

Smoking in Italy 2007, with a focus on the young

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ABSTRACT

Aims and background. Although smoking has been on the decline in Italy, its prevalence is still high among younger individuals. We analyzed data from the 2007 tobacco survey and present the findings on smoking prevalence by selected characteristics, with a particular focus on the young.

Methods. The data were collected from 3,057 Italians aged 15 years and older in March and April 2007 who were randomly selected to be representative of the general Italian population. The prevalence of self-reported current smoking was estimated overall and by age group, education, geographic region, and gender. Additionally, intentions to quit and trends in smoking in the total population and among individuals aged 15-24 years were estimated.

Results. The smoking prevalence overall was 23.5% (27.9% among males and 19.3% among females), with higher estimates among adults living in central regions and among men with a lower educational level. Among individuals aged 15-24 years, since 2001 the male prevalence has fluctuated between 30% and 35% and the female prevalence between 20% and 25%. Overall, the prevalence decreased by approximately 40% in this age group. A small percentage (3.3%) reported having intention to quit smoking in the next 6 months.

Conclusions. The smoking prevalence is the lowest estimate reported since 1957, and the gap between men and women has diminished. Compared to earlier birth cohorts, the lower current estimate among younger adults suggests that the rates will decrease in the future.

Key words: adult smoking, population-based survey, trends in smoking, youth smoking.

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