

SAND abstract No. 74 from the BEACH program 2004–05

Subject: Smoking and passive smoking in the home

Organisations supporting this study: Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre.

Issues: Exposure to tobacco smoke in the home environment (all patients); the current smoking status of adult patients; attempts of daily smokers to quit or reduce tobacco use; years since quitting for previous smokers.

Sample: 2,789 respondents from 96 GPs; data collection period: 24/08/2004–27/09/2004.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2004–05' on this website:
<http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>.

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution for all BEACH encounters, with the majority of patients (57.1%) being female. Patients aged 45–64 years accounted for 28.1% of the sample.

When asked about smoking in the home, almost half the respondents (47.8%) indicated 'smoking is permitted outside only' and a further one-third (32.2%) indicated that 'people are not permitted to smoke anywhere'. Smoking was permitted only in certain areas inside the home in 4.5% of respondents' households, in the house occasionally in 5.8%, or in the house frequently in 9.7% of households.

So, in the majority of households there was no passive smoke in the home (80.1%, 95% CI: 77.2–83.0). In a further 10.3% (95% CI: 8.3–12.3) of households there was limited passive smoke (where smoking is permitted only in certain areas, or smoking in the home is only occasional), and in 9.7% (95% CI: 7.8–11.6) of households there was unlimited passive smoke.

Patients aged 18 years and over were asked to indicate their smoking status. About half (49.1%) had never smoked, and 28.5% were previous smokers. Daily smokers accounted for 17.9% of the responding patients and a further 4.5% reported smoking occasionally.

Of the 434 adult daily smokers, data on their quit/reduction attempts during the previous 12 months was available for 420. Each could indicate more than one quit/reduction option attempted. Only 7.4% had successfully given up smoking for one month or more (but subsequently started again), and one third (33.1%) had a failed quit attempt during the past 12 months. About one in ten adult daily smokers (11.2%) had changed to a lower tar or nicotine brand cigarette, and about a quarter (23.1%) had reduced the average number of cigarettes smoked per day.

In the previous 12 months: over one third of adult daily smokers (37.9%) had attempted to quit smoking by either quitting for one month or more (then starting again) and/or having an unsuccessful quit attempt; over a quarter of all adult daily smokers (28.1%) had attempted to reduce smoking effects by changing brand and/or reducing the number of cigarettes smoked.

Further reading: Valenti L, Charles J, Britt H. Passive smoke in Australian homes 1999 to 2004. *Aust N Z J Public Health* 2005 29(4): 387–8.

Correspondence to: Lisa Valenti, AGPSCC