

mgr Dagmara Opoczyńska-Świeżewska

## **The influence of the introduced smoking ban in public places on young adults' opinions and behaviour**

### **Abstract**

#### **Introduction**

Smoking is one of the most important risk factors for cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - COPD) and reproductive and fetal developmental disorders. Tobacco is the most significant contributor to non-communicable diseases and is responsible for more deaths worldwide than obesity.

Tobacco use is one of the most serious public health problems. Each year, it contributes to preventable disability and death of 8 million people worldwide. Data collected in the European Union (EU) shows that almost 0.7 million deaths per year are related to tobacco use.

In 2003, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2003. Its main premise was to take action, at global and national level, to curb the tobacco epidemic. In order to achieve this goal, a ban on smoking in public places has been introduced in Poland since 15 November 2010, which protects non-smokers and their environment. The detailed provisions constitute the content of the amended Act of 9 November 1995 on the Protection of Public Health against the Effects of Use of Tobacco and Tobacco Products.

#### **Objective**

The main aim of this study is to explore the potential impact of the 2010 smoking ban in public places on the behaviour of young adults in Poland. The aim of the study is also to find out the attitudes of Poles towards the introduced anti-smoking policy restrictions in public places.

## **Material and methods**

The study is based on four studies on the discussed issues, which are presented in the chronological order.

### **This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the global survey on tobacco use among adults**

The data was collected between 2009–2010 as part of the International Global Adult Tobacco Survey project. The study was conducted based on population of age 15 and older. 7,840 full individual interviews were conducted (51.2% in rural and 48.8% in urban areas).

### **This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the analysis of data from a quantitative survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010-2012**

A secondary statistical analysis of third party data was used in the study. The material was obtained from the Public Opinion Research Centre. Polls are conducted among representative samples of about 1,000 adult inhabitants of Poland. The studies on cigarette smoking were carried out in 3 editions (2010, 2011, 2012).

### **This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the qualitative research part of the work**

Qualitative studies were carried out using Individual In-Depth Interviews. The interviews were conducted from February to December 2014. A total of 15 people participated in the study: 6 men and 9 women, aged 23-36 years, divided into three equal groups: smokers, non-smokers, and people who had quit smoking.

### **This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the analysis of data from a quantitative survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010-2019**

The research was conducted on the basis of data collected in the survey. That was a secondary data analysis of existing data collected by the Public Opinion Research Center. The study was carried out in 2 editions (2010 and 2019) on representative samples of approximately 1,000 Polish residents over 18 years of age.

## **Results**

### **This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the global survey on tobacco use among adults**

25.4% of rural residents at the age of 15 and above smoke tobacco daily (32.5% men and 17.9% women). In cities, this percentage corresponds to 30.3% (35.4% males and 25.8% females, respectively). Among the males and females, the highest percentage of daily tobacco smokers was found among respondents with vocational education (males 47.3% in urban and 41.8% in rural areas; females 36.8% and 23.5%, respectively). In both the rural and urban areas the lowest percentage of daily cigarette smokers among male respondents were those with higher education (24.9% in urban and 16.1% in rural areas). In the group of female respondents, the lowest incidence was observed among those with primary education (16.4% in urban, 11.7% in rural areas).

**This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the analysis of data from a quantitative survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010-2012**

The collected data on tobacco smoking before and after implementation of the Act show that the number of smokers remained at a comparable level – about 30% ( $p=0.891$ ). Between 2010–2012, an increase was observed in the percentage of people supporting the smoking ban in public places. The total number of people who definitely or rather supported the smoking ban increased from 75.6% in 2010 to 85.0% in 2012 ( $p<0.001$ ).

**This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the qualitative research part of the work**

9 out of 10 former smokers and non-smokers declared passive exposure to smoke at work, in catering and entertainment facilities, and at homes. 9 out of 10 non-smokers indicated a lack of smoking rooms in the workplace, schools, and in catering and entertainment facilities. Respondents emphasised their satisfaction with the introduction of the smoking ban, which has had a positive influence on their wellness and comfort while in such places.

**This refers to the part of the study dedicated to the analysis of data from a quantitative survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre in 2010-2019**

The proportion of adults declaring smoking traditional cigarettes in the years 2010-2019 decreased from 30.4% to 26.0%;  $p < 0.05$ . There was a decrease in the proportion of traditional cigarette smokers among males from 40.3% to 31.0%;  $p < 0.001$ . Among females, the values remained at the same level. In the period 2010-2019, the total support for the new legal regulations increased from 73.9% to 89.8%;  $p < 0.001$ ). Depending on the place of residence, the largest increase in support for the prohibition was recorded in cities with 100,000-499,999 inhabitants - from 65.9% to 92.4%;  $p < 0.001$ . The use of e-cigarettes in 2019 was rare, only 1.9% declared their use.

## **Conclusions**

- The majority of respondents supported a ban on smoking in public places. They expressed satisfaction with the introduction of smoke-free policies, which had a positive impact on their well-being and comfort in such places. They also noted that it protected non-smokers from the harmful effects of smoke.
- Among adults, the share of traditional cigarette smokers decreased significantly between 2010 and 2019, but the change was mainly in the male group. Among women, the share of cigarette smokers remained the same. A clear decrease in the share of cigarette smokers was also observed among residents of the largest cities (over 500,000 inhabitants).
- In the years 2010-2019 there has been an increase in the acceptance of legal restrictions on smoking in public places.
- There is a need for continued nationwide education to increase awareness of the dangers and negative health effects of smoking.