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| **Living life smoke-free: factors associated with smoking initiation among urban Australian Aboriginal adolescents** |
| **Background/Objectives**Tobacco use continues to be a major cause of preventable ill health for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples (Aboriginal peoples) and is the largest contributing risk factor to the gap in disease burden between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians. As most people start smoking in adolescence, understanding the factors associated with smoking initiation among young Aboriginal people is important.**Methods**Cross-sectional analysis of 106 surveys from Aboriginal adolescents aged 12-17, and their caregivers, recruited from four Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in urban New South Wales in 2009 for the Study of Environment on Aboriginal Resilience and Child Health. Main outcome was ‘never’ smoking tobacco regularly. Individual, social, environmental and cultural factors associated with smoking initiation were analysed using logistic regression.**Results**Most participants had never smoked tobacco regularly (81%). A high proportion had been exposed to environmental tobacco smoke: 60% in-utero exposure; 75% had a caregiver who smoked; 40% lived in homes where smoking was allowed. Never smoking regularly was associated with good mental health (odds ratio (OR) 6.9, 2.3-20.8), having a mother as primary caregiver (OR) 3.2, 95% CI 1.0-9.6), strong community connections (OR 3.5, 1.0-12.1), stating that school attendance was very important (OR 7.3, 1.5-36.8), housing stability (OR 6.7, 1.1-40.3), alcohol use (never) (OR 19.8, 5.1-77.1), not being sexually active (OR 21.7, 1.8-256.9), not being in trouble at school (OR 3.6, 1.2-10.9) or any interactions with the criminal justice system (OR 8.1, 2.9-22.7). **Discussion**The majority of participants 12-17 had never smoked regularly however some younger non-smokers may take up smoking as they move through adolescence. Programs promoting positive engagement with family, school and community may be protective against smoking initiation. Community and school-based health promotion programs targeting young people may address smoking prevention alongside other substance use and mental and sexual health where they are focused on broader social influences, skills development and promoting social and emotional wellbeing. For health professionals smoking may serve as a marker that a young person may also be experiencing or susceptible to mental health difficulties and provides a prompt for screening and support.**Keywords**Tobacco smoking, adolescent, oceanic ancestry group |