

Legislation on smoking in enclosed public places in Scotland: how will we evaluate the impact?

Sally J. Haw, Laurence Gruer, Amanda Amos, Candace Currie, Colin Fischbacher, Geoffrey T. Fong, Gerard Hastings, Sally Malam, Jill Pell, Calum Scott and Sean Semple

Abstract

Background From 26 March 2006, smoking will be prohibited in *wholly* and *substantially enclosed public places* in Scotland, and it will be an offence to permit smoking or to smoke in no-smoking premises. We anticipate that implementation of the smoke-free legislation will result in significant health gains associated with reductions in exposure to both environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) and personal tobacco consumption as well as other social and economic impacts.

Methods Health Scotland in conjunction with the Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland and the Scottish Executive have developed a comprehensive evaluation strategy to assess the expected short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes. Using routine health, behavioural and economic data and commissioned research, we will assess the impact of the smoke-free legislation in eight key outcome areas – knowledge and attitudes, ETS exposure, compliance, culture, smoking prevalence and tobacco consumption, tobacco-related morbidity and mortality, economic impacts on the hospitality sector and health inequalities.

Conclusion The findings from this evaluation will make a significant contribution to the international understanding of the health effects of exposure to ETS and the broader social, cultural and economic impacts of smoke-free legislation.

Keywords: air pollution, public health, tobacco

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