

Effects of new smoking regulations

The introduction of a comprehensive smoke-free law in all indoor workplaces (including bars and restaurants) is supported by a large majority of the population. In Italy, where such legislation was introduced in January 2005, more than 90% of the population are in favour of smoke-free areas or a total smoking ban in all public places [1, 2]. Such legislation has also led to substantial reduction in exposure to second-hand tobacco and to respiratory symptoms of bar workers [3]. Moreover, if anything, it favourably affects the business of bars and restaurants (9.6% of the population in Italy reported to go more frequently, and 7.4% less frequently, to bars and restaurants after the tobacco ban) [1].

No such ban of smoking in indoor public places has yet been adopted in Switzerland. Thus, we considered data of a survey on smoking conducted in September 2005 by DOXA, a branch of the Gallup International Association, on a sample of 2000 subjects aged 15–74, representative of the Swiss adult population in terms of age, sex and geographic area. The data were collected by *ad hoc* trained interviewers using a structured computer-assisted telephone interview.

In the adult Swiss population, 22.3% were current cigarette smokers (23.6% of men, 21.1% of women) and 19.1% former smokers (22.3% of men, 16.2% of women). Overall, 76.8% of the Swiss population were in favour of a total ban of smoking in all indoor public places, 62.2% in all workplaces (including private ones), and 64.1% in bars and restaurants. Among smokers, corresponding proportions were 61.9%, 49.5% and 34.1%, and among ex-smokers 79.6%, 62.6% and 68.4%.

This survey confirms that support for smoke-free policies is widespread in the populations of both sexes of many European countries—both non-smokers and smokers—and stresses, therefore, the urgency for adequate political intervention in this vital public health issue [4].

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