

Tobacco Use

AMONG BC YOUTH

Survey Questions on Smoking

- All three Adolescent Health Surveys in 1992, 1998 and 2003 asked high school students: “Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?”
 - o The answers showed that cigarette smoking among adolescents declined between 1992 and 2003, with a dramatic 22% decrease between 1998 and 2003.
 - o This decrease in prevalence is a very positive change, because smoking is highly addictive and increases risk for cancer, heart disease, chronic lung disease and other health problems.
- In the 1998 and 2003 surveys, students’ smoking status was based on whether they had ever smoked a whole cigarette and their responses to three questions:
 - o During your life, have you smoked at least 100 or more cigarettes?
 - o At the present time, do you smoke cigarettes every day, occasionally or not at all?
 - o During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?

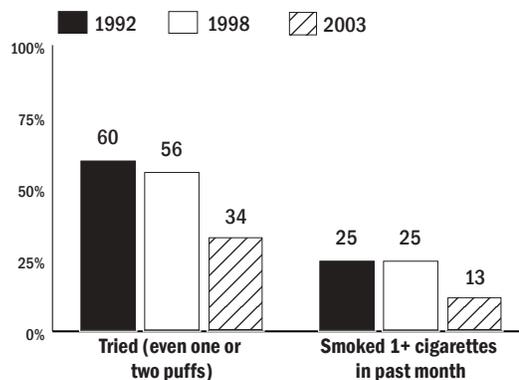
(Note: Not all these questions were included in 1992, limiting the comparisons that can be made with the other two surveys.)

This fact sheet is one of a series on various health issues among BC youth, and may be copied for use as a handout. Data for the fact sheets were collected in the 2003 Adolescent Health Survey III, a 140-question survey completed by over 30,500 students in grades seven to twelve, in schools throughout BC. In all, 45 of BC’s 59 school districts agreed to take part in the survey. The first Adolescent Health Survey was conducted in 1992, and the second in 1998. In total, more than 72,400 BC students filled out the three surveys over a ten-year period.

The Adolescent Health Surveys were conducted by the McCreary Centre Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of BC youth through research, information sharing, and community-based projects that address the unmet health needs of young people.

- Students were divided into four groups based on their answers: non-smokers, experimental smokers, current smokers and former smokers.
 - o **Non-smokers** have never smoked a whole cigarette.
 - o **Experimental smokers** have smoked one cigarette, but less than 100 in their lifetime.
 - o **Current smokers** have smoked 100 or more cigarettes in their lifetime, were smoking every day or occasionally at the time of the survey, and smoked on one or more days in the past month.
 - o **Former smokers** have smoked 100 or more cigarettes in their lifetime, but were not smoking currently, or in the month before the survey.
- Cigarette smoking for AHS II and III was defined to be as consistent as possible with other health surveys and surveillance studies in Canada (Mills, Stephens and Wilkins, 1994).

Trends in Smoking



Smoking Prevalence

- The 2003 survey results were encouraging: 73% of students were non-smokers, and only 7% of all students were current smokers.
- Almost a fifth of youth (19%) was experimental smokers.
- Male students were more likely than females to be non-smokers (76% compared to 71%), and were also less likely to be current smokers (6% versus 7%).
- The percentage of non-smokers decreases as students get older: 86% of students 14 and younger were non-smokers, compared to 69% of students aged 15 to 16, and 57% of students 17 and older.
- The majority of current smokers was trying to quit: 71% tried to quit smoking once or more in the past six months, the same number as in the 1998 survey.

First Cigarette

- 22% of current smokers started smoking at 10 or younger, 27% started at 11 or 12, 35% were 13 to 14 years old, and 17% were over 14 when they started smoking.
- Of experimental smokers, 18% were 10 or younger when they smoked their first cigarette, 24% were 11 to 12 years old, 35% were 13 to 14 years old, and 23% were over 14.

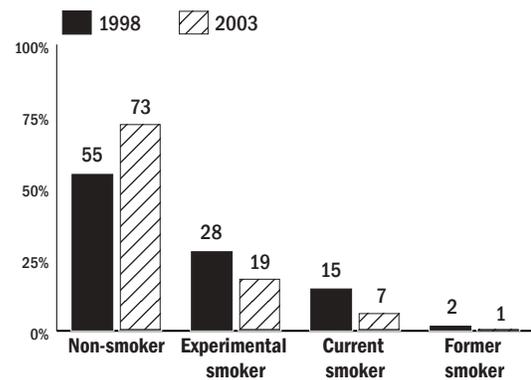
Geography

- The prevalence of cigarette smoking varied across the province:
 - The Greater Vancouver and Capital regions had the lowest rates of current smokers at 6%.
 - The Kootenays (10%) and Interior (9%) regions had the highest rates of current smokers.

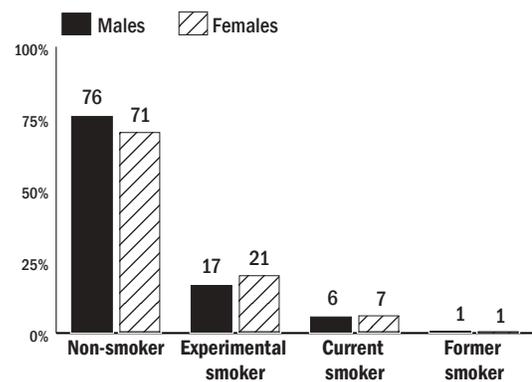
Non-Smokers by Age (2003)

14 years and younger	86%
15-16 years	69%
17+ years	57%

Trends in Smoking Behaviour



Gender Differences in Smoking Behaviour (2003)



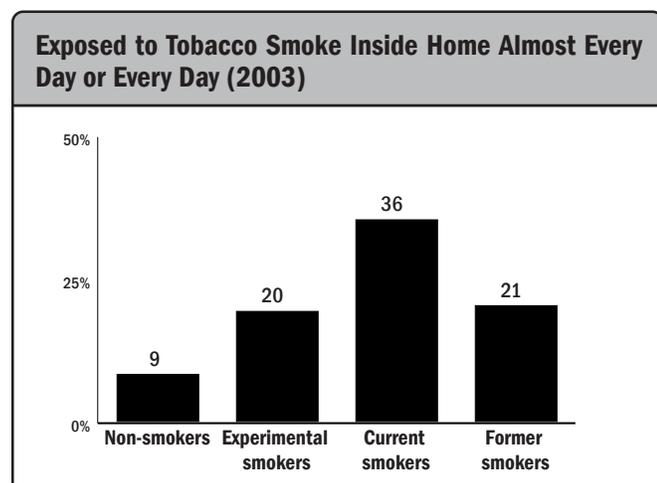
Current Smokers by Region (2003)

Greater Vancouver	6%
Capital	6%
Interior	9%
Kootenays	10%
Upper Island	7%
Northwest	7%
Northeast	8%

Tobacco Sources

- Adolescents were asked where they usually obtain their cigarettes, and:
 - o Friends gave cigarettes to the majority of current smokers (59%).
 - o 58% purchased cigarettes from a convenience store.
 - o 17% said their parents gave them cigarettes.
 - o 16% sneak cigarettes from their parents.

Where Youth Usually Obtain Cigarettes (of current smokers) (2003)	
Given by friends	59%
Purchase from convenience store	58%
Purchase from friends	46%
Purchase from gas station	43%
Purchase from supermarket	23%
Given by parents	17%
Purchase from smoke shop	17%
Sneak them from parents	16%
Purchase from pub/lounge	13%
Purchase from drug store	11%
Purchase from restaurant	5%
Purchase from hotel/motel	3%



Passive Smoke Exposure

- In 2003, 12% of youth who are non-smokers, experimental smokers or former smokers were exposed to second hand cigarette smoke in their home almost every day or every day.
- This figure has decreased from 19% in the 1998 survey.
- Exposure to second hand smoke can cause negative health effects such as asthma and respiratory infections.

Risk Factors

- Cigarette smoking is associated with other risky behaviours including substance use. Adolescents who are current smokers are more likely than non-smokers to frequently use:
 - o Marijuana
 - o Alcohol
 - o Other illegal drugs

Risk Factors Among Non-Smokers and Current Smokers (2003)		
	Non-smokers	Current smokers
Consumed alcohol 10+ days in past month	2%	23%
Binge drinking in past month	14%	80%
Used marijuana 10+ times in past month	2%	45%
Used other drugs [†] 3+ times in life	4%	52%

[†]=Other drugs include cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, mushrooms, hallucinogens, inhalants, injections, steroids, and prescription drugs

Protective Factors

- Current smokers were less connected to their families and schools, and were less likely to have educational aspirations than non smokers:
 - o 59% of current smokers had goals for post-secondary education, compared to 77% of non-smokers.
 - o Current smokers had a school connectedness score of .57, while non-smokers had a score of .69.
 - o The connectedness score is between zero and one. A higher score is associated with a high degree of connection while a lower score is associated with less connection. Lower scores are generally associated with greater risk taking, while strong connections with family, school and the community promote healthy youth development.
 - o In addition, current smokers had a family connectedness score of .67, compared to a score of .81 for non-smokers.

BC Compared to Canada

- Significantly fewer students smoke in BC than in the rest of the country.

References

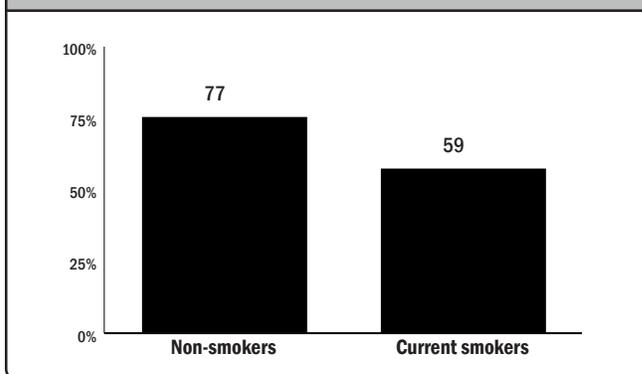
1. Mills C, Stephens T. and Wilkins K (1994), *Summary Report on the Workshop on Data for Monitoring Tobacco Use*.
2. Chronic Diseases in Canada, 15:105-110.
3. Boyce, W., Doherty, M., Fortin, C. and MacKinnon, D. (2003) *Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study: Factors Influencing Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours*. Toronto, ON: Council of Minister of Education, Canada.

Connectedness Among Non-Smokers and Current Smokers (2003)

	Non-smokers	Current smokers
Average Family Connectedness Score [†]	0.81	0.67
Average School Connectedness Score [†]	0.69	0.57

[†]=Based on a zero to one scale where one refers to high family and school connectedness

Plan to Complete Post-Secondary Education Among Non-Smokers and Current Smokers (2003)



Ever Tried Smoking (2003)

	BC [†]	Canada [‡]
Grade 7		
Males	12%	28%
Females	14%	23%
Grade 9		
Males	26%	47%
Females	35%	51%
Grade 11		
Males	42%	64%
Females	50%	65%

[†]=Adolescent Health Survey - British Columbia, Canada 2003.
[‡]=Canadian youth, sexual health and HIV/AIDS study: Factors influencing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.