



Press Release

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Smoke-free cars can cut child tobacco risk by a third, study finds

Banning in-car smoking when children are present can reduce their exposure to tobacco smoke by more than 30 per cent, research shows.

The study team says their findings should pave the way for more countries to outlaw smoking in cars carrying child passengers.

The practice, which is still permitted in the vast majority of countries, can increase the risk of asthma attacks and severe lung infections, the team says.

Researchers analysed data from studies involving 160,000 children. They found that banning tobacco in cars cut children's overall exposure to smoke in cars by 31 per cent and this reduction may reduce child asthma by up to 2.4 per cent.

Recent research among teenagers in seven European cities found between six and 43 per cent are exposed to cigarette smoke in cars every week.

Public support for smoke-free car laws is generally high, however. A recent survey across six European countries showed that more than 95 per cent of adult smokers are in favour of such regulation.

A team from the University of Edinburgh, Imperial College London, and Erasmus MC in Rotterdam, analysed data from 11 studies conducted in the UK, Canada and the US. Individuals risk a fine if they smoke in the car when children are present in these countries.

Professor Aziz Sheikh, Director of the University of Edinburgh's Usher Institute, said experiences worldwide show that smoke-free car legislation is an effective way of reducing tobacco smoke exposure to children's developing lungs.

Professor Sheikh said: "It is vital that the many countries that have still not instituted this safe and efficient policy do so to protect the respiratory health and wellbeing of children, wherever they are in the world."

Dr Jasper Been, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Erasmus MC, said legislation to make cars smoke-free when children are present had already proved effective in the UK and the US.

Dr Been said: "In addition to its direct effects, the policy can contribute to a change in social norms. It should no longer be accepted that children are exposed to harmful cigarette smoke and certainly not in a small enclosed space, such as a car."

The research is published in *The Lancet Public Health*:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(21\)00097-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00097-9/fulltext)

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