

Abstract 30

Friends, family, and the school environment: a multi-level analysis of their relationship to student smoking behaviour

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The purpose of this study was to examine how older smoking peers at school and the smoking behaviour of friends and family members are related to youth smoking behaviour. Multi-level logistic regression analyses were used to examine correlates of experimental and regular smoking in a sample of 10,843 grade 9, 10 and 11 students from 29 secondary schools in Ontario, Canada. Each 1% increase in the smoking rate among high school seniors increased the odds that a junior student was an experimental smoker versus never smoker [OR 1.03, 95% CI 1.01 to 1.04], and a regular smoker versus an experimental smoker [OR 1.02, 95% CI 1.00 to 1.04]. Significant contextual interactions were found; the senior student smoking rate at a school moderates the negative influence of having close friends who smoke for both experimental and regular smokers. Findings indicate that the prevalence of smoking among older students at a school is related to both experimental and regular smokers if they have smoking friends and family members. Prevention programs should target both at-risk schools and students with prevention activities.