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Smoking in Cars Carrying Children: monitoring public attitudes, November 2013 update

Executive summary



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Data collection for this study was undertaken by Beaufort Research Limited, Cardiff.

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Executive summary

Introduction

The aim of the research presented in this report was to update the report '*Smoking in Cars Carrying Children: monitoring public attitudes*'¹ which was published in November 2013. The research was undertaken to inform action around this policy area. Key findings are presented from four waves of data collection between September 2011 and November 2013.

Methods

Questions were included in Beaufort Research Limited's adult omnibus survey, which is designed to be representative of the adult population resident in Wales aged 16 and over. Interlocking demographic quota controls of age and social class within sex are employed in each sampling point for the selection of respondents, these quotas being set to reflect the individual demographic profile of each selected point. Interviews are conducted face-to-face in the homes of respondents utilising Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology. This update report includes Wave 4 fieldwork conducted in November 2013, with 1022 interviews. This builds on fieldwork reported in the earlier report, Waves 1, 2 and 3, conducted in September 2011, March 2012 and November 2012 with 1018, 1007 and 1009 interviews, respectively. Findings are presented for all respondents and by sub-group: gender; age; whether there are children in the household; socio-economic status; geographical region; and smoking status.

¹ Roberts C. et al. (2013). *Smoking in Cars Carrying Children: monitoring public attitudes*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Results

Smoking behaviour in cars

Of those respondents with access to a car, more than three quarters reported that smoking was not allowed in their main car, increasing from 71% in September 2011 to 76% in November 2013. Women, older people, those in professional/skilled occupational groups and non-smokers were more likely to ban smoking in their main car.

Attitudes towards smoking and smoking in cars

Approximately 90% of respondents agreed that second-hand smoke can harm health, that parental smoking can harm health and that parents shouldn't smoke in front of their children, showing a marginal increase over the four waves. Three-quarters (76%) agreed that second-hand smoke can be harmful for up to two hours after smoking a cigarette in a car, an increase from 68% at Wave 3 (November 2012). Fewer than one in ten in November 2013 agreed that it was okay to smoke in a car carrying non-smokers, children or children with a window open, although the figures were slightly higher for current smokers.

Attitudes towards restricting smoking in cars

Half of respondents (50%) agreed that smoking should be banned in cars, increasing from 46% in September 2011. This rose to more than four in five for cars carrying children (84% in November 2013). Around two-thirds agreed that it was an individual's right to smoke in their car (64%), down from 72% in November 2012. For cars carrying children, the corresponding figure was 65%, compared with 67% in September 2011. As in the first three waves, non-smokers were more likely to agree with a ban on smoking in cars, as were women, older respondents and those in professional occupations.

Likely impact of, and compliance with, restricting smoking in cars carrying children

Of those with access to a car, the vast majority (more than 90% in all four waves of data collection) reported that a ban on smoking in cars carrying children would not affect them in any way (93% of non-smokers and 90% of

smokers in November 2013). In November 2013, 84% of smokers reported that they would likely comply with a ban if introduced, up from 80% in September 2011.

Likelihood of restrictions being enforced

In November 2013, a smaller proportion of respondents (38%) reported that they thought it likely that a ban on smoking in cars carrying children would be enforced, compared with 45% in September 2011. Smokers were more likely to agree that a ban would be enforced than non-smokers (45% and 36%, respectively, in November 2013).

Discussion

Over the four waves of the survey, it can be seen that the majority of adults with access to a car do not allow smoking at any time. This has increased across the four waves, although differences by socio-demographic factors and smoking status remain evident with implications for future action in this area.

The case for not smoking in cars would appear to be increasingly accepted among most non-smokers and smokers in Wales, with a decline in the proportions agreeing that it is acceptable to smoke in cars with non-smokers or children present. The latest findings show half of respondents agreed that smoking should be banned in cars, rising to four in five when children are in the car. However the majority of respondents also agreed that it is an individual's right to choose whether they smoke in their own car, whether carrying children or not.

Around four in five smokers reported that they would comply were a ban on smoking in cars carrying children to be introduced, representing a slight increase since baseline measurements were taken in 2011. Despite this, more than half of respondents were not convinced that enforcement would be feasible.

There would be value in continuing to monitor public attitudes and behaviours, alongside the synthesis of research evidence from elsewhere, particularly if future campaign work and/or legislative options are pursued.