

# POS3-169 CONTINUOUS DISPARITIES AMONG YOUNG STUDENT SMOKERS IN NEW ZEALAND



HĀPAI TE HAUORA  
MĀORI PUBLIC HEALTH

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## INTRODUCTIONS

Persistent disparities have remained even though there has been continuous decline in smoking amongst 14-15 year olds in New Zealand. This study explores the decline in smoking over time for ethnic groups, and the extent of the disparities amongst indigenous Māori and Pacific young smokers as observed in New Zealand (NZ).

## METHODS

We used the ASH Year 10 Snapshot data from 2000 - 2015, an annual cross-sectional tobacco-use survey that involves between 21,000 – 33,000 Year 10 student respondents, aged 14 and 15 years old.

To measure smoking frequency, students were asked: How often do you smoke now? Options for response were: 'I have never smoked/I am not a smoker now', 'At least once a day', 'At least once a week', 'At least once a month', or 'Less often than once a month'.

## RESULTS

Daily smoking overall fell from 15.2% in 2000 to 2.5% in 2015. Māori daily smoking has fallen from 31.1% in 2000 to 6.0% in 2015, yet Māori students are still more than 4 times more likely to smoke daily compared to NZ European or Asian students. Daily smoking among Pacific students fell from 18.1% in 2000 to 3.5% in 2015, but reduction rates for Pacific slowed considerably between 2013-2015.

Regular smoking dropped from 26.2% to 3.8% for NZ European, 42.9% to 11.2% for Māori, 28.2% to 7.04% for Pacific and 12% to 1.4% from 2000 to 2015 for each group.

Māori regular smoking is 3-4 times higher compared to NZ European and 8 times higher compared to Asian. Never smokers rose from 33.6% for NZ European in 2000 to 84.6% in 2015, 16.2% to 59.2% for Māori, 35.2% to 70.5% for Pacific and 62.4% to 91.7% for Asian respectively.

The 2015 ASH Snapshot Survey results show a continued decline in regular smoking rates among all students (refer to Figure 1).

## DISCUSSION

In previous years, there has been a reasonable reduction in daily and regular smoking among Māori and Pacific students.

However this overall trend is starting to slow, with daily and regular smoking among Māori and Pacific students falling only slightly in 2015 compared to the previous year.

Consequently ethnic disparities in smoking are still significant. Māori students are more than four times more likely to be daily smokers and more than three times more likely to be regular smokers than European or Asian students

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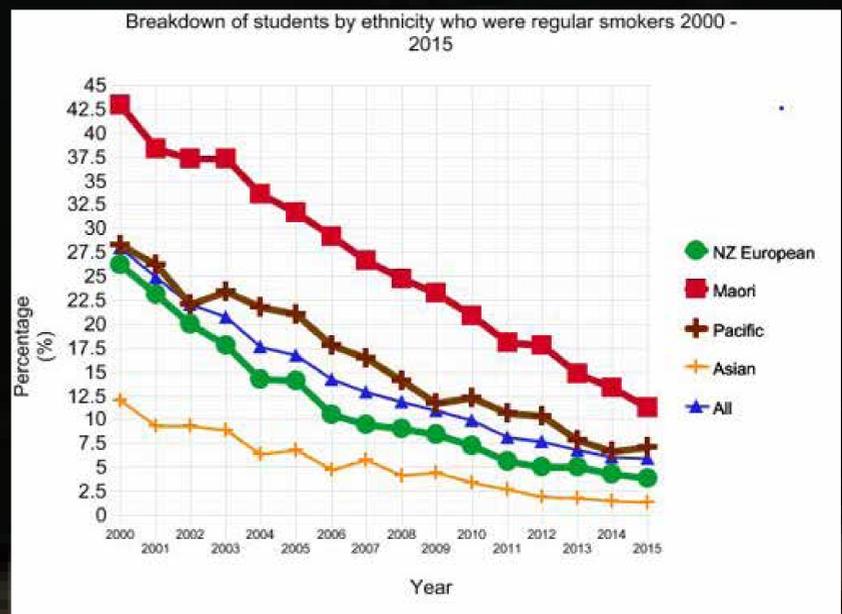
## BACKGROUND

New Zealand's government and tobacco control sector has a goal to reduce smoking prevalence and tobacco availability to minimal levels by 2025. The country's Smokefree 2025 goal emerged from Māori advocacy for Kaupapa Tupeka Kore and the Māori Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the tobacco industry. The Government endorsed the Smokefree 2025 goal in 2011.

Daily smokers are those students who report smoking at least once a day. Regular smokers include daily smokers along with students who reported smoking weekly or monthly.

Prioritised ethnicity was used to allocate students who identify with more than one ethnic group into a single category for analysis. Students who ticked more than one category were prioritised as Māori, Pacific, Asian, Other, and then NZ European.

Female students still have higher daily and regular smoking rates than male students, although the gap has continued to close in previous years. Māori smoking still remains disproportionately high with daily and regular smoking rates among Māori boys and girls decreasing slightly in 2015 compared to 2014.



## CONCLUSION

Ethnic disparities in smoking are still significant. Clearer solutions are needed to address Māori and Pacific youth smoking rates that remain higher than overall youth smoking rates in NZ.

The consistency in these patterns of rapidly declining adolescent smoking suggest more research is needed to explore the causes for disparity particularly for Māori and Pacific.

Exploring explanatory factors to assess the reduction in smoking amongst indigenous or disparity groups is important in other populations and jurisdictions.

The findings may inform efforts to monitor and track smoking amongst other indigenous and minority population groups to assist countries at earlier stages of data analysis of the tobacco epidemic and not to replicate the lack of focus on effective interventions to reduce disparities amongst smokers

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