

# Secondhand Smoke in Flats

A survey was conducted in December 2004, to estimate the exposure of, and behaviours regarding secondhand smoke (SHS) in the flatting population. Inhabitants of flats who advertised in the Dominion Post, and on the Stuff and Victoria University websites were telephoned with a 20-question survey.

The survey found that the advertisements were largely for flats in central Wellington, and that the flatting population tended to have higher than average qualifications, and be aged 24 or over, with a majority of women. Nearly all (94%) of the interviewees were students or in full time employment. Twenty two per cent were smokers - a lower level than in the 20-29 year age group of the general population.

Most (83%) of the flats in the survey restricted smoking to outside. Those that didn't were more likely to contain flatmates who smoked and not to have specific rules about smoking from the landlord. The most common reason for not allowing smoking inside the flat was a dislike for the smell of smoke. Of the flats that did allow smoking inside, most tried to do something to minimise its effects, wrongly believing that this is effective. Most interviewees (90%) knew that SHS was harmful, though few people used this as a reason to restrict smoking.

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