% of participants who smoked reported planning to quit smoking in the future



43.3% (95% CI 39.1-47.6%) planned to quit in the next 6 months (Māori: 43.0%, Pacific: 45.9%, Non-Māori, non-Pacific: 42.5%).

Reasons for quitting smoking (participants who smoked or had recently quit)

Concern for personal health: 82%	Restrictions in public places: 38%	The price: 85%	Health professional advice: 51%
Society disapproves of smoking: 48%	Close friends/family disapprove(d): 55%	Advertising/information on health risks: 43%	Warning labels on cigarette packets: 38%

Knowledge of risks

Awareness of 12 smoking-related harms varied from 37% (bladder cancer) to 86% (oral cancer) in participants that smoked or had recently quit.

Perceived difficulty of quitting

50% of participants who smoked thought it would be difficult to stop smoking.

Bars on the graphs represent 95% confidence intervals. "Refused" responses were excluded. "Don't know" responses were excluded, except for questions on smoking related harms.

CONCLUSIONS

- Most participants regretted starting to smoke, had tried to quit smoking, and intended to quit in the future. These outcomes did not differ significantly by ethnicity.
- However, most participants who smoked believed they were addicted to smoking, with a slightly higher prevalence of this belief among Māori. Additionally, about half of the participants who smoked thought it would be difficult to quit.
- These findings support the need for, and potential efficacy of, measures in the Smokefree Aotearoa Action Plan which aim to facilitate quitting, including mandated denicotinization of smoked tobacco products.



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