

**POS1-150** CHANGES IN PERCEIVED RISK OVER TIME AS A PREDICTOR OF QUIT INTENTIONS: FINDINGS FROM THE ITC FOUR COUNTRY SURVEY

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Background: Recent evidence suggests that perceived risk is an important predictor of quit intentions; however, little is known about how risk perceptions vary over time or whether changes in perceived risk predict quit intentions.

Methods: We analyzed data from the ITC Four Country Survey, a cohort telephone survey of smokers in four countries: Australia, Canada, U.K., and U.S. Measures of perceived risk were collected at two times (N=4,307) and compared to identify whether perceptions changed overtime (i.e., increased, decreased, or remained stable). Changes in perceived risk were used to predict quitting intentions.

Results: Perceptions of heart disease risk changed significantly from Time 1 to Time 2. Specifically, 25.0% of smokers perceived greater risk at Time 2 than at Time 1 (i.e., perceptions of risk increased), whereas 28.7% perceived lesser risk at Time 2 than at Time 1 (i.e., perceptions of risk decreased). Forty-six percent maintained consistent perceptions over time. Those who increased perceived risk were more likely to intend to quit smoking at Time 2 than those who maintained stable risk perceptions (OR=1.44, CI: 1.14-1.82, p=.002), whereas those who decreased perceived risk were less likely to intend to quit smoking at Time 2 than those who maintained stable risk perceptions (OR=.66, CI: .53-.81, p<.001). Further, the proportion of smokers who increased their perceptions of risk did not differ significantly by county. However, significantly more Canadian and British smokers decreased their risk perceptions from Time 1 to Time 2 (32.3% and 30.7%) compared to American and Australian smokers (23.2% and 26.7%), whereas significantly more American and Australian smokers maintained consistent risk perceptions (51.8% and 47.9%) compared to Canadian and British smokers (43.2% and 44.1%).

Conclusions: Public health campaigns and stop-smoking intervention should consider strategies that increase perceptions of risk among smokers and, perhaps most importantly, strategies that help maintain high perceptions of risk overtime.

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**POS1-151** DIFFERENCES IN RATIONALIZATION AND REGRET AMONG SMOKERS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES AND ASIA COUNTRIES: FINDINGS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL POLICY EVALUATION PROJECT

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Rationalization and regret are two common psychological experiences among smokers. They have been found to be negatively related to each other, and both related to intentions to quit. The goal of this paper was to compare the prevalence of rationalization and regret among adult smokers in 7 countries of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (the ITC Project: in four high-income "Western" countries (Canada, US, UK, and Australia) and in three Asian countries (Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea). We analyzed data from the baseline wave of the ITC Four Country Survey in Canada (N=2,193), US (N=2,115), UK (N=2,344), and Australia (N=2,271), the ITC Southeast Asia Survey in Malaysia (N=2,006) and Thailand (N=2,000), and the ITC Korea Survey (N=1000). The respondents were adult smokers (>=18 years) in each country. Prevalence of rationalization (i.e., "Everyone has got to die of something, so why not enjoy yourself and smoke") and of regret (i.e. "If you had to do it over again, you would not have started smoking") varied across countries. Rationalization was extremely low in Thailand (9%), compared to Korea (31%), US (33%), and Canada (34%), which in turn was lower than rationalization in Australia (42%), UK (46%). Malaysia showed the highest level of rationalization (49%). For prevalence of regret, the ordering of the countries was opposite, with Thailand having the highest levels of regret (92%), Malaysia, the lowest (79%), and the other countries falling in the middle (Korea at 87%; the other countries at the 90% level). The differences in rationalization and regret prevalence among these countries may reflect differences in history and intensity of tobacco control measures, whose resulting norms may affect the level of dissonance experienced by smokers as they continue to smoke. These results point to the potential importance of rationalization and regret as indicators of societal norms regarding smoking.

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