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Coverage
Great Britain
Theme
Health and Care

Smoking related behaviour and attitudes 2002

Eighty-eight per cent of people want restrictions on smoking in restaurants, according to a report* published today by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Eighty-six per cent thought there should be restrictions on smoking at work, 87 per cent in other public places such as banks and post offices while 54 per cent thought it should be restricted in pubs.

The report presents the results of a survey on smoking behaviour and attitudes carried out in 2002. It is the latest in a series carried out as part of the ONS Omnibus survey on behalf of the Department of Health. The surveys were designed to explore views on passive smoking, smoking restrictions and giving up smoking.

Other key findings include:

Giving up smoking

- Seventy per cent of current smokers said they would like to give up smoking (compared with 72 per cent in 2001, 71 per cent in 2000 and 72 per cent in 1999).
- Nearly nine out of ten smokers who wanted to give up mentioned at least one health-related reason. For example, 68 per cent said they wanted to stop smoking because it would be better for their health. A further 28 per cent said they wanted to give up because they wanted to save money or considered smoking a waste of money.

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- Fifty-one per cent of smokers said they intended to give up smoking within the next twelve months (the same as in 2001 but higher than 2000 (48 per cent). These smokers tended to be younger, light smokers, smokers of packeted cigarettes and aware of the effect of passive smoking.
- A third (34 per cent) of smokers who had given up for more than a day in the past year, said they had started again because they found life too stressful. Heavy smokers were nearly twice as likely to say that they found life too stressful (48 per cent of those who smoke 20 and over a day compared with 26 per cent of those who smoked fewer than 10).
- Similar reasons were given for not trying to stop or for not succeeding in stopping. Nearly three-tenths (29 per cent) of smokers who want to give up smoking but have not tried or have not succeeded for more than one day said that they found life too stressful, and a further 29 per cent said that they had a lack of commitment to quitting.

Seeking advice

- Overall, 36 per cent of current smokers and 55 per cent of those who had given up smoking in the past year had sought some kind of help or advice for stopping smoking. This was similar to the 2001 and 2000 figures for current smokers (38 and 37 per cent respectively) but lower than in 1999 when 44 per cent of smokers said they had sought some help or advice.

Knowledge and views about passive smoking

- People had a high level of knowledge about the effect of passive smoking. Ninety per cent of respondents thought that a child's risk of getting chest infections was increased by passive smoking and over 80 per cent thought that passive smoking would increase a non-smoking adult's risk of lung cancer, bronchitis and asthma.

Non-smokers' attitudes towards people smoking near them

- Fifty-five per cent of non-smokers said they would mind if other people smoked near them, very similar to the figures found in previous years.

Smokers' behaviour in the company of non-smokers

- Sixty-six per cent of smokers said they do not smoke at all when they are in a room with a child (63 per cent in 2001) and 21 per cent said they would smoke fewer cigarettes in the presence of a child (26 per cent in 2001).
- Smokers said they would modify their smoking in the company of adult non-smokers - 52 per cent would not smoke at all and 30 per cent would smoke fewer cigarettes. This was similar to the percentages found in 2001 (48 per cent and 34 per cent respectively).

Views on smoking restrictions

- Fifty per cent of people who were in work said that smoking was not allowed at all on the premises where they worked, compared with 47 per cent in 2001 and 40 per cent in 1996.
- Support for smoking restrictions has been increasing since the survey began in 1996. The percentage in favour of restrictions at work rose from 81 per cent in 1996 to 86 per cent in 2002, in restaurants from 85 per cent to 88 per cent, in pubs from 48 per cent to 54 per cent and in other public places from 82 per cent to 87 per cent.
- Forty-three per cent of people considered whether or not a place had a non-smoking area was an important factor when deciding whether to go for a meal and 19 per cent would consider this when choosing where to go for a drink.

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey carried out by the ONS each month on behalf of a range of government departments and other public and non-profit making bodies.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
3. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2003.