

2 Use of tobacco

Tobacco is associated with over four in every five drug-related deaths and almost three in every five drug-related hospital episodes. The Institute estimates that tobacco was associated with over 18,000 deaths in 1997 and almost 150,000 hospitalisations (AIHW 1999). The most frequently occurring tobacco-related conditions were cancers (e.g. lung, oesophageal), ischaemic heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Males are more than twice as likely as females to be hospitalised for, or to die from, tobacco-related causes.

Smoking status

In 1998 the proportion of Australians who were recent (regular and occasional) smokers was 27% (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age and sex, Australia, 1998

Smoking status	Age group						All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
	(per cent)						
	Males						
Regular ^(a)	16.3	32.5	28.4	29.1	23.2	15.5	25.1
Occasional ^(b)	8.4	8.0	3.9	1.6	2.9	1.9	4.3
Ex-smokers	27.3	28.7	40.6	44.1	53.9	60.9	42.8
Never smoked	48.1	30.8	27.1	25.1	19.9	21.7	27.8
	Females						
Regular ^(a)	15.8	30.6	24.6	22.5	14.8	9.4	20.0
Occasional ^(b)	10.1	6.6	3.8	2.6	2.8	0.4 *	3.9
Ex-smokers	29.1	31.1	40.5	36.7	43.6	36.6	36.5
Never smoked	45.0	31.7	31.2	38.3	38.8	53.7	39.6
	Persons						
Regular ^(a)	16.1	31.6	26.5	25.8	19.1	12.1	22.5
Occasional ^(b)	9.2	7.3	3.8	2.1	2.8	1.0	4.1
Ex-smokers	28.2	29.9	40.5	40.4	48.9	47.3	39.6
Never smoked	46.5	31.2	29.2	31.7	29.1	39.5	33.8

(a) Smokes daily/most days.

(b) Smokes less often than daily/most days.

Ages of smokers

In 1998 the age group which had the highest proportion of recent smokers was 20–29 years (39%), and the age group with the lowest proportion was 60 years or older (13%) (Table 2.1). The 1998 survey also showed that:

- One in four teenagers smoked in 1998, with slightly fewer than one in six (16%) being regular smokers and slightly fewer than one in ten (9%) being occasional smokers. About half (47%) of all teenagers had never smoked.

- Among the age group 20–29 years, similar proportions of males (33%) and females (31%) reported being regular smokers. Less than a third (31%) of persons in this age group had never smoked.
- From ages 30 years and older, males were less likely than females to have never smoked. Fewer than one in four males (22%) aged 60 years or older had never smoked, compared with more than half of females (54%) in this age group.

Number of cigarettes smoked

The quantities of cigarettes smoked by female smokers did not differ much from those of male smokers, although slightly more males (33%) reported that they smoked 11–20 cigarettes a day compared with females (31%) (Table 2.2). The likelihood of recent smokers smoking less than weekly or smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day was age-related (Table 2.3).

Table 2.2: Number of cigarettes: proportion of recent smokers aged 14 years and over, by smoking status and sex, Australia, 1998

Smoking status	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Recent regular			
> 20/day	27.7	28.3	28.0
11–20/day	33.4	30.6	32.1
1–10/day	23.5	24.2	23.8
Recent occasional			
31+/week	0.9	0.8 *	0.9
11–30/ week	2.5	1.1	1.9
1–10/week	4.5	6.2	5.3
Less than weekly	7.6	8.8	8.1

Note: Base equals all recent smokers.

Table 2.3: Number of cigarettes: proportion of recent smokers aged 14 years and over, by smoking status and age, Australia, 1998

Smoking status	Age group						All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
(per cent)							
Recent regular							
> 20/day	11.3	17.8	31.4	38.7	35.5	37.1	28.0
11–20/day	21.0	32.8	34.9	39.1	26.1	29.0	32.1
1–10/day	29.3	29.8	20.7	13.9	24.6	26.0	23.8
Recent occasional							
31+/week	0.5 *	0.7 *	1.0 *	1.4 *	0.3 *	0.9 *	0.9
11–30/week	4.4	1.4 *	1.2 *	2.7	1.4 *	1.1 *	1.9
1–10/week	10.4	8.1	2.9	1.2 *	6.8	3.3	5.3
Less than weekly	23.2	9.5	7.9	2.9	5.4	2.4	8.1

Note: Base equals all recent smokers.

The majority of recent smokers (60%) smoked 11 or more cigarettes a day, with more than a third of elderly smokers (37%) smoking in excess of 20 cigarettes a day. One in five (21%) teenage smokers smoked between 11 and 20 cigarettes a day.

Multiple drugs use with tobacco

The 1998 survey showed that, of all the recent smokers aged 14 years and over, nine out of ten also drank alcohol and nearly two-fifths (39%) smoked marijuana (Table 2.4). In general, among recent smokers, males were more likely to use multiple drugs than females. Furthermore, teenagers were more likely to use multiple drugs than their older counterparts (Table 2.5). Further, among those teenage recent tobacco smokers, 96% reported using alcohol recently and 76% reported using marijuana/cannabis recently.

Table 2.4: Polydrug use: proportion of recent tobacco smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Other substances recently used	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Alcohol	92.3	87.3	90.0
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(a)	7.4	7.8	7.6
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	4.7	5.0	4.8
Steroids ^(a)	0.9	0.3 *	0.6
Barbiturates ^(a)	1.0	0.5 *	0.8
Amphetamines ^(a)	11.7	6.9	9.5
Marijuana/cannabis	41.5	35.3	38.7
Heroin	2.9	1.1	2.1
Methadone ^(b)	0.8	0.1 *	0.5
Cocaine	3.9	2.7	3.4
Hallucinogens	9.7	5.3	7.7
Ecstasy/designer drugs	5.8	3.8	4.9
Inhalants	1.7	1.7	1.7

(a) For non-medical purposes.

(b) Non-maintenance.

Note: Base equals recent smokers.

Table 2.5: Polydrug use, proportion of recent tobacco smokers aged 14 years and over, by age, Australia, 1998

Other substances recently used	Age group				All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	
	(per cent)				
Alcohol	95.5	93.0	90.2	86.4	90.0
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(a)	14.6	12.0	7.9	2.4	7.6
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	6.4	9.5	4.3	1.3	4.8
Steroids ^(a)	0.4 *	1.0 *	0.4 *	0.5 *	0.6
Barbiturates ^(a)	0.6 *	2.0	0.8 *	—	0.8
Amphetamines ^(a)	14.4	21.9	6.0	1.2 *	9.5
Marijuana/cannabis	76.1	57.9	40.9	13.9	38.7
Heroin	1.9	4.3	1.7	0.7 *	2.1
Methadone ^(b)	0.3 *	0.8 *	0.4 *	0.3 *	0.5
Cocaine	2.5	6.9	4.5	0.3 *	3.4
Hallucinogens	17.0	16.9	3.0	1.4	7.7
Ecstasy/designer drugs	8.4	11.7	2.7	0.4 *	4.9
Inhalants	5.8	3.6	0.6 *	—	1.7

(a) For non-medical purposes.

(b) Non-maintenance.

Note: Base equals recent smokers.

Source of supply of tobacco for under-age smokers

The 1998 survey showed that the majority of recent smokers obtained their first cigarettes from a friend or acquaintance (Table 2.6). Among under-age smokers (aged 14–17 years), two-thirds (67%) obtained their first cigarettes from a friend or acquaintance compared to 56% of adult smokers. There were sex differences in the way cigarettes were available for under-aged smokers, with nearly three in five (59%) under-aged male smokers getting their first cigarettes from a friend or acquaintance compared to nearly three-quarters (73%) of under-aged female smokers.

Among the adults, more than half of all recent smokers obtained their first cigarettes from a friend or acquaintance, and the source of supply did not vary greatly between males (54%) and females (57%). As for the recent supply, more than two-fifths (44%) of under-aged smokers reported purchasing from a shop, while another two-fifths (42%) reported obtaining from a friend or acquaintance. The majority (91%) of adult smokers now purchase their cigarettes, while one in 20 (6%) get their supply from a friend or acquaintance.

Table 2.6: First and recent source of supply for under-age smokers: proportion of recent smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Source	Recent smokers <18 years		Recent smokers 18+ years	
	First obtained	Now obtain	First obtained	Now obtain
(per cent)				
Males				
Friend or acquaintance	58.5	49.6	54.3	7.2
Sibling	6.1	9.3	3.2	0.2 *
Parent	6.2	4.4	1.4	0.1 *
Spouse or partner	—	—	0.5	0.4 *
Other relative	1.0	—	3.0	—
Stole it	8.6	—	9.0	—
Purchased it—shop	4.5	35.1	14.0	90.7
Other	2.5	1.7	4.3	0.5
Can't recall	12.7	n.a.	10.2	0.9
Females				
Friend or acquaintance	73.4	36.0	57.0	4.7
Sibling	7.8	0.7 *	8.0	0.2 *
Parent	0.6 *	5.0	1.9	—
Spouse or partner	0.4 *	4.0	1.5	2.1
Other relative	0.8 *	—	1.6	0.2 *
Stole it	6.3	0.2 *	7.7	—
Purchased it—shop	1.3	49.8	10.1	91.0
Other	1.6	4.2	2.0	0.8 *
Can't recall	7.8	n.a.	10.1	0.6 *
Persons				
Friend or acquaintance	66.9	41.8	55.5	6.1
Sibling	7.1	4.4	5.4	0.2 *
Parent	3.0	4.7	1.6	0.1 *
Spouse or partner	0.2 *	2.3	1.0	1.2
Other relative	0.9 *	—	2.4	0.1 *
Stole it	7.3	0.1 *	8.4	—
Purchased it—shop	2.7	43.6	12.2	91.0
Other	2.0	3.1	3.3	0.8 *
Can't recall	9.9	n.a.	10.1	0.6 *

Correlates of tobacco use

The 1998 survey collected information about the respondents' socioeconomic characteristics in order to investigate whether background characteristics correlate with drug use, attitudes and beliefs. The percentage distribution of background characteristics across smoking status is presented in Table 2.7. The explanation of these characteristics and how they were measured is in Appendix 2. The data indicate that background characteristics correlate with a person's smoking status:

- Slightly more than one in ten (12%) of all Australians with a tertiary qualification were regular smokers compared with one in four (26%) Australians with no qualification.
- Nearly two-fifths (38%) of all unemployed persons were regular smokers compared with only one in four (25%) employed persons.
- The higher the occupational status, the lower the proportion of regular smokers. However, nearly half of all (49%) white collar workers were ex-smokers compared with only one in three (34%) blue collar workers.
- Cultural background also played a role in smoking status, with more than one in five (22%) Australian-born persons reported being a regular smoker compared to only one in six (17%) persons born in non-English-speaking countries.
- Persons living in the least affluent areas were 1.5 times as likely to be regular smokers (27%) as persons living in the most affluent areas (18%).
- Persons from rural/remote areas also have increased likelihood of being regular smokers (26%) compared with persons from urban areas (21%).
- One in four (25%) never-married persons reported being regular smokers compared with about one in six (15%) widowed persons.
- Social influences on a person's smoking status were evident: when more than 50% of friends were smokers, the respondent was likely to be a regular smoker (46%) or an ex-smoker (30%). Of all the persons for whom less than 50% of friends smoked, approximately one in nine (11%) were regular smokers, 44% were ex-smokers and 42% had never smoked.

Table 2.7: Correlates of tobacco use: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, Australia, 1998

Characteristics	Smoking status			
	Regular	Occasional	Ex-smoker	Never smoked
	(per cent)			
Education				
No qualification	26.1	2.8	37.1	33.9
HSC or equivalent	25.8	5.2	37.1	31.9
Trade/diploma	23.9	4.1	45.2	26.8
Tertiary	11.9	5.0	47.2	36.0
Employment status				
Employed	24.8	4.4	41.8	29.0
Student	12.7	8.0	29.5	49.8
Unemployed	38.3	5.0	23.5	33.2
Retired/pension	19.3	1.9	42.0	36.8
Occupational status				
Upper (white)	14.5	4.1	49.0	32.3
Middle	24.4	4.1	41.0	30.5
Lower (blue)	28.6	4.0	33.5	33.8
Country of birth				
Australian born	22.3	4.4	39.5	33.8
Other English-speaking born	25.9	3.0	47.5	23.5
Non-English-speaking born	17.4	2.4	35.0	45.2
Socioeconomic area				
1st quintile	26.8	3.2	36.7	33.2
2nd quintile	24.1	2.9	37.1	35.9
3rd quintile	23.6	4.8	38.3	33.3
4th quintile	20.8	5.0	42.2	32.0
5th quintile	18.2	4.9	43.3	33.6
Geography				
Urban	21.2	4.2	39.6	35.0
Rural/remote	25.8	3.9	39.6	30.8
Marital status				
Never married	25.0	7.3	28.8	38.9
Widowed	15.4	0.3	39.6	44.8
Divorced/separated	33.5	3.2	38.1	25.3
Presently married	19.6	2.9	45.4	32.2
Social influences				
At least 50% friends use	45.6	6.4	29.8	18.2
Less than 50% friends use	10.7	2.9	44.1	42.4

Note: Base equals recent smokers.