

Prioritising Populations to Increase Smoking Cessation: Targeted Nicotine Dependence Treatment within Alcohol and Other Drug Services

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Introduction / Issues: While Australia has been very successful at reducing the smoking rate among the middle class through population-wide campaigns. There are still sub-populations that experience high rates of nicotine dependence, including among people accessing alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and harm reduction services.

Method / Approach: Data from the 2018 ACT AOD Service Users' Satisfaction and Outcomes Survey (SUSOS) has been applied to key national and ACT data sets to investigate smoking rates and potential impact of programs.

Key Findings: ACT data shows that 77% of people accessing specialist AOD services identify as people who smoke, with rates even higher for some intervention types. Of the approximately 29,000 ACT residents who smoke, over 10% make contact with AOD treatment and harm reduction services annually. Data shows that a large proportion of people accessing these services want to quit, and feel that they could with appropriate support. An analysis of current targeted programs show that these could make a difference to the overall smoking rate.

Discussions and Conclusions: These findings demonstrate a key opportunity for the ACT, and Australia more broadly, to further reduce tobacco-related harms. Place-based targeted interventions delivered in AOD services have the potential to reach over 10% of people who currently smoke in the ACT. Current programs could make a difference, but are under-resourced. Other priority groups, such as those living with mental illness, could be similarly targeted.

Implications for Practice or Policy (optional): The ACT is striving towards a 5% smoking rate. The data shows that it is likely that this could best be achieved by funding targeted place-based support where people who smoke are accessing services.

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