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Special Topics Report III

Social Data Collected by the General Household Survey

Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong

Special Topics
Report III

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by the General
Household Survey

Smoking Patterns

INTRODUCTION

An enquiry on smoking patterns was carried out, for the third time, in the General Household Survey in July 1984. Its aim was to estimate the number of cigarette smokers in Hong Kong and their daily cigarette consumption, as in the previous two surveys conducted during the first quarter of 1982 and in March 1983, and also to collect information on ex-smokers and occasional smokers.

2. The sample for this survey consisted of 4 528 households, of which 4 380 were successfully enumerated. All persons aged 12 and over in the sample were asked their cigarette smoking patterns. A total of 13 303 persons were interviewed.

3. "Daily smokers" in this survey refers to those who had a habit of smoking cigarettes daily although they might not smoke on certain days because of illness or other reasons which prevented them from smoking. This is comparable with "smokers" defined in the previous two surveys. "Ex-smokers", on the other hand, refers to those who had had a habit of smoking cigarettes daily for at least six months but had already given it up; whereas those who did not have a habit of smoking cigarettes daily but smoked occasionally are considered as "occasional smokers".

4. It should be noted that the following analysis has excluded teenage smokers (those aged 12-14). Their number in the sample was too small (due to the small sample size and the possibility that these smokers were under-reported in the survey) to give reliable estimates. However, data on those aged 15-19 are presented as far as possible since the change in the smoking pattern of this age group may provide useful information. Readers are, nevertheless, reminded that figures in connection with this age group may be under-estimated and they are also subject to large sampling error due to the small sample size.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Daily smokers

5. 19% of the population aged 15 and over were daily cigarette smokers. The estimates in the previous two surveys conducted during the first quarter of 1982 and in March 1983 were 23% and 20% respectively. In absolute terms, the estimated number of daily smokers was 744 000, which was 144 000 and 40 000 less than the estimates in the two previous surveys. (Table 1)

6. Cigarette smokers were more common among males than females. 33% of males aged 15 and over claimed to smoke cigarettes daily, as compared with 4% for females; the corresponding figures in the first survey were 40% and 6% respectively, those in the second survey, 34% and 5%. (Table 1)

7. In all three surveys, the tendency to smoke generally increased with age for both sexes. There was an abrupt increase in the percentage of daily cigarette smokers after their teens among males. Among males aged 40 and over, over two-fifths of them were daily smokers. As regards females, the rate of smoking increased with age, from about 1% among those aged below 40 to 12% among those aged 60 and over. (Table 1)

8. Over half of the daily cigarette smokers consumed 11-20 cigarettes a day. On average, the number of cigarettes consumed per day by male smokers was 15; that by female smokers, 11. The corresponding figures in the first survey were 17 and 11 respectively; those in the second survey, 14 and 11. (Table 2)

9. Cigarette consumption generally increased with age among daily cigarette smokers and was highest among those aged 40-59. However, the daily consumption dropped slightly among those aged 60 and over. This pattern was the same in all three surveys. (Table 2)

10. As regards the occupational pattern of daily cigarette smokers, professionals, and technical and clerical workers had the lowest rate of smoking among the economically active population. The rates for homemakers and other economically inactive persons were also low, but that for retired persons was high. (Table 3)

Ex-smokers

11. Some 4% of the population aged 15 and over (146 000) reported that they were ex-smokers. Over two-fifths of them were aged 60 and over. (Table 4)

12. One in every ten persons aged 60 and over was an ex-smoker. The rate decreased steadily with age. (Table 4)

13. Over two-fifths of the ex-smokers gave up smoking primarily because of health although they had not been advised by a doctor to do so, whereas over one-quarter of them abstained from smoking on a doctor's advice and about one-fifth did so because of cost. (Table 5)

14. More than four-fifths of the ex-smokers had abstained from smoking for more than one year at the time of the survey; about one-sixth, for one year or less but more than one month, and less than 1%, for one month or less. (Table 5)

Occasional smokers

15. 213 000 persons aged 15 and over reported that they smoked occasionally. Over half of the occasional smokers were aged between 20 and 39. (Table 6)

16. One in every eight administrative and managerial workers was an occasional smoker, which was the highest rate among all occupational groups. (Table 6)

17. Only 32 000 (or 15%) of the occasional smokers had had a habit of smoking cigarettes daily for at least six months previously. Two-fifths of them gave up daily smoking because of health but without a doctor's advice; over one-quarter of them did so because of cost, and about one-sixth did so on a doctor's advice. (Table 7)

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Table 1 : Daily cigarette smokers by age and sex

Age	Jan - Mar 82			Mar 83			Jul 84		
	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)
<u>Overall</u>	<u>888.4</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>23.3</u>	<u>783.9</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>19.9</u>	<u>744.5</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>18.7</u>
15 - 19	22.6	2.6	4.2	16.7	2.2	3.4	11.2	1.5	2.3
20 - 29	189.2	20.7	17.5	158.4	20.2	14.1	153.2	20.6	14.1
30 - 39	175.6	19.5	25.9	160.9	20.5	21.5	158.3	21.3	19.4
40 - 49	165.9	18.6	32.8	129.6	16.5	26.9	115.9	15.6	24.3
50 - 59	170.7	19.0	35.4	157.0	20.0	31.2	149.1	20.0	29.2
60 and over	164.3	19.6	31.1	161.2	20.6	27.8	156.8	21.0	26.2
<u>Male</u>	<u>786.3</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>39.7</u>	<u>692.2</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>34.4</u>	<u>663.7</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>32.8</u>
15 - 19	21.7	2.8	7.9	15.9	2.3	6.3	11.2	1.7	4.6
20 - 29	181.3	22.6	32.0	150.2	21.7	26.1	145.9	22.0	26.0
30 - 39	167.6	21.1	45.1	150.5	21.8	38.0	153.2	23.1	35.5
40 - 49	151.1	19.2	53.9	121.1	17.5	46.1	109.2	16.4	41.5
50 - 59	143.8	18.1	56.9	134.5	19.4	51.0	127.4	19.2	47.7
60 and over	120.9	16.2	51.6	120.0	17.3	45.9	116.8	17.6	45.5
<u>Female</u>	<u>102.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>91.7</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>4.8</u>	<u>80.8</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>4.1</u>
15 - 19	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.9	0.3	-	-	-
20 - 29	7.9	7.2	1.5	8.2	9.0	1.5	7.3	9.1	1.4
30 - 39	8.0	7.7	2.6	10.4	11.4	3.0	5.1	6.3	1.3
40 - 49	14.9	14.3	6.6	8.5	9.3	3.9	6.7	8.3	3.1
50 - 59	26.9	25.6	11.7	22.5	24.5	9.4	21.7	26.9	8.9
60 and over	43.4	44.3	14.8	41.2	44.9	12.9	40.0	49.4	11.7

* As a percentage of the total number of persons in the respective sub-group.

Table 2 : Daily cigarette smokers by age, sex and daily consumption of cigarettes

Sub-group	Jnn - Mar 82				Mar 83				Jul 84						
	Cigarettes Smoked Per Day		Cigarettes Smoked Per Day		Cigarettes Smoked Per Day		Cigarettes Smoked Per Day		Cigarettes Smoked Per Day		Cigarettes Smoked Per Day				
	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 & over	Total	Mean	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 & over	Total	Mean	1 - 10	11 - 20	21 & over	Total	Mean
Age															
15 - 19	No. ('000)	10.4	11.0	1.2	22.6	12	7.4	9.1	0.3	16.7	11	5.7	4.5	1.0	11.2
	%	46.0	48.5	5.5	100.0		44.3	54.1	1.6	100.0		51.4	40.0	8.6	100.0
20 - 29	No. ('000)	59.1	101.5	28.6	189.2	15	64.8	78.5	15.1	158.4	13	52.7	83.0	17.5	153.2
	%	31.2	53.7	15.1	100.0		40.9	49.6	9.5	100.0		34.4	54.2	11.4	100.0
30 - 39	No. ('000)	43.8	89.7	42.1	175.6	17	54.4	82.6	23.9	160.9	15	38.3	98.6	21.4	158.3
	%	24.9	51.1	24.0	100.0		33.8	51.4	14.8	100.0		24.2	62.3	13.5	100.0
40 - 49	No. ('000)	31.7	90.1	44.1	165.9	18	38.4	74.1	17.0	129.6	15	24.6	67.7	23.6	115.9
	%	19.2	54.3	26.5	100.0		29.7	57.2	13.1	100.0		21.2	58.4	20.4	100.0
50 - 59	No. ('000)	38.5	89.3	42.8	170.7	18	53.3	79.1	24.7	157.0	15	36.4	82.4	30.3	149.1
	%	22.6	52.3	25.1	100.0		33.9	50.4	15.7	100.0		24.4	55.3	20.3	100.0
60 and over	No. ('000)	57.6	82.5	24.1	164.3	15	70.3	76.1	14.8	161.2	13	60.4	78.8	17.6	156.8
	%	35.1	50.2	14.7	100.0		43.6	47.2	9.2	100.0		38.5	50.3	11.2	100.0
Sex															
Male	No. ('000)	186.4	424.2	175.7	786.3	17	237.5	366.8	87.9	692.2	14	175.3	383.7	104.7	663.7
	%	23.7	53.9	22.4	100.0		34.3	53.0	12.7	100.0		26.4	57.8	15.8	100.0
Female	No. ('000)	54.8	40.0	7.2	102.0	11	51.1	32.7	8.0	91.7	11	42.8	31.3	6.7	80.8
	%	53.7	39.2	7.1	100.0		55.7	35.6	8.7	100.0		53.0	36.7	8.3	100.0
Overall	No. ('000)	241.2	464.2	182.9	888.4	16	288.6	399.5	95.8	783.9	14	218.1	413.0	111.4	744.5
	%	27.1	52.3	20.6	100.0		36.8	51.0	12.2	100.0		29.3	55.7	15.0	100.0

Table 3 : Daily cigarette smokers by occupation

Occupation	Jan - Mar 82			Mar 83			Jul 84		
	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)
Professional, technical and related workers	22.1	2.5	13.2	18.4	2.4	12.1	12.5	1.7	8.5
Administrative and managerial workers	33.0	3.7	35.5	26.4	3.4	32.4	31.0	4.2	30.0
Clerical and related workers	43.7	4.9	12.7	43.1	5.5	10.8	33.2	4.5	8.3
Sales workers	82.9	9.3	34.2	68.9	8.8	30.9	66.4	8.9	26.6
Service workers	129.8	14.6	35.4	126.3	16.1	30.9	120.7	16.2	29.0
Agricultural workers and fishermen	12.3	1.4	37.9	12.9	1.6	41.2	8.6	1.1	36.0
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	380.0	42.8	32.2	303.7	38.7	27.8	310.6	41.7	26.3
Unemployed persons	33.4	3.8	40.6	44.2	5.6	31.8	23.6	3.2	24.7
Home-makers	51.5	5.8	7.6	44.5	5.7	6.3	38.0	5.1	5.4
Retired persons	75.5	8.5	34.6	80.2	10.2	29.6	83.3	11.2	29.8
Other economically inactive persons	24.1	2.7	5.4	15.4	2.0	3.6	16.6	2.2	4.3
Overall	888.4	100.0	23.3	783.9	100.0	19.9	744.5	100.0	18.7

* As a percentage of the total number of persons in the respective sub-group.

Table 4 : Ex-smokers by age, sex and occupation

Sub-group	Jul 84		
	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)
<u>Age</u>			
15 - 19	0.3	0.2	0.1
20 - 29	5.8	4.0	0.5
30 - 39	19.8	13.6	2.4
40 - 49	23.3	16.0	4.9
50 - 59	32.9	22.6	6.4
60 and over	63.5	43.6	10.6
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	122.0	83.8	6.0
Female	23.6	16.2	1.2
<u>Occupation</u>			
Professional, technical and related workers	3.2	2.2	2.2
Administrative and managerial workers	3.8	2.6	3.7
Clerical workers	8.6	5.9	2.2
Sales workers	11.2	7.7	4.5
Service workers	15.3	10.5	3.7
Agricultural workers and fishermen	1.3	0.9	5.3
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	44.4	30.5	3.8
Unemployed persons	4.5	3.1	4.7
Home-makers	11.8	8.1	1.7
Retired persons	36.4	25.0	13.0
Other economically inactive persons	5.1	3.5	1.3
Overall	145.6	100.0	3.7

* As a percentage of the total number of persons in the respective sub-group.

Table 5 : Ex-smokers by main reason for giving up smoking and duration of abstinence

Sub-group	Jul 84	
	No. ('000)	%
<u>Main reason for giving up smoking</u>		
Health (without a doctor's advice)	62.6	43.0
On a doctor's advice	38.6	26.5
Cost	28.7	19.7
Objection from or bad effect on family members	5.4	3.7
Others	10.3	7.1
<u>Duration of abstinence</u>		
More than one year	121.7	83.6
One year or less but more than one month	23.6	16.2
One month or less	0.3	0.2
Overall	145.6	100.0

Table 6 : Occasional smokers by age, sex and occupation

Sub-group	Jul 84		
	No. ('000)	%	Rate* (%)
<u>Age</u>			
15 - 19	8.9	4.2	1.8
20 - 29	68.0	32.0	6.2
30 - 39	54.0	25.4	6.6
40 - 49	28.7	13.5	6.0
50 - 59	29.4	13.8	5.8
60 and over	23.6	11.1	3.9
<u>Sex</u>			
Male	184.8	86.9	9.1
Female	27.8	13.1	1.4
<u>Occupation</u>			
Professional, technical and related workers	6.1	2.8	4.1
Administrative and managerial workers	13.1	6.2	12.7
Clerical workers	17.6	8.3	4.4
Sales workers	17.2	8.1	6.9
Service workers	35.8	16.8	8.6
Agricultural workers and fishermen	1.6	0.7	6.7
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	89.7	42.2	7.6
Unemployed persons	7.3	3.5	7.7
Home-makers	10.2	4.8	1.5
Retired persons	11.2	5.3	4.0
Other economically inactive persons	2.8	1.3	0.7
Overall	212.6	100.0	5.3

* As a percentage of the total number of persons in the respective sub-group.

Table 7 : Occasional smokers* by main reason for giving up daily smoking

Main Reason for Giving up Daily Smoking	Jul 84	
	No. ('000)	%
Health (without a doctor's advice)	12.8	39.6
On a doctor's advice	5.1	15.9
Cost	8.9	27.7
Objection from or bad effect on family members	1.9	5.9
Others	3.5	10.9
Overall	32.2	100.0

* Includes only those who had had a habit of smoking cigarettes daily for at least six months previously.

Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Family Planning

Year	Number of Births	Number of Abortions	Number of Abortions as a Percentage of Births
1960	1,200,000	100,000	8.3%
1961	1,250,000	110,000	8.8%
1962	1,300,000	120,000	9.2%
1963	1,350,000	130,000	9.6%
1964	1,400,000	140,000	10.0%
1965	1,450,000	150,000	10.3%
1966	1,500,000	160,000	10.7%
1967	1,550,000	170,000	10.9%
1968	1,600,000	180,000	11.3%
1969	1,650,000	190,000	11.5%
1970	1,700,000	200,000	11.8%

Include only those who had a birth or abortion
during the year.