



# 14<sup>th</sup> SINGAPORE PUBLIC HEALTH & OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE CONFERENCE

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## PREVENTIVE HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

### NATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL POLICIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SINGAPORE YOUNG MALE ADULTS

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#### **Background**

Between 2016 and 2018, tobacco control legislations have undergone several amendments to further restrict tobacco use in Singapore. These included tobacco tax increase, point-of-sale display bans and raising the minimum legal age for smoking from 18 to 21 years. This study explored the attitudes towards these policy changes and the perceived effectiveness of legislations from the perspectives of young male adults in Singapore

#### **Methods**

A total of 29 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted among young male adults who have completed their National Service in 2017/18 and self-reported as a smoker at pre-enlistment screening.

#### **Results**

Young male smoker perspectives on Singapore tobacco policies including taxation, smoke-free environments, point-of-sale display bans on tobacco products, graphic health warnings, and raising the minimum legal age of smoking to 21, were evaluated. Participants held the view that cigarette pricing to be a highly effective approach to control their smoking behaviour because it has a direct impact on their tobacco affordability, and they shared that the least effective was point-of-sale display ban and graphic health warnings.

#### **Conclusion**

Our study results demonstrate that participants were well aware of tobacco control policies in Singapore, but they did not always fully accept them or understand the rationale behind them. Participants felt that it would have some effect on discouraging people from smoking by delaying the onset of smoking and denormalization. Our findings highlighted that tobacco control measures should be implemented along with public education to correct misperceptions and increase public support for tobacco control measures in Singapore.