

Cessation assistance reported by smokers in 15 countries participating in the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Surveys

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Abstract

Aims To describe some of the variability across the world in levels of quit smoking attempts and use of various forms of cessation support.

Design Use of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project surveys of smokers, using the 2007 survey wave (or later, where necessary).

Settings Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay and United States.

Participants Samples of smokers from 15 countries.

Measurements Self-report on use of cessation aids and on visits to health professionals and provision of cessation advice during the visits.

Findings Prevalence of quit attempts in the last year varied from less than 20% to more than 50% across countries. Similarly, smokers varied greatly in reporting visiting health professionals in the last year (<20% to over 70%), and among those who did, provision of advice to quit also varied greatly. There was also marked variability in the levels and types of help reported. Use of medication was generally more common than use of behavioural support, except where medications are not readily available.

Conclusions There is wide variation across countries in rates of attempts to stop smoking and use of assistance with higher overall use of medication than behavioural support. There is also wide variation in the provision of brief advice to stop by health professionals.

Keywords Country differences, quitting activity, quitting aids, quitting medications, smoking cessation, survey.

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