

## Smoking and risk behaviours in Australia, 2007-08

Tobacco smoking is one of the more prominent lifestyle behaviours contributing to increased health risks in Australia, with 19% of adults smoking daily. Where people have a cluster of risk behaviours, such as a combination of excessive alcohol intake, smoking and low exercise, their risk of ill-health increases.

### Overweight & obesity

People who were ex-smokers were more likely to be overweight or obese than people who currently smoked or had never smoked. This was particularly the case for men.

**Overweight and obesity rates by smoker status and sex, 2007-08**

Smoker status	Males	Females	Persons
Current daily smoker	60%	57%	59%
Irregular smoker	59%	49%	55%
Ex-smoker	76%	59%	69%
Never smoked	65%	52%	57%

Source: National Health Survey, 2007-08

### Exercise

- ◆ Around half of men who were daily smokers led a sedentary lifestyle, doing very little or no exercise (53% compared with 36% of ex-smokers and 34% of men who had never smoked).
- ◆ Women who were daily smokers also led the most sedentary lives, with 52% doing very little or no exercise compared with 34% of ex-smokers and 40% of women who had never smoked.

### Nutrition

- ◆ While very few people consumed the recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables, current daily smokers were even less likely to do so, at 2% compared

### About the information...

The article draws on data from the 2007-08 ABS National Health Survey (NHS) and the 2010 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) General Record of Incidence of Mortality (GRIM) Books. The analysis is for people aged 18 years and over, unless stated otherwise.

Current smokers are those who reported smoking tobacco in the form of cigarettes, cigars or pipes at the time of interview. Current daily smokers are those who reported regularly smoking one or more cigarettes, cigars or pipes per day. An irregular smoker is someone who smokes less than once per day.

Ex-smokers are those who reported they had smoked at least 100 cigarettes, or smoked cigars or pipes at least 20 times, in their lifetime but did not currently smoke.

People who had 'ever smoked' are those who were either current or ex-smokers.

with 8% of ex-smokers and 7% of people who had never smoked.

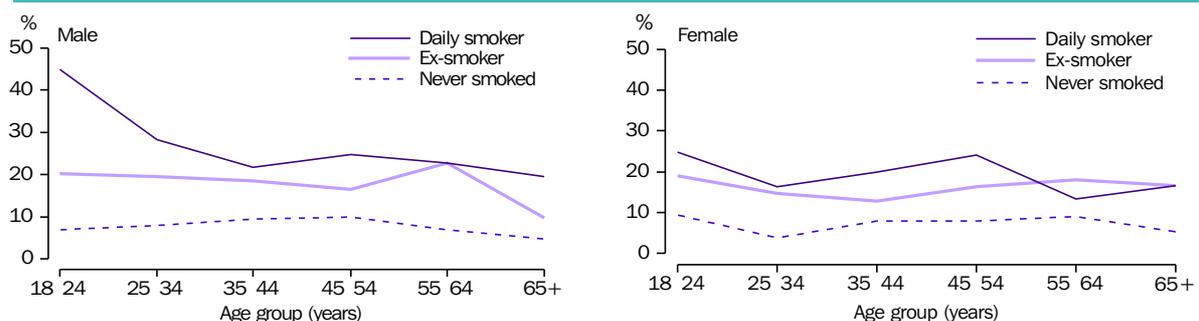
### Alcohol

- ◆ In general, daily smokers were more than three times as likely to drink at risky or high risk levels (24%) as people who had never smoked (7%).
- ◆ Young men aged under 25 years who smoked daily were more than 6 times as likely to drink at risky or high risk levels (45%) as young men who had never smoked (7%).
- ◆ For young women of the same age this difference was less extreme but still high, with 25% of daily smokers drinking at risky or high risk levels compared with 10% of those who had never smoked.

### Passive smoking

The World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged the dangers of passive smoking, particularly for the health of children.<sup>1</sup>

**Smoker status by risky or high risk alcohol consumption**

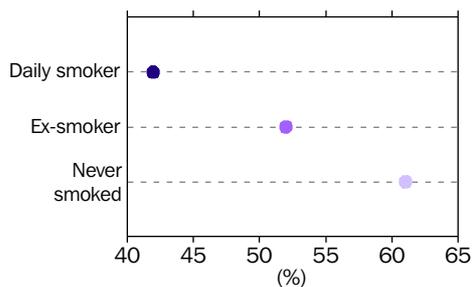


Source: ABS National Health Survey 2007-08

- ◆ In Australia, almost 1.9 million people (9%) lived in a household in which at least one person smoked indoors daily.
- ◆ More than 163,000 households where at least one person smoked indoors also had one child or more aged under 15 years living in the home.
- ◆ A higher proportion of women than men smoked indoors if there were children living in the home (29% compared with 18%).

### General health status

#### Smoker status by excellent/very good self-assessed health



Source: National Health Survey, 2007–08

### Health conditions

- ◆ People who had ever smoked were over 6 times more likely to have emphysema than people who had never smoked. Around 87% of people with emphysema had smoked at some time in their lives.
- ◆ People who had ever smoked were 1.6 times as likely to have bronchitis as those who had never smoked. Around two-thirds (63%) of people with bronchitis had smoked at some time in their lives.
- ◆ Heart, stroke and vascular disease was more prevalent in adults who had ever smoked (8%) than those who had never smoked (5%).

### Mental Health

- ◆ Current daily smokers were the most likely people to have high or very high levels of psychological distress (19% compared with 12% of all adults).
- ◆ Around 63% of people with high or very high levels of psychological distress had smoked at some time in their lives.

### Lung cancer deaths

According to WHO, the role of smoking in increasing the chance of lung cancer is one of the most widely known of tobacco's harmful effects on human health.<sup>2</sup>

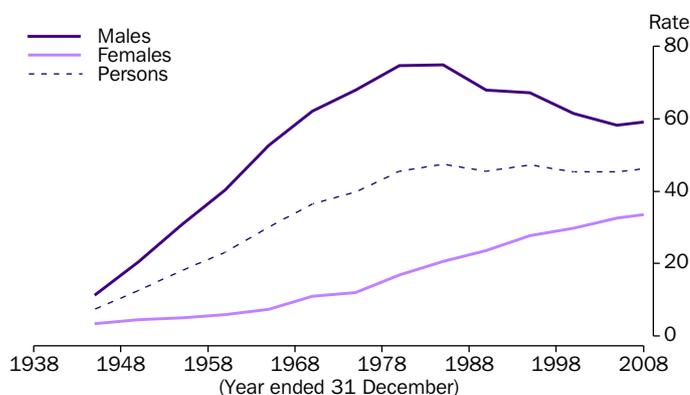
- ◆ Between 1945 and 1980, lung cancer death rates in Australia increased from 7.4 to 45.5 deaths per 100,000 people (aged 15 years and over), with rates remaining relatively stable from 1980 until 2008.
- ◆ Rates for men rose from 11.3 deaths per 100,000 in 1945 to 74.8 deaths in 1985, declining to 59.0 deaths per 100,000 in 2008 which could be a result of smoking reduction campaigns.
- ◆ Rates for women have steadily risen from 3.5 deaths per 100,000 in 1945 to 33.4 deaths per 100,000 in 2008 reflecting the continued uptake of smoking by women.

Although smoking rates have fallen over the past 20 years, there may be a lag between reduced smoking rates and lung cancer deaths because of the time it takes to develop the condition.

#### Footnotes

1. World Health Organization (WHO), Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2009. <http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/2009/en/index.html> - viewed 29/04/2010
2. WHO, Tobacco Free Initiative, <http://www.who.int/tobacco/research/cancer/en/> - viewed 1 July 2011

### Lung Cancer death rates, 1945 to 2008(a)



(a) Deaths per 100,000 persons aged 15 years and over.

Source: AIHW, General Record of Incidence of Mortality (GRIM) Books, 2010