

Barriers in managing tobacco dependence in under 18s': highlights from interviews with clinicians in Queensland

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Introduction and Aims: Approximately 1 in 20 secondary students are current tobacco smokers¹. Many are not ready to quit and their tobacco dependence can have social impacts (e.g. schooling) as well as health impacts.^{2,3} This study aims to understand the challenges in supporting young people aged under 18 to manage tobacco dependence in different settings in Queensland.

Method: A snowball recruitment method was used to identify eligible clinicians. The 12 semi-structured phone interviews lasting 30-60 minutes were coded by themes through a grounded theory approach.

Key Findings: Major themes were identified in relation to the research question "What are the difficulties in managing tobacco dependence in young people?" These included: smoking norms in the home and social environment; difficulties with Nicotine Replacement Therapy based interventions; behavioural interventions that are often adult-centric and psychosocial complexity amongst some young people impacting on their ability to quit smoking.

Discussions and Conclusions: Most existing tobacco treatment information and interventions are targeted towards adults and focus on tobacco cessation. Our study highlights the difficulties this creates for clinicians working with young people under 18 who are frequently pre-contemplative, lack autonomy, and often exist within institutional settings like schools, hospitals or under the care of the Department of Child Safety. We suggest the need for under 18 specific treatment information and interventions that considers: the young person's goals; the institutional settings in which they exist; and addressing non-health related harms associated with smoking such as disengagement from school.

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References

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