

Anti-smoking policies for adults also reduce kids' smoking

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When governments use comprehensive, well-funded tobacco control programs to reduce adult smoking, they also reduce smoking among adolescents. This bonus effect is an important factor to consider as policymakers face pressure to reduce spending on anti-smoking programs.

The most effective elements of a tobacco control program include taxes on tobacco, well-funded adult-focused tobacco control programs, well-funded anti-smoking mass media campaigns, and strong indoor smoking restrictions.

Comprehensive programs like this generally take a long time to implement and are not cheap to run.

But a study published today in the journal *Addiction* shows that in Australia these adult-focused programs have produced an additional benefit: they have also reduced smoking among adolescents. And the better funded those programs are, the more effective they are at cutting smoking among both adults and adolescents.

There are three reasons why policies designed to reduce adult smoking can also reduce kids' smoking. First, as adult smoking decreases, young people have a lower tendency to see smoking as an adult activity. Second, many adult smokers are parents: when parents quit, it reduces the likelihood that their kids will start smoking. And third, many anti-smoking programs and policies directly influence adolescents

themselves. For example, there is strong evidence that media ads that emphasise the serious health consequences of smoking in an emotional way resonate strongly with young people.

To be effective, though, a comprehensive [tobacco control](#) program must be sustained and contain strong, consistently enforced, and well-funded anti-smoking policies. Says Professor Melanie Wakefield, co-author of the study and Director of the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer at the Cancer Council Victoria, "The only way to get this double benefit is to create a rigorous anti-smoking program in the first place. If governments are determined to reduce [smoking](#) in this generation and the one to follow, they must choose effective policies and finance them properly. There's no other way around it."

Provided by Wiley

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