

# Peer relations linked to smoking behavior in vocational students

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In a *Nursing Open* study, peer relations and self-rated health were associated with smoking behavior in both girls and boys studying in upper secondary vocational schools.

In the study of 34,776 Finnish 14 to 20 year-old vocational school students who were surveyed in 2013, 37 percent of girls and 36 percent of boys reported smoking daily, 15 percent of girls and 14 percent of boys smoked occasionally, and 15 percent of girls and 13 percent of boys stated that they were ex-smokers. Thirty-three percent of girls and 38 percent of boys were non-smokers.

Having a close friend or friends was associated with smoking among girls and boys. Additionally, bullies and/or [bullies](#) who were also bullying victims were more frequently smokers than students not involved with bullying behavior among boys only. Boys and girls who rated their health as moderate or poor were more often daily smokers; in [girls](#), this was also the case in occasional smokers.

"According to this study, adolescents with [close friends](#) were more likely to smoke in a vocational setting. This is the opposite of findings from different social network studies," said co-author Dr. Hanna Aho, of Tampere University, in Finland. "Social belonging that is formed around the ashtray and [social relationships](#) between smokers can be very tight. Therefore social relationships and the loss of smoking friends if quitting should be taken into account in smoking cessation guidelines and programs."

**More information:** Hanna Aho et al, The relationship between peer relations, self-rated health and smoking behaviour in secondary vocational schools, *Nursing Open* (2019). [DOI: 10.1002/nop2.260](https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.260)

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