

Study suggests older non-smokers benefit most from smoking bans

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Older people who have never smoked benefit most from smoking bans, suggests a study involving a University of Southampton scientist.

The study in New Zealand showed that, three years after a smoking ban on all workplaces was introduced, hospital admissions for heart attacks among men and women aged 55-74 fell by nine per cent. This figure rose to 13 per cent for 55-74 year olds who had never smoked.

Overall, the research showed heart attacks among people aged 30 and over fell by an average of five per cent in the three years following the ban.

Dr Graham Moon, of the University of Southampton's School of Geography, worked on the study, which examined trends in acute heart attacks following a change in legislation. A ruling, which updated a previous law in which smoking was outlawed in some public places, made smoking illegal in all workplaces including bars and restaurants.

Graham says: "This study contributes to the emerging evidence on the consequences of banning smoking in public places. Similar legislation is now in place in England and Scotland. Our work gives early evidence of potential impacts in terms of [population health](#) improvement."

The study, carried out with the University of Edinburgh and the Universities of Otago and Canterbury in New Zealand, found that heart

attacks were reduced for ex-smokers of all ages, and that there was a greater decrease in hospital admissions for men compared with women.

In addition, the study found that people in more affluent neighbourhoods benefited more from the ban than those in poorer areas. This may be because they visit cafes and restaurants more often.

Alternatively, it may be that they are more likely to use the smoking ban as an incentive to quit.

Dr Jamie Pearce, of the University of Edinburgh's School of GeoSciences, says: "This short-term research indicates a link between a [smoking ban](#) in bars and restaurants and a reduction in severe heart attacks. However, more work is needed to look at the effects of the ban in greater detail."

The study was published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

Provided by University of Southampton

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