

Tobacco displays increase the odds of teens becoming smokers

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Young people who find tobacco displays in shops attractive and who easily recall seeing the displays have a greater chance of becoming a smoker according to a new Cancer Research UK funded [research study published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research today](#).

Around 950 non-smoking 11-16 year olds from across the UK were interviewed by the researchers based at the University of Stirling. Susceptibility to smoking, recall and attraction to tobacco displays in shops were examined.

Susceptibility to smoking was determined by asking the young people whether they had taken a firm decision not to smoke or whether they might smoke in the future.

Among these young people who had never smoked, 27 per cent were categorized as susceptible.

It was found that eight in ten (81 per cent) children reported noticing behind the counter tobacco displays, nearly one in five paid close attention to them, one in four thought them to be eye-catching and one in eight considered them attractive. Importantly, being attracted to displays was positively associated with susceptibility.

Support for putting tobacco out of sight in shops was also found to be very high, with more than 70 per cent backing measures to remove the shop displays.

Anne Marie Mackintosh, lead researcher based at the University of Stirling, said: “Our findings show a link between the smoking [susceptibility](#) of young people and tobacco displays in shops. Demonstrating that young people who had never smoked appear vulnerable to the colorful and brightly lit tobacco displays is a real concern and reinforces the importance of putting those displays out of sight.”

Legislation to remove tobacco displays is due to come into force in supermarkets in England and Wales in April 2012, and in April 2015 for smaller shops.

Jean King, Cancer Research UK’s director of tobacco control, said: “Tobacco advertising and marketing has been banned in the UK since 2002, but a loophole has meant that huge walls of tobacco have remained on display in nearly every corner store and shop across the country. Protecting young people from tobacco marketing is vital if we are to stop more [young people](#) from starting an addiction that kills half of all long term [smokers](#). This research adds further evidence showing that putting tobacco out of sight is without a doubt the right move to make.”

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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