

# OBSERVED SMOKING BY TIME OF DAY

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## PURPOSE

To further develop the assessment of the prevalence of outdoor smoking at different times of the day, so as to inform smokefree policy evaluation and monitoring.

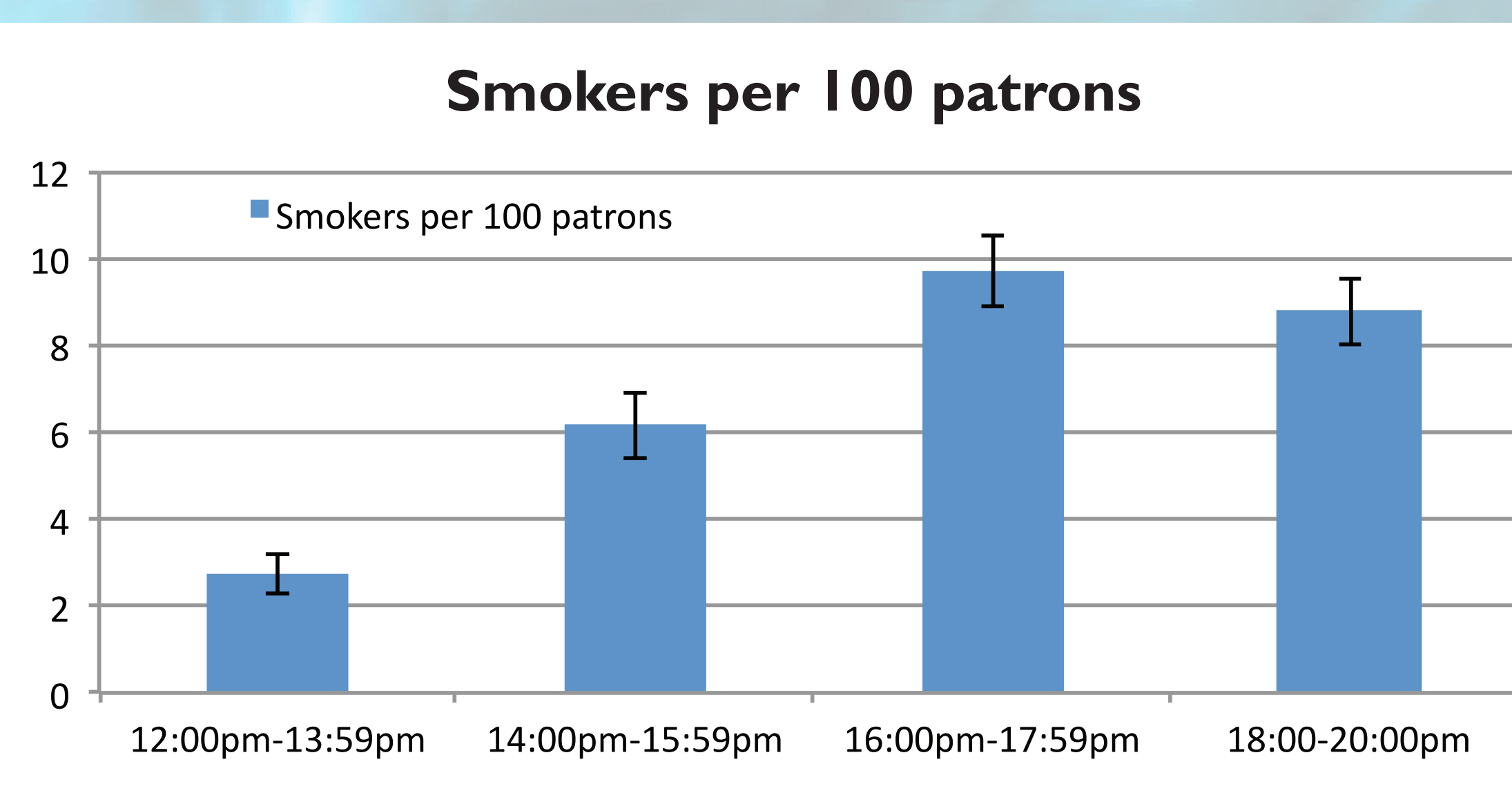
## METHODS

Two rounds of field observations were conducted in central Wellington, New Zealand. In April 2013 (autumn), smoking was observed during eight 15-minute periods (during 12.00-13.00h and 19.00-20.00h) on two Wednesdays and two Fridays, at outdoor tables of 14

bar/café locations. In March 2014, smoking was observed every 30 minutes or every hour between 12.00 and 19.30h on a Friday, two Saturdays and a Sunday, at 55 bars/café with outdoor tables.

## RESULTS

Of 2600 bar/café patrons observed in 2013, 15.8% were observed smoking; 9.1% at midday compared to 18.5% in the evening. Of 11,455 patrons observed in 2014, 8% were smoking. In 2014 the smoking prevalence varied from 3% between 12.00-13.00h, increasing to 10% between 16.00-17.00h and 9% between 18.00-19.30h.



**Figure 1:** Smokers as a proportion of the number of adult patrons, averages by time of day (Wellington City, March 2014)

## CONCLUSIONS

In both observational studies, we found a large increase between the prevalence of smoking outside bars/café from midday to evenings, as has also been found in an Australian study.<sup>1</sup> Such differences may be related to a greater consumption of alcohol in evenings, fewer children around, or to a different patronage then. The finding is in contrast to studies that have observed smoking in vehicles, which have found a greater prevalence of smoking in mornings compared to evenings.<sup>2</sup>

The implications of this work include that future evaluation studies around the impact of outdoor smokefree area policies need to use precisely defined observational periods (time of day, day of week) in any before and after studies or compliance monitoring studies. Smokefree area policies covering these outdoor settings could potentially help denormalise smoking.



## DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest. George Thomson was supported for this project by the Cancer Society of New Zealand (Wellington Branch).

## REFERENCES

- 1) Wakefield MA, Zacher M, Bayly M, et al. The silent salesman: an observational study of personal tobacco pack display at outdoor cafe strips in Australia. *Tob Control* 2014;23:339-44.
- 2) Patel V, Thomson G, Wilson N. Objective measurement of area differences in 'private' smoking behaviour: observing smoking in vehicles. *Tob Control* 2013;22:130-5.