

The Impact of Price-Minimizing Purchases on Smoking Cessation using Longitudinal Data from the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project in Australia

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Introduction / Issues: Australian cigarette prices are among the highest in the world due to a 2010 tax hike and annual tobacco tax increases from 2013 to 2020. Tobacco manufacturers introduced various pack and pouch sizes and launched cheaper brands. This study aimed to evaluate whether the reported price-minimising purchases (PMP), such as roll-your-own tobacco (RYO), cartons, large-sized packs, and economy brands, were associated with smoking cessation outcomes.

Method: We analysed data collected from adults who smoked factory-made and/or RYO in nine waves (2007-2020) of the International Tobacco Control Policy (ITC) Evaluation Project Australia Survey ($N_{\text{sample}}=2,801$, $N_{\text{observations}}=6,351$). PMPs were defined as RYO, carton, large-sized pack, economy pack, and tax avoidance and evasion at baseline (wave T). Outcomes were cutting down, making a quit attempt, and quitting at follow-up in next wave (wave T+1). Logistic regression, fit using generalised estimating equations, was used to estimate the association between PMPs and the outcome.

Results: The weighted percentages of current consumers who used at least one PMP strategy increased from 58.6% in 2007 to 76.7% in 2020. Those who used at least one PMP strategy at baseline were less likely to make a quit attempt and quit at follow-up (aOR=0.81, 95% CI=0.69-0.95; aOR=0.83, 95% CI=0.68-1.01, respectively). Those who purchased RYO tobacco, carton and large-sized packs at baseline were less likely to make a quit attempt at follow-up (aOR=0.75, 95% CI=0.59-0.95; aOR=0.71, 95% CI=0.55-0.91; aOR=0.75, 95% CI=0.60-0.95, respectively).

Discussions and Conclusions: Engaging in at least one PMP strategy increased over a 13-year period and reduced the effectiveness of tax increases on smoking cessation.

Implications for Practice or Policy: There is an immediate need for legislative action to reduce price-related marketing, such as standardising pack and pouch sizes and establishing floor and/or ceiling prices.

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