

Smoking in young and adult population, Italy 2009

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ABSTRACT

Aims and background. To monitor smoking prevalence and trends of young and adult populations in Italy.

Method and study design. A survey on smoking was conducted during March-April 2009 on a sample of 3213 participants (1546 men and 1667 women), representative of the Italian population aged 15 years or over. Data from a simplified questionnaire were collected in an over-sample of 1010 young individuals, reaching a total of 1390 participants aged 15-24 years (713 males and 677 females).

Results. In 2009, 25.4% of Italians described themselves as current cigarette smokers (28.9% of men and 22.3% of women). Among young people, male smoking prevalence steadily declined from 38% in 2001 to 29% in 2009. Smoking prevalence in young females decreased from 30% in 2001 to 19% in 2008, but increased to 23% in 2009. Among both males and females aged 15-17 years, smoking prevalence was around 10%. This increased in the 18-24 year age group, with 37.6% of current smokers among males and 28.9% among females. Among young current smokers, 45.5% reported that they would reduce the number of cigarettes smoked per day, 11.1% would quit smoking, and 4.3% would switch to hand-rolled cigarettes, assuming that the minimum price of a pack of cigarettes increased to €5.

Conclusions. Our findings indicate that smoking prevalence has decreased over recent years, particularly in the young. Still, over one-fourth of Italian adults are smokers. An increase in cigarette price represents an effective strategy to control tobacco, particularly in the young.

Key words: epidemiology, Italy, population survey, tobacco smoking.

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