

Study of smoking among doctors and nurses shows very low smoking prevalence and Smokefree 2025 goal can be achieved

March 9 2018

A new study on smoking trends among doctors and nurses in New Zealand finds smoking has declined steadily within these healthcare professions. Researchers say this shows that very low smoking rates can be achieved in large occupational groups, suggesting that New Zealand's Smokefree 2025 goal is reachable.

The study published today in the *New Zealand Medical Journal*, was led by researchers at the University of Otago, Wellington (UOW) in collaboration with the Health Promotion Agency. Lead author Professor Richard Edwards from the Department of Public Health at UOW says the findings illustrate that New Zealand's Smokefree 2025 goal can be achieved among health care workers – doctors are already there, and generally nurses are well on the way.

"By 2013, just two per cent of New Zealand doctors were regular cigarette smokers, well below the New Zealand Smokefree 2025 goal of five per cent or less," Professor Edwards says.

"New Zealand nurses in general are also well on track to achieve the Smokefree goal figure, with nine per cent of male and eight per cent of females still [smoking](#)."

The researchers used 2013 New Zealand Census data to examine recent smoking trends among doctors and nurses in New Zealand.

The study showed that smoking is more common among Māori doctors and Māori nurses, and also for [psychiatric nurses](#), although smoking was also decreasing among these groups.

"We found that 19 per cent of Māori nurses and seven percent of Māori doctors still smoked, and 15 per cent of male psychiatric nurses and 18 per cent of female psychiatric nurses smoked," Professor Edwards says.

"We believe there is a case for developing targeted smoking cessation support for high smoking prevalence occupational groups, particularly those like nurses and teachers who have great potential to provide positive smokefree role models to patients, schoolchildren and within their communities," he says.

"A good place to start would be to work with Māori nurses and mental [health](#) care nurses to explore their needs and develop appropriate smokefree interventions."

Provided by University of Otago

Citation: Study of smoking among doctors and nurses shows very low smoking prevalence and Smokefree 2025 goal can be achieved (2018, March 9) retrieved 22 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-03-doctors-nurses-prevalence-smokefree-goal.html>

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