Purpose of Study:
The purpose of the study was to examine the association between smoking behaviour and agreement with proposed anti-smoking legislation of rural, regional and remote Central Queenslanders. Rural Australians have higher rates of smoking, contributing to poor health of rural Australians. In 2004 the Queensland Government introduced legislation to reduce the impact of environmental tobacco smoking (ETS) on the community. A cross-sectional descriptive study using an omnibus survey format administered via telephone interviewing to 1208 people from Central Queensland. Binominal logistical regression analysis was used to determine the association between smoking behaviour, smoking beliefs and sociodemographic variables. 21 percent (n= 255) self reported smoking behaviours. Smokers were 49% less likely than non-smokers to agree that the legislation would create a healthier environment or that there would be a reduction in ETS. Similarly, smokers were 57% less likely to agree that ‘it is right to ban smoking in public places’. Smokers were 360 percent more likely to agree that the legislation goes too far and that everyone should have the right to smoke if they wish (OR 4.29; CI 2.18-8.45).

Conclusions:
There is a high level of support for smoking restrictions in public places (75%). Smokers were less likely to agree that the legislation would reduce their exposure to ETS and more likely to agree that the legislation had gone too far. This study suggests that health promotion campaigns should continue to educate the public about health risks of ETS, to target smokers and the adverse effects of ETS.

Category:
Population Health

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