

China Household Rules for Smoking

Fact Sheet

Background

Subnational smoke-free policies are increasingly common in China thereby raising the profile of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure in the household as a public health issue. Describing household rules for smoking, particularly in households with children, can help raise awareness about the harms of SHS and contribute to a change in social norms that supports compliance with smoke-free policies. This study was conducted in Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen.

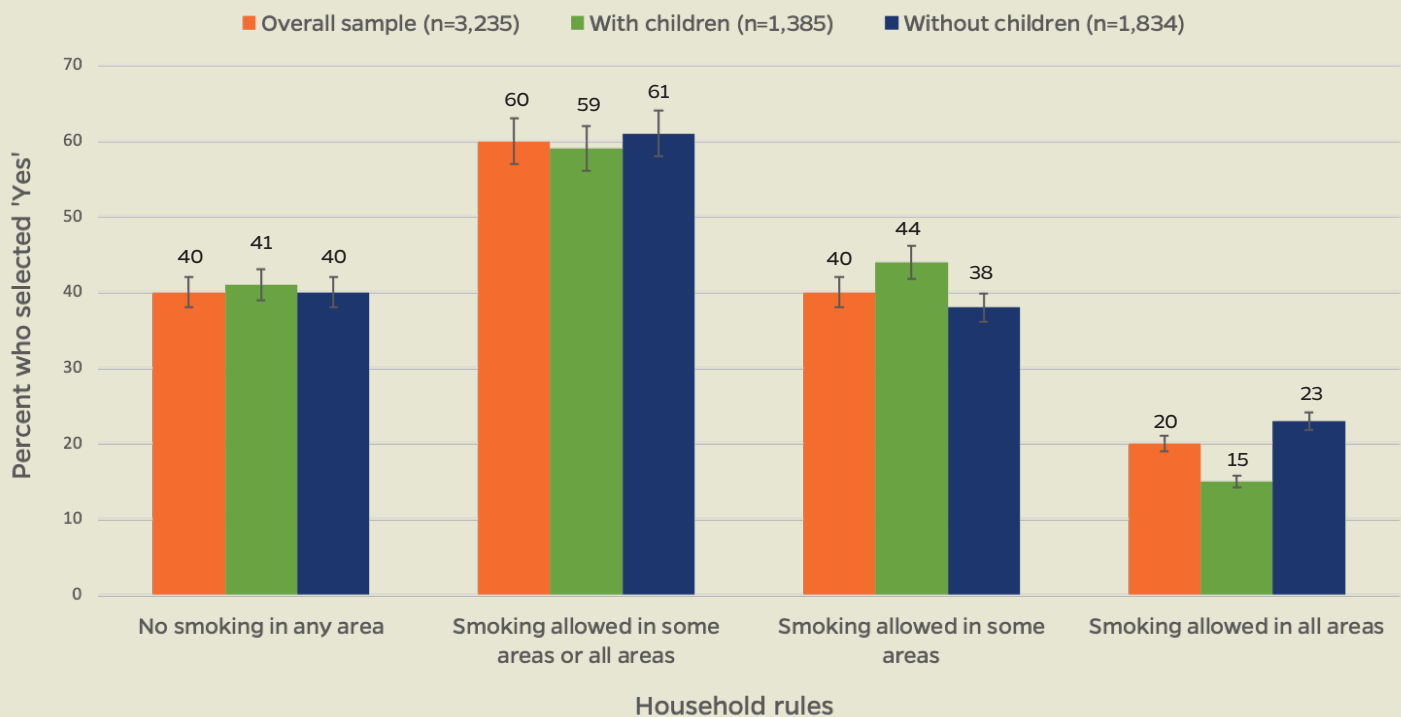
Key Findings

Majority of participants allowed smoking in some or all areas of the home:

- 60% of the overall sample allowed smoking in the home
- Presence or absence of children did not impact whether or not smoking was allowed in the home ($p=0.52$)

Living with children increased the probability that participants allowed smoking in some areas of the home, while it lowered the probability that they allowed smoking in all areas of the home:

- 20% of the overall sample allowed smoking in all areas of the home, 40% allowed smoking in some areas of the home, and 40% did not allow it
- Among those who reported allowing smoking in some or all areas of the home ($n=1,941$), 42% live with children and 58% live without children. Twenty-six percent of those with children allowed smoking in all areas of the home versus 37% of those without children. Seventy-four percent of those with children allowed smoking in some areas of the home versus 63% of those without children. These differences between those with and without children are significant ($p<0.0001$)



Study Design

Data were collected in December 2017. Approximately 1,066 adult (>18 years of age) residents from each of the three cities were recruited via street intercept to complete a 25-minute tablet-based survey (50% smokers, 50% male, and 50% <40 years of age). Participants reported whether they lived with children <18 years old, and their household rules for smoking.



Discussion

With 60% of participants having allowed smoking in their household, SHS exposure in the household is a major public health issue in China. Extrapolating to the 58 million residents of Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen, these data suggest that over 35 million Chinese adults in these three cities allow smoking in their homes (Note: Our data were not intended to be representative).

While living with children was not associated with having a smoke-free home, it may have increased the probability that participants allowed smoking in some (but not all) areas of the home while it lowered the probability that they allowed smoking in all areas of the home. These findings suggest Chinese adults may attempt to limit secondhand smoke exposure to children by allowing smoke in select areas of the home rather than all areas. However, allowing smoking in some areas still exposes children to the harms of secondhand smoke.

Educational interventions or campaigns may be needed to highlight the dangers of smoking anywhere in the household. An emphasis on the dangers to children may aid in messaging efforts. Increased knowledge about the harms of SHS may lead to greater support for, and compliance with, smoke-free public places.



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