Use of roll-your-own tobacco among Maori and non-Maori: results from the ITC New Zealand Survey

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Introduction

In New Zealand (NZ), roll-your-own (RYO) cigarettes are very commonly smoked, with previous evidence suggesting use is particularly prevalent among young people and among Maori (the indigenous people of NZ).

Objectives

We explore patterns of and reasons for use of RYO cigarettes among Maori and non-Maori NZ smokers.

Methods

• Data from the ITC New Zealand survey, a cohort of 1155 smokers and recent quitters recruited from participants in the NZ national health survey (NZHS).
• Data collected by a CATI survey, Sept 2016 – April 2017.
• Response – 41.5% of all contacted eligible subjects, 27.6% among all eligible subjects.
• Results presented from 884 current smokers (320 Māori), analysis allowed for over-sampling of some participant groups in the NZHS/ITC sampling stages.

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Results

• 59% of smokers smoked only (29%) or some (30%) RYO cigarettes.
• RYO cigarette smoking was more common among Māori smokers (Figure 1).
• RYO smoking was less common among ≥ 55 yrs (46% smoked only or some RYO cigarettes), and commonest among 18-24 yrs (63%).

• The commonest reason for smoking RYO cigarettes was that they are less expensive (74% of RYO users).
• Over a third (35%) of smokers thought RYO cigarettes were less harmful than tailor-made (TM). This belief was higher among RYO users (Figure 2).
• RYO smokers showed greater evidence of addiction and were less likely to be planning to quit or to have tried quitting in the last year (Figure 3).

Conclusions

• RYO products and RYO smoking may be undermining progress towards NZ’s Smokefree 2025 goal, particularly among Māori.
• Interventions such as differential tax increases for RYO tobacco may be required to reduce RYO use and achieve the endgame for tobacco in NZ.

Reference