

Quitting intentions and behaviour of smokers by ethnicity, deprivation and financial stress

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Aim

To determine how smokers' quitting intentions and behaviour vary by ethnicity, deprivation and financial stress.



Methods



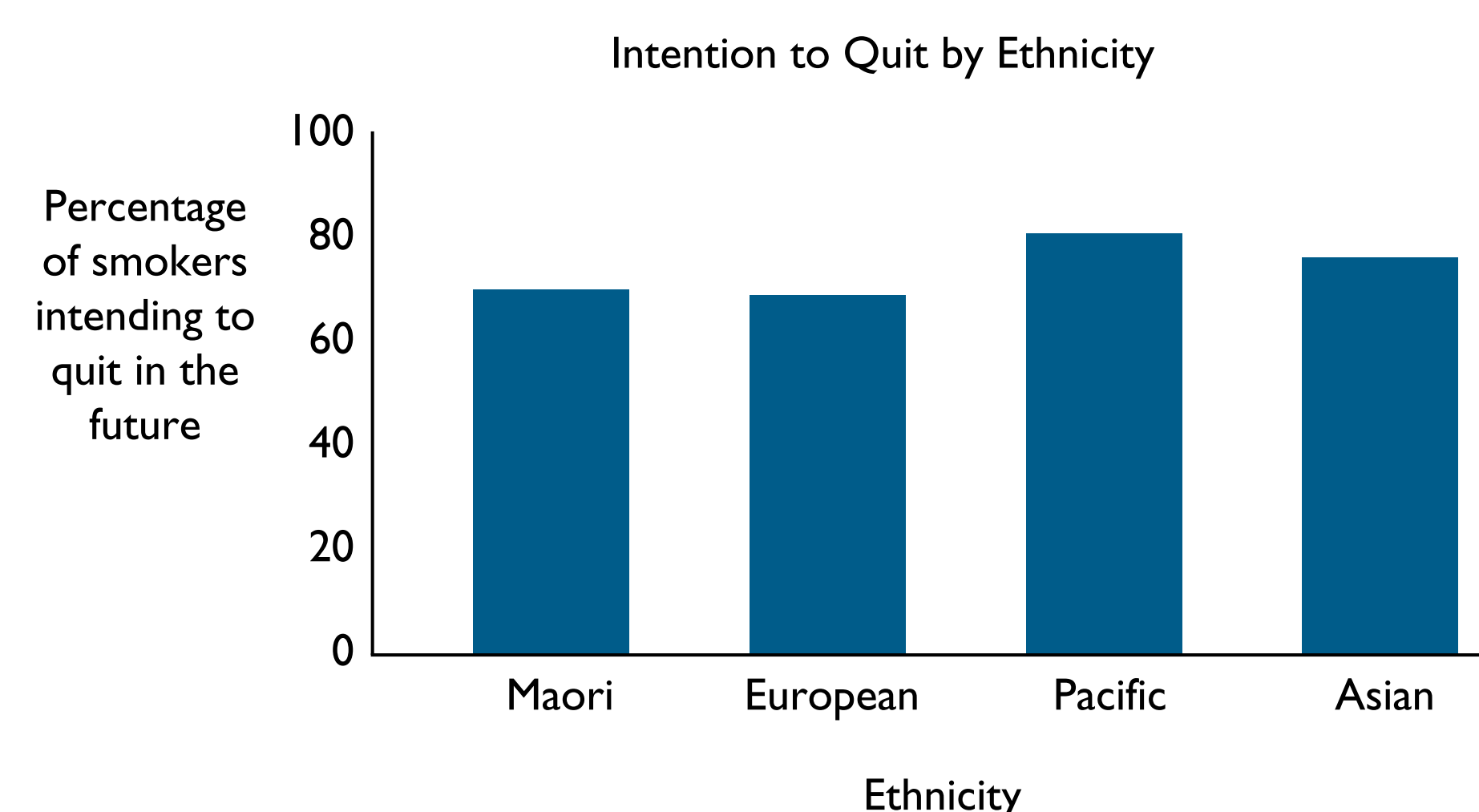
Subjects were participants in the first wave of the New Zealand (NZ) arm of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Survey (ITC Project). The NZ arm of the ITC Project uses as its sampling frame the NZ Health Survey, a national sample with boosted

sampling of Māori (indigenous New Zealanders), and New Zealanders of Pacific Islands and Asian ethnic origin.

In Wave One, 1376 smokers aged ≥ 18 years took part in telephone interviews between March 2007 to February 2008. Results were weighted to reflect the national population of smokers and the complex sample design. From this sample we surveyed adult smokers using standard ITC Project procedures. Descriptive analyses were undertaken using weights to make the sample representative of all New Zealand smokers. Further details on the survey methods are available elsewhere (Methods Report: <http://www.wnmeds.ac.nz/itcproject.html>).

Results

Ethnicity



Deprivation

Quitting intention did not vary significantly by level of deprivation (63.1% in the least deprived quintile and 69.3% in the most deprived quintile intended to quit in the future).

Similarly, past quit attempts did not vary by ethnicity or deprivation (58.3% overall had ever made a quit attempt).

Smoking-induced deprivation (i.e. spending money on cigarettes that you knew would be better spent on household essentials like food) was associated with quitting intention (OR=1.71, 95%CI=1.12–2.62).

Financial Stress

Financial stress (i.e. being unable to pay important bills on time) was significantly associated with both quitting intention (OR=2.65, 95%CI=1.25–5.59) and past quit attempts (OR=1.83, 95%CI=1.04–3.22).

Note: Roll-Your-Own Smokers

Smokers of roll-your-own tobacco (who comprise about 40% of all NZ smokers) had similar quitting intentions and past quit attempts to smokers of factory-made cigarettes.



Conclusions

A majority of New Zealand smokers express an intention to quit and have made past quit attempts.

These did not vary significantly by ethnicity or by deprivation. However, financial stress was associated with higher quitting intention and the number of quitting attempts. This group should therefore be prioritised for additional quitting support (beyond the free Quitline and subsidised NRT available in NZ) such as more intensive mass media campaigns promoting Quitline.

Further research should explore the barriers to quitting in this group and how these can be overcome.



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ITC Information

<http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~itc/>
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