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CESSATION SERVICES IN SIMCOE MUSKOKA



Welcome to the last issue of our five part series. This issue focuses on findings from our phone survey of Simcoe Muskoka smokers. We thank all smokers who generously agreed to be interviewed for this study; without their valuable input this study would not have been possible.

STUDY BACKGROUND

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) is pilot testing a methodology to understand the availability of cessation services at local levels in Ontario. The methods for this study are being tested in Simcoe Muskoka. Preliminary findings are presented in a series of newsletters.

Past issues include:

- Preliminary findings from OTRU's scan of the availability and reach of smoking cessation services in Simcoe Muskoka
- Results of interviews with key informants
- Results of a survey of blue collar workers
- Results of a survey of young adults.

All past issues can be found online at:

http://www.otru.org/program_evaluation.html

THE SURVEY

In this newsletter we present an overview of findings from a comprehensive survey of smokers in Simcoe Muskoka. The Survey Research Center at the University of Waterloo conducted phone interviews with a random sample of 800 smokers between June and November 2007. Participants were asked about their tobacco smoking behaviour as well as their awareness and experiences with different smoking cessation services. We adapted interview questions from the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit's Ontario Tobacco Survey, a comprehensive survey which includes questions about tobacco use, nicotine dependence, awareness of quit aids, use of quit aids, and satisfaction with quit aids. The data were weighted by age and gender to make them representative for all smokers in Simcoe Muskoka.

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EVALUATION NEWS



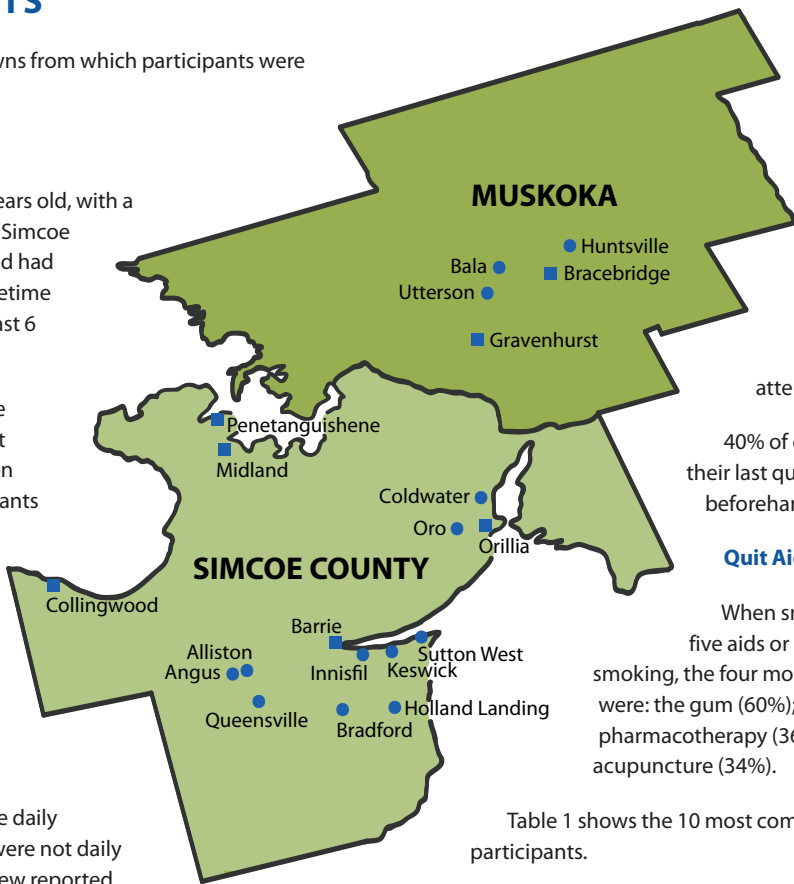
THE PARTICIPANTS

The map shows the cities and towns from which participants were recruited.

Demographic Characteristics

Survey participants were 18-87 years old, with a mean age of 40; they had lived in Simcoe Muskoka for at least 6 months and had smoked 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and at least one cigarette in the last 6 months.

Survey participants' mean income was \$45,000-59,000. Fifty percent had at least a secondary education diploma. The majority of participants (58%) were married. 59.5% of participants were female, 40.5% were males.



Attempting to Quit

80% of Simcoe Muskoka smokers believed that they would benefit "quite a bit or a lot" from quitting and 43% reported they had intentions to quit in the next 6 months.

Simcoe Muskoka smokers had attempted to quit smoking an average of 3 times (range: 0-53); 15% had never made a serious attempt to quit.

40% of current smokers had planned their last quit attempt at least a few weeks beforehand.

Quit Aids

When smokers were asked to name five aids or resources that help people quit smoking, the four most common quit aids mentioned were: the gum (60%); the patch, (60%); non NRT pharmacotherapy (36%) and laser therapy, hypnosis or acupuncture (34%).

Table 1 shows the 10 most common quit aids mentioned by participants.

Table 1: Most Common Quit Aids Mentioned by Participants

Quit Aid	Percent
Nicotine gum	60
Nicotine patch	60
Pharmacotherapy (not NRT)	36
Laser, hypnosis or acupuncture	34
Cold turkey/willpower	10
Advice from doctor	9
Self help materials	7
Food/herbal supplements	6
Family and/or friends	5
Telephone helpline	4
Counseling	4
Inhaler	3

While only 5% of smokers mentioned family or friends as a resource to help them quit, 48% had made deals with friends or family in order to stop smoking. Further, when we asked for more details about resources to quit smoking, making deals with family or friends was the resource most commonly used. More than half of those who had made a deal with family or friends in order to quit smoking had found it a useful strategy. This is consistent with the clinical guidelines of the US and UK, which advocate the use of social support in social cessation interventions..

Table 2: Quit Aids Used and Perceived Helpfulness

Quit Aid	Percent
Made deal with a friend or family	48
Found it at least somewhat helpful	56
Nicotine gum	41
Found it at least somewhat helpful	28
Nicotine patch	40
Found it at least somewhat helpful	63
Zyban or Bupropion	25
Found it at least somewhat helpful	49
Self help materials	18
Found it at least somewhat helpful	68
Sponsored by non profit organization	39
Sponsored by private company	19
Sponsored by tobacco company	5
Sponsored by pharmaceutical company	7
Used laser, hypnosis or acupuncture	13
Found it at least somewhat helpful	44
Wellbutrin	8
Found it at least somewhat helpful	60
Called telephone helpline	6
Accessed Smokers' Helpline Online	4
Took part in a quit program	4



RESULTS

Smoking Behaviour

Almost all participants (81%) were daily smokers, and 83% of those who were not daily smokers at the time of the interview reported that they had smoked daily in the past.

The mean number of cigarettes smoked per day (on the days that participants smoked) was 17.

Dependence

There are several ways to measure dependence on tobacco smoking; one of the most common is the Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI). The HSI is a scale based on time of first cigarette of the day and number of cigarettes smoked per day. HSI is only computed for daily smokers.

More than half (55%) of Simcoe Muskoka daily smokers had a moderate dependence score or higher.

65% reported having their first cigarette in the first 30 minutes of waking up and 23% within 5 minutes of waking up.

65% of all Simcoe Muskoka smokers considered themselves to be very addicted and 50% reported they would find it very hard to quit.

Table 2 shows past use of various the quit aids and perceived helpfulness of the quit aids.

Quit Aids Simcoe Muskoka smokers report they would use

We asked participants if they would be interested in participating in certain programs, or taking some actions on quitting smoking. Table 3 shows participants' responses to their willingness to participate in various services.

Action	Willingness to participate (%)
At least somewhat likely to ask doctor for advice	66
Wants to participate in a smoker's registry	49
At least somewhat likely to ask a pharmacist for advice	40
Willing to participate in counselling (asked for those who had never participated in counselling before)	38
At least somewhat likely to ask a nurse for advice	24
At least somewhat likely to ask a dentist for advice	10

Almost half of Simcoe Muskoka smokers reported that they were interested in participating in a smokers' registry that would provide them with the following benefits:

- Ongoing contact with smoking cessation professionals .
- The latest information about smoking cessation services and products.
- Information on what is the most appropriate service/product for the smoker to use in order to quit smoking.
- Information about special studies for which they might be eligible.



GAPS IN SIMCOE MUSKOKA'S CESSATION SYSTEM

1. Access to counseling services

- 38% of smokers who have never participated in counseling to help them quit or reduce their smoking stated they would be willing to attend counseling sessions.
- 53% thought that counseling programs would make quitting easier.
- 67% did not know how much counseling programs cost.
- 30% thought that counseling programs were hard to get and 35% did not know if they were hard to get.

2. Access to NRT

- The price of stop smoking medications is an obstacle for many participants: 54% of Simcoe Muskoka smokers thought that stop smoking medications cost too much; 58% believed that stop medications would make their quit attempt easier.

3. Voluntary smokers' registry

- 49% report being interested in participating in a voluntary smokers' registry.

4. Hospital-based cessation interventions

- 67% of Simcoe Muskoka smokers had been hospitalized. Of these, only 24% were advised by hospital staff to reduce or quit smoking.

5. Self help materials

- Only 19% of Simcoe Muskoka smokers had used self help materials; however 68% of those who had used self help materials thought that they were at least somewhat helpful.

6. Focusing more on the importance that social ties might have on quit attempts

- 48% of Simcoe Muskoka smokers had made a deal with a friend or family to quit or reduce their smoking and 56% of them found it at least somewhat helpful.



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The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) is an Ontario-based research network that is recognized as a Canadian leader in tobacco control research, monitoring and evaluation, teaching and training and as a respected source of science based information on tobacco control.