

## Part 2: Attitudes and beliefs related to smoking

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An important factor in reducing smoking uptake among youth is reinforcing anti-tobacco attitudes and building personal skills to refuse tobacco use (Health Sponsorship Council, 2005). Students who show a commitment not to smoke are likely to have reduced susceptibility to smoke in the future.

This section describes the prevalence of smoking-related attitudes and beliefs among Year 10 students. The survey included questions about the likelihood of individuals' own smoking behaviour in the future, beliefs about smoking-related harm to health, and general attitudes about smoking and people who smoke.

### Likelihood of smoking in the future

Students were asked whether or not they would be likely to smoke:

- if offered a cigarette by a best friend,
- in the next 12 months, and
- 5 years from now.

### Smoking in the short-term

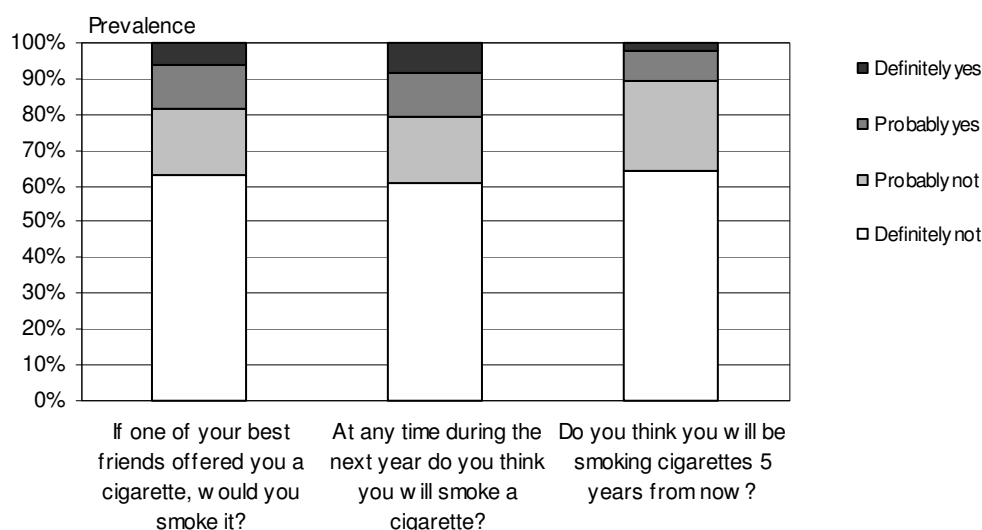
When asked if they would smoke a cigarette if one of their best friends offered one, over six in ten participating students said *definitely not* (62.9%, Figure 2.1) and almost one-fifth of students *probably not* (18.4%). Less than one in ten said *definitely yes* and more than one in ten *probably yes* (6.4% and 12.3%, respectively).

Male students were more likely to say they would *definitely not* smoke a cigarette if offered one by a best friend, compared with female students (68.0% and 57.4%, respectively). Pacific and New Zealand European/Pākehā students were also more likely than Māori students to say they would *definitely not* smoke a cigarette if offered one by a best friend (65.6%, 64.3% and 52.4%, respectively).

When asked if they thought they would smoke a cigarette at any time during the next year (12 months) following the survey, six in ten students said *definitely not* (60.8%, Figure 2.1) and almost one-fifth (18.6%) *probably not*. Less than one in ten students said *definitely yes* and more than one in ten *probably yes* (8.6% and 12.0%, respectively).

A higher proportion of male students reported that they would *definitely not* smoke at any time during the next year (12 months) following the survey, compared with female students (66.0% and 55.2%, respectively). A higher proportion of New Zealand European/Pākehā and Pacific students reported that they would *definitely not* smoke at any time during the next year following the survey, compared with Māori students (60.9%, 64.6% and 52.2%, respectively).

**Figure 2.1 Likelihood of smoking in the future – all students**



## Susceptibility to smoke

Responses to the preceding two questions were combined for 'never smokers' to indicate the proportion of students that are susceptible to starting smoking within one year of the survey.

Students who are 'susceptible' are those who did not answer *definitely not* to both of the following questions: 'If one of your best friends offered you a cigarette, would you smoke it?' and 'At any time during the next year do you think you will smoke a cigarette'?

The majority of 'never smokers' (80.1%) were not susceptible to smoking initiation, as they expressed strong commitment not to smoke in the near future. The remaining one-fifth of 'never smokers' (19.9%) were classified as susceptible to smoking initiation in the year following the survey.

## Likelihood of smoking five years from the time of the survey

When asked if they thought they would be smoking cigarettes five years from now, almost two in three students said *definitely not* (64.5%, see Figure 2.1 above) and almost one-quarter of students (24.7%) *probably not*. A very small number of students said *definitely yes* (2.2%) and less than one in ten *probably yes* (8.6%).

A higher proportion of New Zealand European/Pākehā and Pacific students reported that they would *definitely not* be smoking five years from the time of the survey, compared with Māori students (54.3% 66.3% and 52.2%, respectively).

Analysis by smoking status revealed that less than one-half of 'current smokers' thought they would not be smoking cigarettes five years from the survey, either *definitely not* (12.1%) or *probably not* (31.4%). In comparison, the majority of 'never smokers' thought that they would *definitely not* (81.5%) or *probably not* (17.7%) be smoking cigarettes five years from the time of the survey.

Around two in five 'current smokers' (41.8%) thought that they would *probably yes* be smoking cigarettes five years from the time of the survey and over one in ten (14.7%) thought that they would *definitely yes* be smoking. In comparison, less than one percent of 'never smokers' thought that they would either *probably yes* (0.8%) or *definitely yes* be smoking cigarettes (0.1%) five years from the time of the survey.

## Beliefs about smoking harm

When asked if they thought *cigarette smoking is harmful* to their health, close to nine in ten students (86.2%) said *definitely yes*, and less than a further one in ten (7.5%) *probably yes*. A higher proportion of New Zealand European/Pākehā students thought that smoking is *definitely* harmful to their health, compared with Pacific students (89.6% and 77.8%, respectively).

Students from high decile schools were more likely to report that they thought smoking is *definitely yes* harmful to their health compared with students from low decile schools (89.6% and 83.6%, respectively).

Analysis by smoking status revealed that 'never smokers' were more likely to say smoking is *definitely yes* harmful to health, compared with 'current smokers' (90.2% and 69.3%, respectively). Conversely, 'current smokers' were more likely to think that smoking is *probably yes* harmful to their health, compared with 'never smokers' (21.6% and 4.0%, respectively).

When asked if they thought smoke from other people's cigarettes is harmful to you, close to two-thirds of students (65.0%) said *definitely yes* and close to three in ten (28.2%) said *probably yes*. A higher proportion of non-Māori students thought that smoking from other

people's cigarettes is *definitely yes* harmful to health, compared with Māori students (66.7% and 58.9%, respectively).

Students from high decile schools were more likely to report that they thought smoking from other people's cigarettes was *definitely yes* harmful to their health, compared with students from low decile schools (67.8% and 61.7%, respectively). 'Current smokers' were less likely to think that smoking from other people's cigarettes was *definitely yes* harmful to their health, when compared to 'never smokers' (42.6% and 71.8%, respectively).

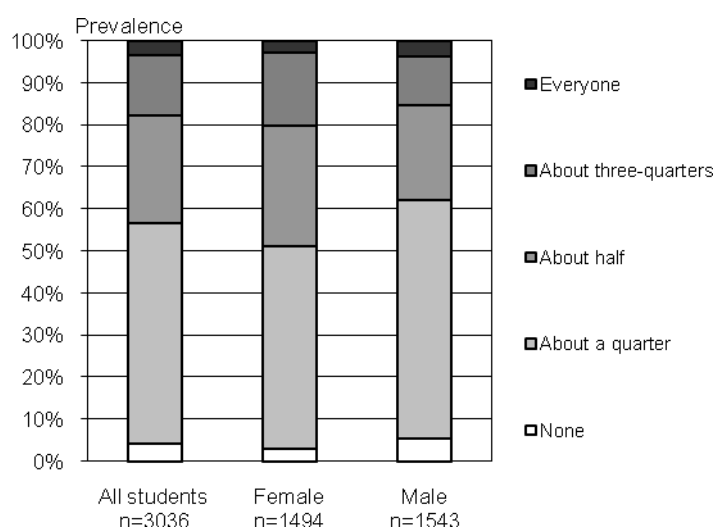
### Perceived daily smoking prevalence among people their own age

Students' beliefs about smoking prevalence among their peers is an important indicator of perceived social norms (Wiium, Torsheim & Wold, 2006), and is likely to influence individual smoking behaviour (Botvin, Botvin, Baker et al., 1992). Students were asked - *Out of 100 people your age, how many do you think smoke cigarettes at least once a day?* Response categories were *None*, *About a quarter*, *About half*, *About three-quarters*, or *Everyone*.

Around one-half of the students (52.5%) thought that *about a quarter* of people their own age smoked at least once a day (See Figure 2.2), and one-quarter (25.6%) *about a half*.

Female students were more likely to think that a higher proportion of people their age smoked: 28.7% thought that *about half* of people their age smoked daily (compared with 22.7% of male students) and 17.3% thought that *about three-quarters* did (compared with 11.6% of male students).

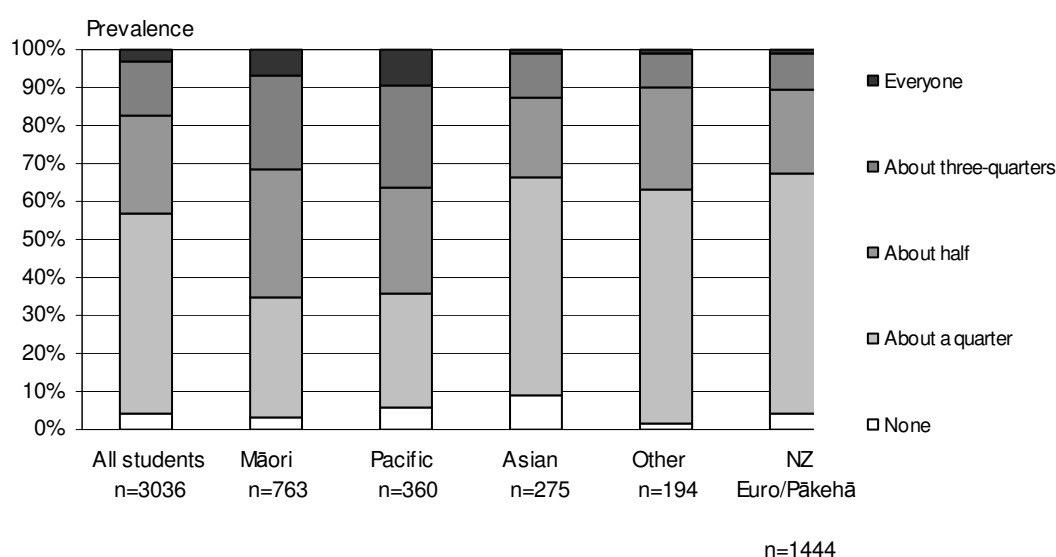
**Figure 2.2 Perceived daily smoking prevalence among people their own age – all students by gender**



Māori students were more like likely to have thought that *about half* of people their own age smoked at least once a day, compared with New Zealand European/Pākehā students (33.8%, and 22.4%, respectively - see Figure 2.3). Similarly, Pacific and Māori students were more like likely to have thought that *about three-quarters* of people their own age smoked at least once a day, compared with New Zealand European/Pākehā students (26.5%, 24.8% and 9.2%, respectively).

Analysis of Māori students' responses by gender shows that a higher proportion of Māori females thought that *about three-quarters* of people their age smoked on a daily basis, compared with Māori males (30.5% and 19.4%, respectively).

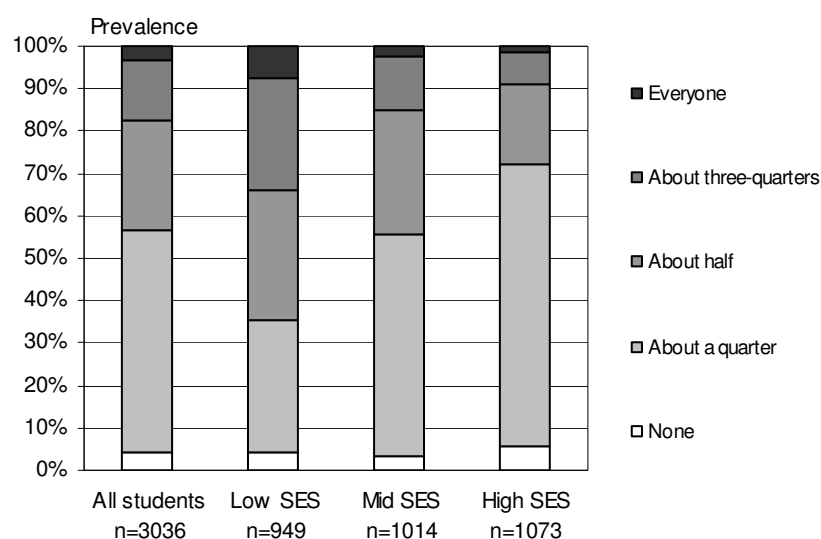
**Figure 2.3 Perceived daily smoking prevalence among people their own age – all students by ethnicity**



The perceived prevalence of smoking for people their own age decreased amongst students, with increases in school decile, from low to high SES (See Figure 2.4). Two-thirds of all students (66.3%) from high decile schools thought that *about a quarter* of their peers smoke daily, compared with about one-half of students (52.3%) from mid decile schools and just under one-third of students (31.2%) from low decile schools. Students from low decile schools were more likely to think that *about three-quarters* of people their age smoke daily compared with students from mid and high decile schools (26.6%, 13.0% and 7.5%, respectively).

Just over three in five 'never smokers' (61.7%) thought that *about a quarter* of people their age smoked daily, whereas only 27.4% of 'current smokers' reported this. Among 'current smokers', 28.9% believed that *about three-quarters* of people their own age smoked at least daily. In comparison, among 'never smokers', 9.3% believed that *about three-quarters* of people their own age smoked at least daily. Students who were 'current smokers' were more likely to think that *everyone* their age smoked than 'never smokers' (10.4% and 0.9%, respectively).

**Figure 2.4 Perceived daily smoking prevalence among people their own age – all students by SES**



## Attitudes towards smoking behaviour and people who smoke

Students were asked to respond to a range of statements related to smoking and people who smoke. Students were asked whether they *agree*, *disagree* or *don't know* for each statement. The smoking-related statements and response findings have been grouped into five areas of interest for this analysis: acceptance and belonging; attractiveness and popularity; independence and uniqueness; the emotional state of people who smoke; and sensory and physiological effects of smoking.

### Acceptance and belonging

Overall, the majority of students did not consider smoking as a favourable factor contributing to social acceptance and belonging. Despite this, there was still a number of students who appeared unsure in their responses and answered *don't know*, and there was also a number of students who did consider smoking to be a favourable factor.

Around two-thirds of the students *agree* with the statement that *non-smokers dislike being around people who are smoking* (66.6%, Figure 2.5) and 73.0% of students *disagree* with the statement that *smokers are more popular*. Just over one-quarter of students (26.1%) *agree* with the statement that *smoking helps people feel more comfortable at parties* and only 14.0% *agree* that *smoking helps people meet and talk to other people*. However, there was also a proportion of students who responded did not know to either of the following two statements - *smoking helps people feel more comfortable at parties* or that *smoking helps people meet and talk to other people* (36.3% and 33.5%, respectively).

New Zealand European/Pākehā students were more likely than Māori and Pacific students to agree that *non-smokers dislike being around people who are smoking* (70.4%, 60.3% and 59.8%, respectively).

A higher proportion of students from low decile schools agree that *smokers are more popular* and *smoking helps people feel more comfortable at parties* (15.8% and 30.0%, respectively) than students from high decile schools (8.8% and 24.4%, respectively). A higher proportion of students from high decile schools agree that *non-smokers disliked being around people who are smoking* (70.3% and 64.0%, respectively).

A higher proportion of 'current smokers' agree with the statements *smokers are more popular* and *smoking helps people feel more comfortable and smoking helps people meet and talk to other people* (26.3%, 51.7% and 37.7%, respectively), compared 'never smokers' (7.2%, 18.0% and 7.5%, respectively). A lower proportion of 'current smokers' agree with the statement that *non-smokers dislike being around people who are smoking*, compared with 'never smokers' (54.4% and 74.5%, respectively).

However, there were a proportion of 'never smokers' who *did not know* whether or not *smoking helps people feel more comfortable* and *smoking helps people meet and talk to other people* (40.6% and 35.1%, respectively). The reverse was true for 'current smokers' for the following two statements – *smokers are more popular* and *non-smokers dislike being around people who are smoking* (4.6% and 4.0%, respectively of 'current smokers' *did not know*).

## Attractiveness and popularity

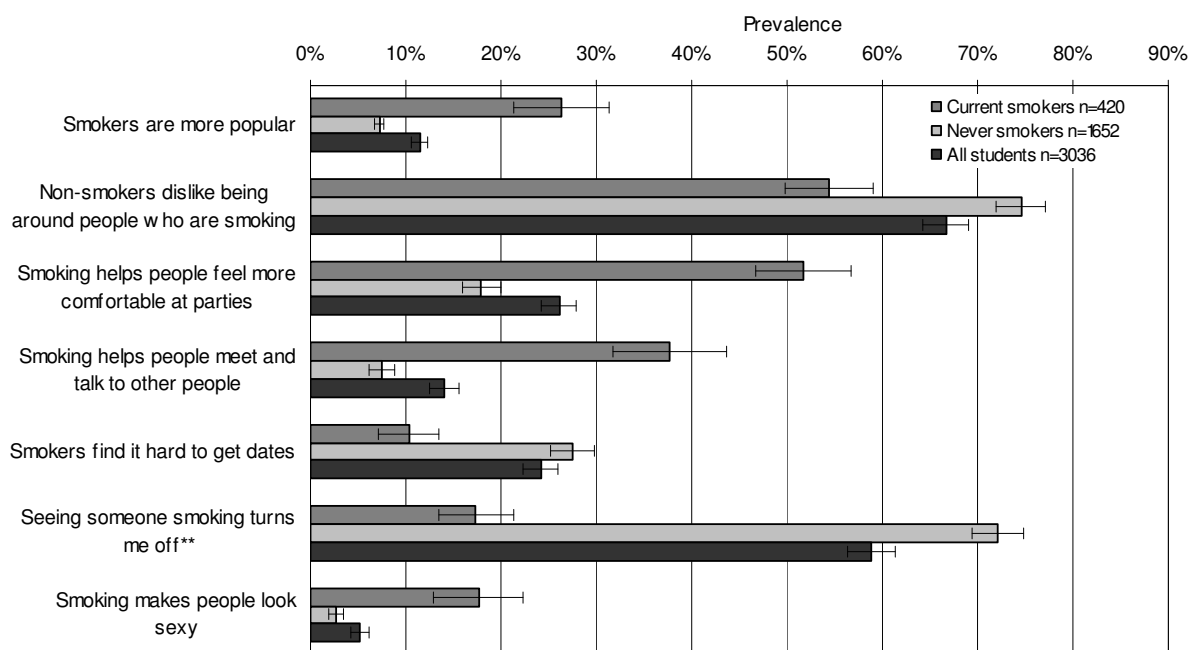
When asked to respond to the statement *smokers find it hard to get dates*, most students *did not know* (41.3%, Figure 2.5) or *disagree* (34.5%). Almost three in five students (58.9%) agree with the statement *seeing someone smoking turns me off*, and almost one-quarter of students (23.6%) *disagree*. However, only 5.2% of students agree with the statement *smoking makes people look sexy* (80.4% *disagree*).

New Zealand European/Pākehā students were more likely than Māori and Pacific students to agree with the statement that *seeing someone smoking turns me off* (63.9%, 50.2% and 51.1%, respectively). In comparison, a higher proportion of Māori female students *disagree* with the statement that *smokers find it hard to get dates*, compared with Māori male students (50.5% and 35.4%, respectively).

Students from high decile schools were more likely than students from low decile schools to agree with the statement that *seeing someone smoking turns me off* (64.6% and 51.9%, respectively). A higher proportion of 'current smokers' *disagree* with the statements *smokers find it hard to get dates* and *seeing someone smoking turns me off* (67.4% and 61.8%, respectively), compared with 'never smokers' (24.8% and 12.8%, respectively). A higher proportion of 'current smokers' agree with the statement that *smoking makes people look sexy*,

compared with ‘never smokers’ (17.6% and 2.7%, respectively). However, the majority of ‘current smokers’ (61.6%) still *disagree* with this statement.

**Figure 2.5 Attitudes towards smoking: Acceptance and belonging, attractiveness and popularity – all students by smoking status**



Bars indicate the prevalence of students who agreed with statement

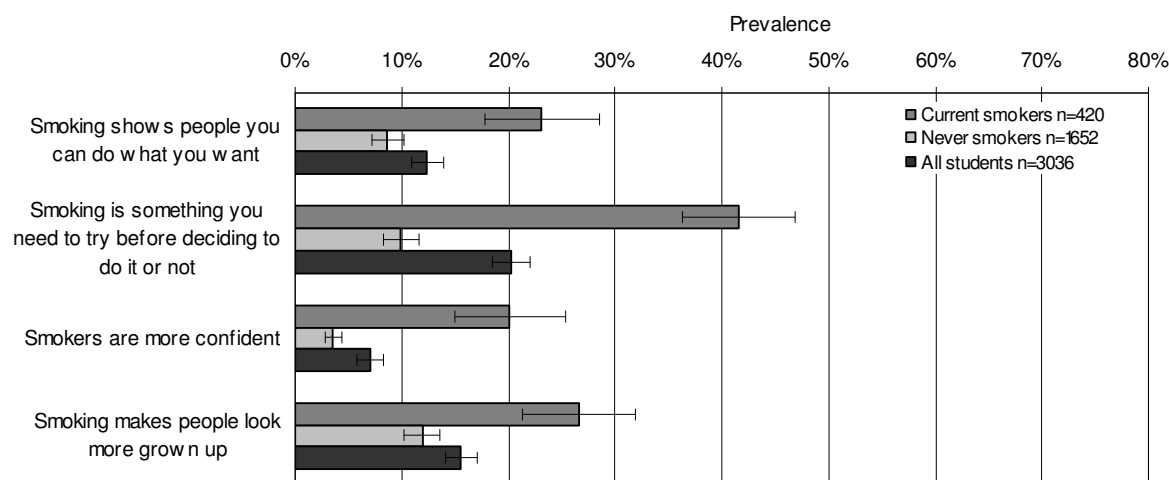
## Independence and uniqueness

Over one in ten students *agree* with the statement that *smoking shows people you can do what you want* (12.4%, Figure 2.6), and one in five students (20.3%) *agree* with the statement that *smoking is something you need to try before deciding to do it or not*. Fewer than one in ten students (7.0%) *agree* with the statement that *smokers are more confident* and 15.6% of students *agree* that *smoking makes people look more grown up*.

A higher proportion of Māori and Pacific students than New Zealand European/Pākehā students *agree* that smoking makes people look more grown up (16.8%, 24.7% and 13.2%, respectively).

A higher proportion of 'current smokers' *agree* with the statements *smoking shows people you can do what you want* and *smoking is something you need to try before deciding to do it or not* and *smokers are more confident* and *smoking makes people look more grown up* (23.2%, 41.6%, 20.2% and 26.6%, respectively), compared with ‘never smokers’ (8.7%, 9.9%, 3.6% and 12.0%, respectively).

**Figure 2.6 Attitudes towards smoking: Independence and uniqueness – all students by smoking status**



Bars indicate the prevalence of students who agreed with statement

### Emotional state of people who smoke

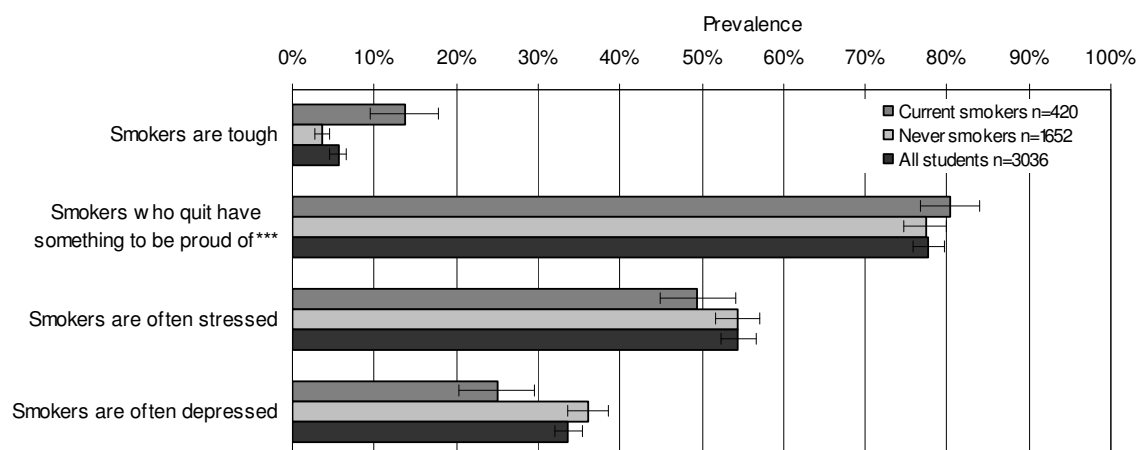
The majority of students did not view smoking as positively contributing to emotional well-being of people who smoke. Only 15.9% of students *disagree* with the statement *smokers are often stressed* and only 5.6% of students *agree* with the statement that *smokers are tough* (Figure 2.7).

Similarly, 77.7% of students *agree* with the statement *smokers who quit have something to be proud of*. Around a third of students (33.7%) *agree* with the statement *smokers are often depressed* but two in five students (41.2%) did not know.

A higher proportion of female than male students were more likely to *agree* that *smokers who quit have something to be proud of* (82.3%, compared with 73.4% of male students). This was also true for New Zealand European/Pākehā students, compared with Māori and Pacific students (81.8%, 75.1% and 72.3%, respectively). A higher proportion of male students compared to female students *agree* that *smokers are often depressed* (36.7% and 30.6%, respectively).

A higher proportion of 'current smokers' *disagree* with the statements *smokers are often stressed* and *smokers are often depressed* (30.2% and 49.5%, respectively), compared with 'never smokers' (11.8% and 18.4%, respectively). A higher proportion of 'current smokers' *agree* with the statement *smokers are tough*, compared with 'never smokers' (13.7% and 3.6%, respectively).

**Figure 2.7 Attitudes towards smoking: Emotional state of people who smoke – all students by smoking status**



Bars indicate the prevalence of students who agreed with statement

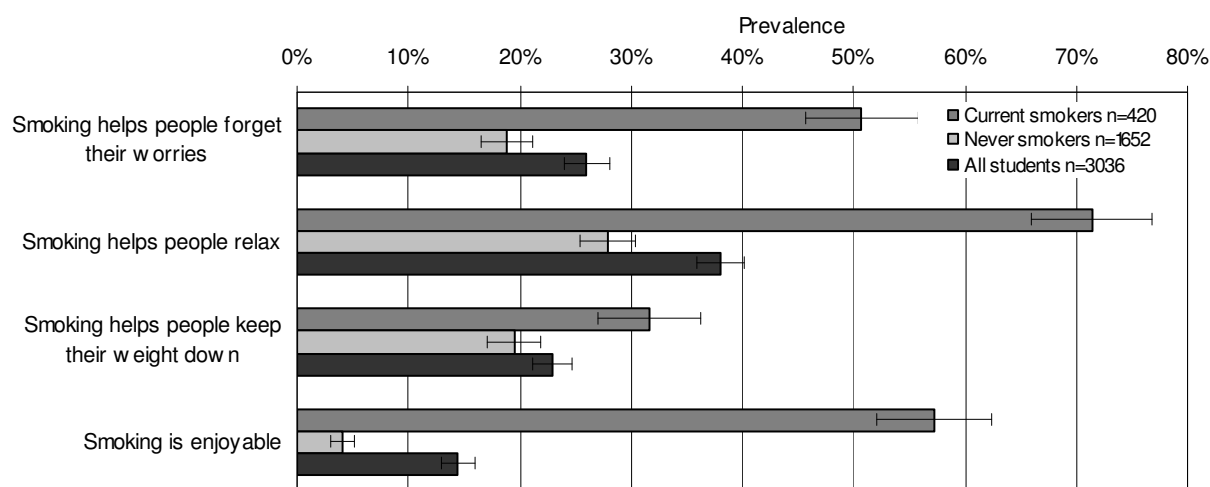
## Sensory and physiological effects

Close to one-quarter of students *agree* with the statement that *smoking helps people forget their worries* (26.0%, Figure 2.8). Almost two in five students (38.1%) *agree* that *smoking helps people relax*. Overall, 14.5% of students *agree* with the statement that *smoking is enjoyable*, and over one in five students (23.0%) *agree* with the statement that *smoking helps people keep their weight down*.

A higher proportion of female students than male students were more likely to think that *smoking helps people keep their weight down* (26.3%, compared with 19.8% of male students). Māori students were more likely to *agree* with the statement that *smoking is enjoyable*, compared with non-Māori students (19.3% and 13.1%, respectively).

A higher proportion of 'current smokers' *agree* with all four statements - *smoking helps people forget their worries*, *smoking helps people relax*, *smoking helps people keep their weight down* and that *smoking is enjoyable* (50.7%, 71.4%, 31.6% and 57.3%, respectively), compared with 'never smokers' (18.8%, 27.9%, 19.5% and 4.1%, respectively).

**Figure 2.8 Attitudes towards smoking: Sensory and physiological effects– all students by smoking status**



Bars indicate the prevalence of students who agreed with statement

## Attitudes towards restrictions on smoking and tobacco imagery and displays

Students were asked what they thought about restricting smoking around children at home and in cars and whether smoking should be allowed in movies, on TV or in music videos watched by young people or in pictures or ads in magazines.

Close to nine in ten students (89.5%) thought that smoking should not be allowed *around children at home*. A higher proportion of non-Māori students thought that it should not be allowed, compared with Māori students (91.1% and 84.0%, respectively). Just over two-thirds of 'current smokers' thought that smoking should not be allowed *around children at home* compared with over nine in ten 'never smokers' (67.3% and 95.2%, respectively).

Over nine in ten students (91.3%) thought that smoking should not be allowed *around children in cars*. Again, a higher proportion of non-Māori students thought it should not be allowed (92.5%), compared with Māori students (87.0%). Almost three-quarters of 'current smokers' (74.4%) thought that smoking should not be *allowed around children in cars*, compared with 96.2% of 'never smokers'.

Seven in ten students (70.1%) thought that smoking should not be allowed *in movies watched by young people*. Almost one-half of all students (46.7%) thought that smoking should not be allowed *in pictures or advertisements in magazines* and 45.6% of all students thought that smoking should not be allowed *on television and in music videos* watched by young people. However, there were around a quarter of all students who did not know whether smoking

should be allowed *in pictures or ads in magazines* (25.3%) or *be on television and in music videos watched by young people* (26.1%).

Again, a higher proportion of New Zealand European/Pākehā students thought smoking should not be *allowed in pictures or advertisements in magazines* or *be allowed on television and in music videos watched by young people* (49.6% and 46.7%, respectively), compared with Māori (39.7% and 37.6%, respectively) and Pacific students (41.2% and 46.5%, respectively).

A higher proportion of 'never smokers' thought smoking should not be *allowed in movies and in pictures or advertisements in magazines* or *be allowed on television and in music videos watched by young people* (74.3%, 54.9% and 54.2%, respectively), compared with 'current smokers' (52.2%, 27.1% and 23.8%, respectively).

Over one-half of all students thought that *a ban on cigarette displays in shops would make children less likely to smoke* - either they *strongly agree* (19.2%) or *agree* (34.4%) with the statement. It was more likely that 'current smokers' *disagree*, compared with 'never smokers' (41.8% and 15.9%, respectively).