

THE ONTARIO UNITÉ TOBACCO DE RECHERCHE RESEARCH SUR LE TABAC UNIT DE L'ONTARIO

EVALUATION

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OTRU SURVEY TRACKS SMOKING AND QUITTING BEHAVIORS OF YOUNG MEN

STUDY BACKGROUND

A key goal of tobacco control is to encourage young adult smokers to quit, since quitting at an early age reduces the health risks associated with smoking. The purpose of our current evaluation study is to assess the extent to which Ontario's smoking cessation system meets the needs of young male smokers who are 19-29 years old. Preliminary findings are presented in a series of newsletters. Newsletter 1 focused on the reach of existing cessation services, while Newsletter 2 summarized preliminary information provided through key informant interviews.

In this newsletter we present an overview of findings from the Ontario Tobacco Survey (OTS), a provincial longitudinal survey of smokers and a cross-sectional survey of non-smokers. The survey includes questions about tobacco use, nicotine dependence, awareness of quit aids, use of quit aids, and attitudes toward stop smoking medications.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Our OTS study sample was made up of 507 young male smokers (19-29 years old) who were interviewed between July 2005 and July 2007. For comparison purposes we analyzed the data of 1957 older male smokers (30-69 years old), and 516 young female smokers (19-29 years old). Study data were weighted to reflect the Ontario adult population. To understand how well smoking cessation services are serving the needs of young male smokers we also ran a longitudinal analysis with 162 of young male smokers who had been followed for 12 months. We compared this group with older male smokers (335 males 30-49 year old, and 208 males 50-69 year old), and 138 young female smokers (19-29 years old) who were followed for 12 months. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of our sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Current Smokers, Ontario Tobacco Survey, 2005-2007

	19–29 year old males (%)	30-49 year old males (%)	50–69 year old males (%)	19–29 year old females (%)
Education				
Less than secondary school	12	13	28*	12 †
Secondary school diploma	44	30*	28*	30*
Some college	11 †	10	9†	16†
College or university degree	34	48*	35	43
Marital status	•	•		•
Married	24	69*	73*	59*
Not Married	76	31*	28*	41*
Region	^	<u>`</u>	•	
Rural	11	16*	21*	14
Urban	89	84*	79*	86

* Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

† Interpret with caution: subject to moderate sampling variability Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

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SMOKING BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG MALE SMOKERS

When we compared the smoking behaviour of young male smokers age 19-29 to older smokers we found that:

1. Male smokers 19-29 years old are significantly less likely to be daily smokers than male smokers 50-69 years old (78% vs. 92%; p<0.05) (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Proportion of Daily Smokers

* Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

2. Young male smokers (19-29 years old) smoke fewer cigarettes per day than older male smokers in either older age category (Mean number of cigarettes smoked per day, on the days that participants smoked was 13 for 19-29 year olds, vs. 16 for male smokers 30-49 years old and 20 for male smokers 50-69 years old , p<0.001) (Figure 2).



Nicotine Dependence

We used the Heaviness of Smoking Index (HSI) to measure dependence. 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.

Male daily smokers 19-29 years old are significantly:

- Less likely to be heavily addicted (HSI score=5,6) than male daily smokers 50-69 years old (8% vs. 20%, p<0.05)
- Less likely to smoke their first cigarette in the first 30 minutes after waking than older male smokers (19-29 year olds=48%; 30-49 year olds=60%; 50-69 year olds=71%, p<0.05)
- Less likely to report that it would be (very) hard to quit (19-29 year olds=29%; 30-49 year olds=44%; 50-69 year olds=64%, p<0.05)

Quit Intentions and Past Quit Attempts

- 17% of young male smokers had intentions to quit in the next 30 days and 45% had intentions to quit in the next 6 months. This is not significantly different from the reported intentions of 30-49 year old male smokers (13% in the next 30 days and 37% in the next 6 months respectively) or those of 50-69 year old males (17% and 38% respectively)
- Similarly there are no significant differences in the intentions to quit smoking in the next 30 days between young men and women smokers (17% vs. 15%) or in the next 6 months (27% vs. 30%)
- 81% of young male smokers believed that they would benefit "Quite a bit or a lot" from quitting. This was not significantly different from male smokers 30 years or older (75%) or females 19-29 years old (82%)

Quit Aids

When 19 -29 year old male smokers were asked to name five aids or resources to help people quit smoking, the most common quit aids mentioned were nicotine replacement therapies like the patch and gum (see Table 2).

While there was usually no significant difference between the quit aids male young smokers and older smokers mentioned, it is interesting to note that young male smokers were significantly more likely to mention "family and friends" as an aid or resource that help people quit smoking than older smokers (11% vs. 6%; OR=2.03 (95% Cl=1.13-3.64).

^{*} Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

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counselor, Ontario Smokers' Helpline, other quit programs, and/or health professional advice), or non evidence-based therapy (defined as hypnosis/ acupuncture/laser therapy, self-help booklet/video/ website/chat group). These results should be interpreted with caution since older males are bound to have higher prevalence

Table 2: Five Most Common Quit Aids Mentioned

Quit Aid	Male smokers 19-29 (%)	Male smokers 30+ (%)	Female smokers 19-29 (%)
Nicotine patch	51	55	55
Nicotine gum	50	50	50
Non NRT pharmacotherapy	13	27*	22*
Laser therapy, hypnosis or acupuncture	11 [†]	22*	15 [†]
Family and friends	11 [†]	6*†	6†

* Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

[†] Interpret with caution: subject to moderate sampling variability

Past use of quit aids

Compared to male smokers 30 years or older, young male smokers (19-29 years old) were significantly less likely to have ever used smoking cessation services or received advice from a health care professional.



Figure 3: Lifetime Use of Smoking Cessation Services Among Males

* Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

[†] Interpret with caution: subject to moderate sampling variability

Figure 3 shows the proportion of participants who have ever used an evidence-based therapy (defined here as use of NRT, group counseling/group support program, specialized addiction for ever use due to increase in age.

Young male smokers were significantly less likely to have used an evidence-based therapy (defined as use of NRT, behavioral therapy, and health professional advice) 6 months prior to their interview than older male smokers (OR=2.23, 95% Cl=1.4-3.57) (Figure 4).





* Significantly different than young males (p<0.05)

Very few young male smokers, approximately 1%, had ever used a telephone helpline, and there was no significant difference between young male smokers and smokers age 30+





LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

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Among those who intended to quit within six months, there was a larger reduction in the number of cigarettes smoked per day (CPD) for young male smokers compared to older males (3 fewer cigarettes compared to 30-49 year olds males; 7 fewer cigarettes compared to 50-69 year old males, p<0.05). It is important to note that the type of quit aid participants used in the past 6 months was not a significant predictor of the reduction in the number of cigarettes per day among the young male smokers.

Among those who intended to quit within six months, HSI scores decreased for all age and gender groups. The decrease was greatest for young female smokers. HSI decrease for young males was greater than for the two older male age groups (p<0.001). Once again, the type of quit aid used in the past 6 months was not a significant predictor in rate of change of HSI score among the young male smokers.



Over the year, there was no significant difference in the number of quit attempts, quit intentions, and successful quits between the young male smokers and older male smokers.

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RESEARCH TEAM

- Robert Schwartz: Director of Evaluation and Monitoring
- Nadia Minian: Scientist
- Anne Philipneri, Research Officer
- Emily Di Sante: Research Assistant
- Michelle Poirier: Outreach Worker
- Anxhela Paparizo: Outreach Worker
- Mathew Aaron: Outreach Worker

Newsletter production: Marilyn Pope and Sonja Johnston

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Nadia Minian Ontario Tobacco Research Unit c/o Dalla Lana School of Public Health University of Toronto 155 College Street, Unit 530 Toronto, ON M5T 3M7 Telephone: 416.978.8137

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.