

4 Use of tobacco

Introduction

Tobacco smoking is responsible for the greatest burden on the health of Australians compared to all other risk factors for disease (AIHW: Mathers et al. 1999). It contributes to more drug-related hospital separations and deaths than alcohol and illicit drug use combined. In recent years, the number of deaths attributed to tobacco smoking has declined slightly; however, the number of hospital separations has increased (AIHW: Miller & Draper 2001).

The proportion of Australians aged 14 years and over who smoked daily declined between 1998 and 2001, from 21.8% to 19.5%.

Australians who have ceased smoking show no significant difference in mean age of initiation than those who still smoke. Males are significantly more likely to commence smoking at a younger age (15.1 years) than females (16.3 years).

Recent smokers spent an average of \$41.89 on tobacco weekly.

Tobacco smoking status

Approximately 3.6 million Australians aged 14 years and over were smokers in 2001. Over one-quarter (26.2%) of the population were ex-smokers (Table 4.1). Other findings include:

- Under one in five (19.5%) Australians aged 14 years and over smoked daily, 1.6% smoked weekly and 2.0% smoked less often than weekly.
- Males were more likely than females to smoke daily, weekly or less often than weekly.
- Smoking rates peaked in the 20-29 years age group.

Table 4.1: Tobacco smoking status, persons aged 14 years and over, by age and sex, Australia, 2001

Smoking status	Age group						All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
(per cent)							
Males							
Daily	14.1	28.5	27.3	23.6	20.3	10.2	21.1
Weekly	2.7	3.3	2.8	1.3	1.2	0.7	2.0
Less than weekly	3.4	5.1	2.8	2.3	1.7	0.6	2.6
Ex-smokers ^(a)	4.0	12.4	21.8	33.9	44.2	53.0	29.6
Never smoked ^(b)	75.9	50.7	45.4	38.9	32.5	35.5	44.7
Females							
Daily	16.2	23.7	24.3	20.8	16.1	7.8	18.0
Weekly	2.0	2.3	1.7	1.1	0.7	0.2	1.3
Less than weekly	2.4	3.2	1.8	1.2	0.8	0.3	1.5
Ex-smokers ^(a)	4.7	17.1	25.6	29.0	26.0	26.6	22.9
Never smoked ^(b)	74.7	53.7	46.7	47.8	56.4	65.2	56.4
Persons							
Daily	15.1	26.1	25.7	22.2	18.2	8.9	19.5
Weekly	2.3	2.8	2.2	1.2	1.0	0.4	1.6
Less than weekly	2.9	4.1	2.3	1.8	1.2	0.4	2.0
Ex-smokers ^(a)	4.4	14.7	23.7	31.5	35.3	38.7	26.2
Never smoked ^(b)	75.3	52.2	46.1	43.3	44.3	51.6	50.6

(a) Smoked at least 100 cigarettes or the equivalent tobacco in their life, but reported no longer smoking.

(b) Never smoked more than 100 cigarettes or the equivalent tobacco in their life.

Type of tobacco smoked

Respondents were asked if they now smoked manufactured cigarettes, roll-your-own cigarettes, cigars or pipes:

- Manufactured cigarettes were by far the most commonly used form of tobacco (92.0%) (Table 4.2). Female smokers (95.2%) were more likely than males (89.3%) to smoke manufactured cigarettes.
- About one-quarter of smokers used roll-your-own cigarettes (26.7%). Males (32.8%) were more likely than females (19.4%) to smoke this kind of tobacco.
- Cigars and pipes were the least common type of tobacco used by smokers (13.5%). Males (20.2%) were almost four times more likely than females (5.5%) to smoke cigars or pipes.

Table 4.2: Type of tobacco smoked, smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Type	Males	Females	Persons
(per cent)			
Manufactured cigarettes	89.3	95.2	92.0
Roll-your-own cigarettes	32.8	19.4	26.7
Cigars or pipes	20.2	5.5	13.5

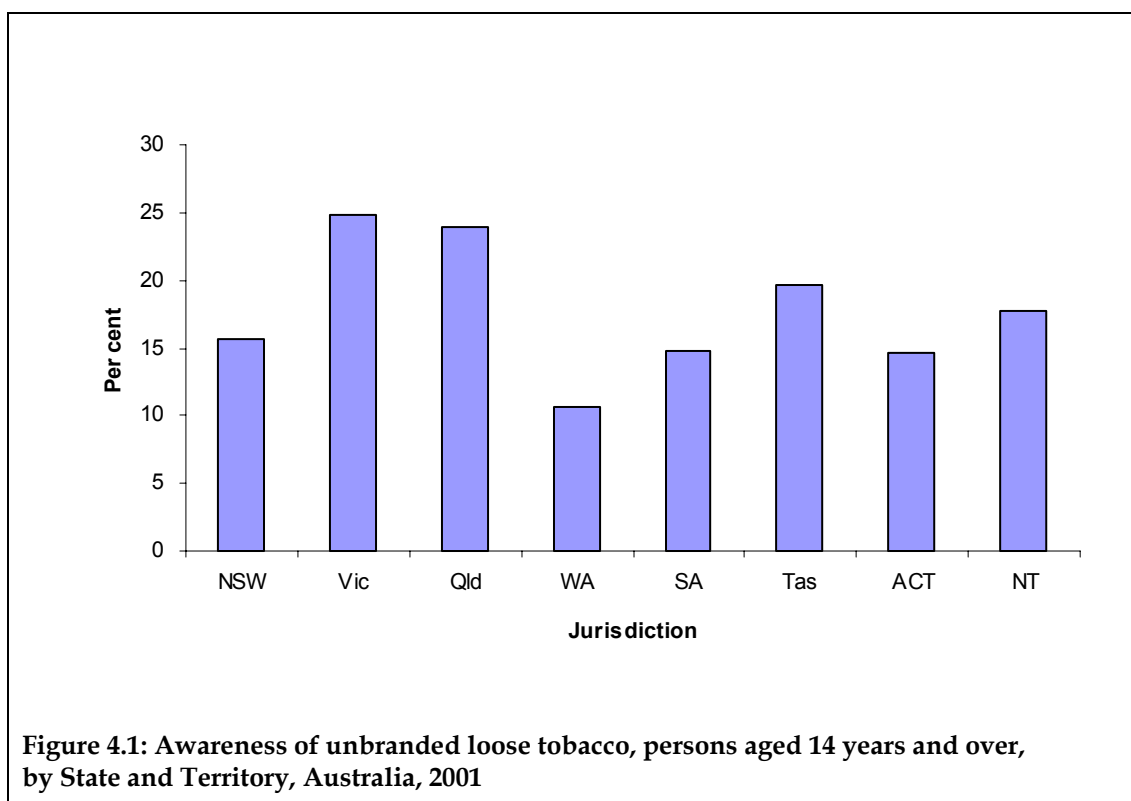
Notes

1. Base equals daily, weekly and less than weekly smokers.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Unbranded loose tobacco

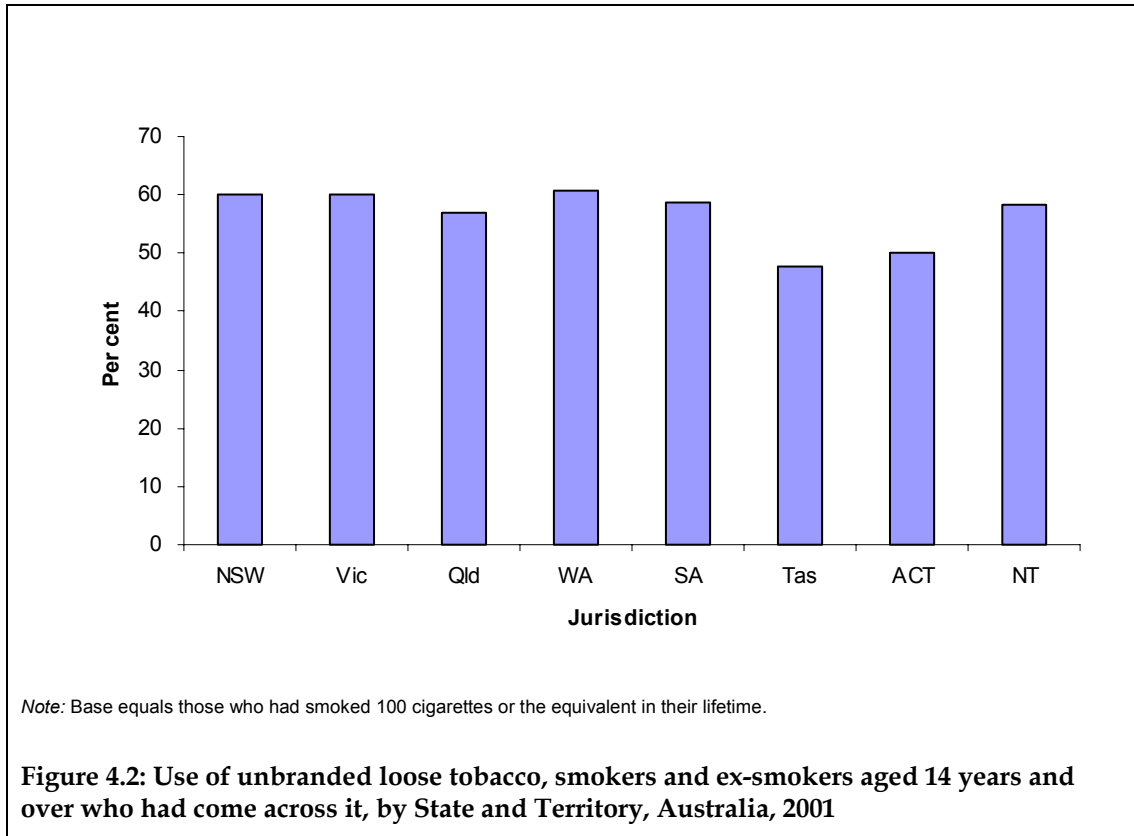
The 2001 survey included a new section on unbranded loose tobacco, otherwise known as 'chop-chop'. Almost one in five (19.0%) Australians aged 14 years and over had come across unbranded loose tobacco:

- Almost one-quarter of residents of Victoria (24.9%) and Queensland (24.0%) had come across unbranded loose tobacco (Figure 4.1).
- Western Australia was the jurisdiction with the lowest proportion of residents who had come across unbranded loose tobacco (10.6%).



The majority (58.6%) of smokers and ex-smokers who had come across unbranded loose tobacco had smoked it at least once:

- In the majority of jurisdictions, around 60% of smokers and ex-smokers who had come across unbranded loose tobacco had smoked it at least once (Figure 4.2). The proportions in the Australian Capital Territory (50.2%) and Tasmania were slightly lower (47.8%).



Changes to smoking behaviour

Smokers were asked if they had changed their smoking behaviour in the last 12 months (Table 4.3):

- The most common change to behaviour among smokers was a reduction in the amount of tobacco smoked per day (34.2%).
- Three in 10 (30.8%) smokers had tried unsuccessfully to give up smoking.
- One in five female smokers (21.6%) and fewer than one in five male smokers (17.3%) changed to lower tar or nicotine content cigarettes.

Table 4.3: Changes to smoking behaviour, recent smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Behaviour	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Given up for more than 1 month	24.6	25.1	24.8
Tried to give up unsuccessfully	30.1	31.6	30.8
Changed to lower tar or nicotine content	17.3	21.6	19.3
Tried to change to lower tar or nicotine content unsuccessfully	3.9	4.1	4.0
Reduced amount smoked daily	33.0	35.7	34.2
Tried to reduce amount smoked daily unsuccessfully	14.0	15.2	14.5
None of the above	24.2	19.4	22.0

Notes

1. Base equals those who reported smoking in the last 12 months.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Motivators for change to behaviour

Those who reported a change in their behaviour in the last 12 months (Table 4.3) were asked what motivated them to change (Table 4.4):

- The main motivator for both males and females who changed behaviour was that smoking was considered to be costing too much (54.0%).
- The second most common reason nominated was that smoking was affecting health or fitness (50.6%).
- One-third (33.8%) wanted to get fit. Males (36.7%) were more likely than females (30.5%) to nominate this factor.

Table 4.4: Factors which motivated change to smoking behaviour, smokers aged 14 years and over who reported a change in behaviour, by sex, Australia, 2001

Motivator	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Affecting health or fitness	51.5	49.5	50.6
Wanted to get fit	36.7	30.5	33.8
Advice from doctor	17.1	16.6	16.8
Family/friends asked me to quit	29.6	28.1	28.9
Anti-smoking advertisements	24.8	28.2	26.4
Health warnings on packets	19.1	18.5	18.8
Tobacco Information Line (advertised on packet)	1.0	0.7	0.8
QUIT line	3.3	4.3	3.8
Pregnant or wanting to start a family	1.1	11.3	5.9
Smoking restrictions in public areas	10.3	11.2	10.7
Smoking restrictions in the workplace	8.7	6.2	7.5
Costing too much	53.1	55.1	54.0
Worried it was affecting the health of those around me	19.5	25.2	22.2
Other	9.5	10.7	10.1

Notes

1. Base equals those who reported undertaking measures in Table 4.3.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Characteristics by smoking status

In 2001, 50.6% of the population aged 14 years and over had never smoked, 26.2% were ex-smokers and 23.2% smoked. The distribution of these groups varied with different population characteristics (Table 4.5):

- Three in five (61.5%) never married people were never smokers, compared with around half of those divorced/separated/widowed (45.0%) and married/de facto (47.0%).
- A higher proportion of people whose main language spoken at home was English smoked than those whose main language was not English.
- The proportions of smokers increased with greater socioeconomic disadvantage.

Table 4.5: Characteristics by smoking status, persons aged 14 years and over, Australia, 2001

Characteristic	Never smoked	Ex-smoker	Smoker
	(per cent)		
Education			
Without post-school qualification	53.3	22.4	24.2
With post-school qualification	48.4	29.6	22.0
Labour force status			
Currently employed	47.0	27.1	25.9
Student	74.6	7.3	18.1
Unemployed	37.6	18.2	44.3
Retired/pension/home duties	49.4	32.7	17.9
Main language spoken at home			
English	49.3	27.1	23.6
Other	68.0	14.2	17.8
Socioeconomic status			
1st quintile	48.0	26.2	25.8
2nd quintile	49.2	25.7	25.1
3rd quintile	50.0	26.3	23.7
4th quintile	50.1	26.3	23.6
5th quintile	54.9	26.7	18.4
Geography			
Urban	52.1	25.4	22.5
Rural/remote	46.7	28.3	25.0
Marital status			
Never married	61.5	10.4	28.0
Divorced/separated/widowed	45.0	28.2	26.7
Married/de facto	47.0	32.5	20.5
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	37.7	12.4	49.9
Non-Indigenous	50.8	26.4	22.8

Characteristics by mean number of cigarettes smoked per week

The mean number of cigarettes smoked per week by current smokers varied with different population characteristics (Table 4.6). As reported in *First Results* (AIHW 2002), the average number of cigarettes smoked per week by male smokers was 111.8 and 106.5 by female smokers.

- Not only does prevalence of smoking increase with socioeconomic disadvantage (Table 4.5), the average number of cigarettes smoked per week also increases with disadvantage. Smokers in the most disadvantaged quintile smoked on average 122.4 cigarettes per week, compared with 86.6 cigarettes by those in the most advantaged quintile.
- People whose main language spoken at home was a language other than English smoked on average 86.8 cigarettes per week, compared with 110.3 cigarettes per week for those whose main language spoken at home was English. The prevalence of smoking among people whose main language spoken at home was a language other than English (17.8%) was also lower than the other group (23.6%).
- When comparing employment status, students smoked the lowest average number of cigarettes per week (59.5), and people who were retired/on a pension/or doing home duties smoked the highest (130.4).
- The prevalence of smokers was slightly higher in rural/remote areas (25.0%) compared with urban areas (22.5%) and the average number of cigarettes smoked per week was also higher in rural/remote areas (116.2) compared with urban areas (106.0).
- A higher proportion of Indigenous Australians smoked compared with non-Indigenous Australians, and the average number of cigarettes smoked per week was also higher (125.4 and 108.3 respectively).

Table 4.6: Mean number of cigarettes smoked per week, current smokers aged 14 years and over, by social characteristics, Australia, 2001

Characteristics	Males	Females	Persons
		(number)	
Education			
Without post-school qualification	116.6	111.6	114.0
With post-school qualification	106.7	97.6	103.2
Labour force status			
Currently employed	111.1	98.3	106.3
Student	54.9	64.6	59.5
Unemployed	121.1	116.5	119.5
Retired/pension/home duties	137.6	127.0	130.4
Main language spoken at home			
English	112.9	107.2	110.3
Other	91.0	75.7	86.8
Socioeconomic status			
1st quintile	128.8	115.2	122.4
2nd quintile	122.0	113.6	118.1
3rd quintile	107.2	106.5	106.9
4th quintile	110.4	99.3	105.3
5th quintile	85.6	87.9	86.6
Geography			
Urban	108.5	103.0	106.0
Rural/remote	118.1	113.7	116.2
Marital status			
Never married	93.3	86.5	90.5
Divorced/separated/widowed	133.4	130.1	131.6
Married/de facto	118.8	109.8	114.8
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	132.6	119.2	125.4
Non-Indigenous	110.8	105.3	108.3

Note: Base equals daily, weekly and less than weekly smokers.