

INTRODUCTION

An enquiry was conducted via the General Household Survey in January 1996 to obtain information on the number of cigarette smokers and their cigarette smoking pattern for assessing the effectiveness of and reviewing the anti-smoking policy. Similar enquiries of cigarette smoking were conducted during January to March 1982, in March 1983, July of 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1990 and during August to September 1993. Comparison of enquiry findings is made, where appropriate.

2. The sample of this enquiry consisted of 3 201 households of which 3 024 (or 94.5%) were successfully enumerated. Persons aged 12 or over were interviewed to identify if they were daily smokers or ex-smokers. Daily smokers were asked the number of cigarettes they smoked daily, the age they started smoking, reason for starting to smoke, whether they had ever tried to give up smoking, and if so why they failed to do so. For those who had not ever tried to give up smoking, they were asked if they wanted to do so, and also reason for so doing or not so doing. Ex-smokers were similarly asked the age they started smoking, reason for starting to smoke and that for giving it up then.

3. It should be noted that as smoking has become a less socially acceptable behaviour, respondents especially youngsters, were prone to under-report their cigarette smoking behaviour in this enquiry. In this sample, none of the enumerated respondent was aged 12-14, probably due to the small sample size involved and the tendency of under-reporting. As such, in order to give more reliable estimates, teenagers in the age group of 12-14 were all excluded from the analysis and both types of smokers presented in this report i.e. daily smokers and ex-smokers only refer to persons aged 15 or over. Readers are thus advised to interpret the enquiry findings with caution.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

4. In this enquiry, 'smoking' referred to cigarette smoking, excluding cigar and pipe-smoking. 'Daily smokers' were defined to include persons aged 12 or over who at the time of enumeration had a daily smoking habit (although they might not smoke on certain days because of illness or other reasons which prevented them from doing so). On the other hand, 'ex-smokers' were defined to include those previously with a daily smoking habit for a continuous period of six months or more but at the time of enumeration having given up smoking.

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TABLE SUMMARY

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1. Smokers aged 15 or over by type
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 - d. by activity status
 - e. by reason for starting smoking
 - f. by whether had tried to give up smoking and whether wanted to do so
 - g. who had tried to give up smoking by reason for failing to do so
 - * h. who had never tried but wanted to give up smoking by reason for not trying to give up smoking
 - * i. who had never tried and did not want to give up smoking by reason for not wanting to give up smoking
3. Employed daily smokers by occupation
4. Ex-smokers
 - a. by age/sex
 - b. by reason for giving up smoking

Notes: Figures in the tables may not add up to the respective totals due to rounding.

'.' signifies nil.

'..' signifies not applicable/not available.

* Tables not to be included in the survey report.

Table 1 Smokers aged 15 or over by type of smokers

Enquiry period	Daily smokers		Ex-smokers [@]	
	No. (‘000)	Rate*	No. (‘000)	Rate*
Jan-Mar 82	888.4	23.3
Mar 83	783.9	19.9
Jul 84	744.5	18.7	145.6	3.7
Jul 86	713.4	17.4	132.9	3.2
Jul 88	723.9	16.8	138.3	3.2
Jul 90	691.9	15.7	102.7	2.3
Aug-Sep 93	687.1	14.9	134.5	2.9
Jan 96	740.4	14.8	240.3	4.8

* As a percentage of the total number of persons aged 15 or over in the respective period.

@ It refers to those who had previously had a daily smoking habit for a continuous period of at least six months but had given up smoking.

Table 2a Daily smokers by age and sex

Age group	Male			Female			Overall		
	No. ('000)	%	Rate*	No. ('000)	%	Rate*	No. ('000)	%	Rate*
15 - 19	14.1	2.1	5.9	2.4	3.1	1.3	16.5	2.2	3.8
20 - 29	99.7	15.1	23.0	22.0	27.5	4.1	121.7	16.4	12.5
30 - 39	173.6	26.3	29.0	15.9	19.8	2.5	189.5	25.6	15.2
40 - 49	148.6	22.5	30.0	11.0	13.7	2.4	159.6	21.6	16.8
50 - 59	99.7	15.1	35.3	9.8	12.2	4.1	109.4	14.8	20.9
60 or over	124.7	18.9	29.7	19.0	23.7	4.0	143.7	19.4	16.1
Overall	660.3	100.0	26.7	80.1	100.0	3.1	740.4	100.0	14.8
		(89.2)			(10.8)			(100.0)	

* As a percentage of the total number of persons aged 15 or over in the respective age and sex sub-groups.

Note: Figures in brackets represent the proportion to all daily smokers.

Table 2b Daily smokers by age starting smoking weekly and sex

Age starting smoking weekly	Male		Female		Total	
	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%
Under 15	68.5	10.4	6.7	8.4	75.2	10.2
15 - 19	299.6	45.4	34.2	42.7	333.8	45.1
20 - 24	205.4	31.1	22.0	27.5	227.4	30.7
25 - 29	54.4	8.2	4.3	5.3	58.7	7.9
30 - 39	25.7	3.9	7.9	9.9	33.6	4.5
40 or over	6.7	1.0	4.9	6.1	11.6	1.6
Total	660.3	100.0	80.1	100.0	740.4	100.0

Table 2c Daily smokers by age/sex and daily consumption of cigarettes

Age group/sex	No. of cigarettes smoked per day								Mean	
	1 - 10		11 - 20		21 & over		Total			
	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%	No. ('000)	%		
Age group										
15 - 19	7.9	48.1	7.9	48.1	0.6	3.7	16.5	100.0	14	
20 - 29	61.7	50.8	56.2	46.2	3.7	3.0	121.7	100.0	14	
30 - 39	74.6	39.4	97.2	51.3	17.7	9.4	189.5	100.0	16	
40 - 49	48.9	30.7	88.6	55.6	22.0	13.8	159.6	100.0	17	
50 - 59	37.9	34.6	58.7	53.6	12.8	11.7	109.4	100.0	17	
60 or over	58.1	40.4	74.0	51.5	11.6	8.1	143.7	100.0	15	
Sex										
Male	239.7	36.3	358.3	54.3	62.4	9.4	660.3	100.0	16	
Female	49.5	61.8	24.5	30.5	6.1	7.6	80.1	100.0	13	
Overall	289.2	39.1	382.7	51.7	68.5	9.2	740.4	100.0	16	

Table 2d Daily smokers by activity status

Activity status	No. ('000)	%	Rate*
Economically active	590.0	79.7	18.9
Employed	563.7	(95.5)	18.6
Unemployed	26.3	(4.5)	27.7
Economically inactive	150.4	20.3	7.9
Home-makers	25.1	(16.7)	3.3
Retired persons	105.8	(70.3)	16.6
Others	19.6	(13.0)	4.0
Overall	740.4	100.0	14.8

* As a percentage of the total number of persons aged 15 or over in the respective activity status sub-groups.

Note : Figures in brackets represent the proportion to the daily smokers in the corresponding activity status.

Table 2e Daily smokers by reason for starting smoking

Reason for starting smoking	No. (‘000)	%
Influence of friends	350.9	47.4
Out of curiosity	119.8	16.2
Enhancing spirit	69.1	9.3
Necessary in social occasions	51.4	6.9
Influence of family members	48.3	6.5
Killing time	40.4	5.5
Easing tension	34.8	4.7
To look more mature/stylish	19.0	2.6
Others	6.7	0.9
Total	740.4	100.0

Table 2f Daily smokers by whether had tried to give up smoking and whether wanted to do so

Whether had tried to give up smoking and whether wanted to do so	No. (^{'000})	%
Those who had tried to give up smoking but failed	305.7	41.3
Those who had never tried but wanted to give up smoking	45.2	6.1
Those who had never tried and did not want to give up smoking	389.4	52.6
Total	740.4	100.0

Table 2g Daily smokers who had tried to give up smoking by reason for failing to do so

Reason for failing to give up smoking	No. (‘000)	%
Had formed a habit or for killing time	83.8	27.4
Being not determined enough	68.5	22.4
Feeling physiologically uncomfortable	47.1	15.4
Most friends or colleagues were smokers	33.0	10.8
Necessary in social occasions	27.5	9.0
Enhancing spirit	26.3	8.6
Too easy to get cigarettes	12.8	4.2
Others	6.7	2.2
Total	305.7	100.0

Table 2h Daily smokers who had never tried but wanted to give up smoking by reason for not trying to give up smoking

Reason for not trying to give up smoking	No. (‘000)	%
Had formed a habit or for killing time	15.3	33.8
Being not determined enough	10.4	23.0
Enhancing spirit	6.1	13.5
Most friends or colleagues were smokers	5.5	12.2
Too easy to get cigarettes	3.7	8.1
Feeling physiologically uncomfortable	1.8	4.1
Necessary in social occasions	1.2	2.7
Others	1.2	2.7
Total	45.2	100.0

Table 2i Daily smokers who had never tried and did not want to give up smoking by reason for not wanting to give up smoking

Reason for not wanting to give up smoking	No. (‘000)	%
Had formed a habit or for killing time	243.9	62.6
Enhancing spirit	39.1	10.0
Necessary in social occasions	32.4	8.3
Most friends or colleagues were smokers	26.3	6.8
Feeling physiologically uncomfortable	17.1	4.4
Not necessary	12.2	3.1
Being not determined enough	8.6	2.2
Others	9.8	2.5
Total	389.4	100.0

Table 3 Employed daily smokers by occupation

Occupation	No. ('000)	%	Rate*
Administrative and managerial workers	67.9	12.0	21.0
Professionals and associate professionals	61.1	10.8	10.8
Clerks	36.1	6.4	6.4
Service workers and shop sales workers	96.0	17.0	22.1
Craft and related workers	104.5	18.5	34.1
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	89.3	15.8	29.1
Elementary occupations	107.6	19.1	20.7
Others	1.2	0.2	25.0
Overall	563.7	100.0	18.6

* As a percentage of the total number of employed persons in the respective occupation sub-groups.

Table 4a Ex-smokers by age/sex

Age group/sex	No. (‘000)	%	Rate*
Age group			
15 - 29	16.5	6.9	1.2
30 - 39	29.3	12.2	2.4
40 - 49	48.3	20.1	5.1
50 - 59	42.2	17.6	8.1
60 or over	103.9	43.3	11.7
Sex			
Male	213.4	88.8	8.6
Female	26.9	11.2	1.1
Overall	240.3	100.0	4.8

* As a percentage of the total number of persons aged 15 or over in the respective age/sex sub-groups.

Table 4b Ex-smokers by reason for giving up smoking

Reason for giving up smoking	No. ('000)	%
Health (without a doctor's advice)	84.4	35.1
Health (with a doctor's advice)	65.4	27.2
Objection from or bad effect it had on family members	31.2	13.0
High price of cigarettes	30.6	12.7
Prohibited/discouraged at work or public places	12.2	5.1
Government's anti-smoking publicity	6.1	2.5
Others	10.4	4.3
Total	240.3	100.0

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RELIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES

The estimates derived from the enquiry are subject to sampling error. Given the sample design of the enquiry, there is a 95% probability that the population value of the following item would lie within the limits specified below :

<u>Item</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Lower limit</u>	<u>Upper limit</u>
Daily smokers	740 400	698 500	782 300
Ex-smokers	240 300	208 100	272 500