

# Smoke-free laws lead to less smoking at home

PARIS, FRANCE: Anti-tobacco laws in several European countries prompted many smokers to ban smoking at home and to cut their cigarette consumption, according to a study reported in the journal Tobacco Control on Tuesday, 14 February.



Doctors pored over a survey into smoking habits in France, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands, both before and after bans on smoking in the workplace, restaurants and bars took effect in the last decade.

The trends in those countries were compared with Britain, which at the time did not have smoke-free legislation.

After the laws took effect, the percentage of smokers who banned all smoking at home rose by 17% in France, 25% in Ireland, 28% in the Netherlands and 38% in Germany, the study found.

The overall number of cigarettes that an individual smoked each day also fell "significantly" in Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands, but not in France.

The authors, led by Ute Mons of the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg, say the findings rebut those who claimed banning smoking in public places would simply shift the habit to the home, exposing family members to dangerous second-hand smoke.

In fact, the new laws prompted many smokers to ban smoking at home, especially if they had already been mulling an intention to kick the habit, supported smoke-free legislation or had a young child exposed to passive smoke.

"Our findings strongly support the premise that smoke-free legislation does not lead to more smoking in smokers' homes," says the paper.

"The data suggest rather that smoke-free legislation may stimulate smokers to establish total smoking bans in their own home."

The research was based on responses from 4,634 smokers in the four countries and 1,080 in Britain. The British results came from across the United Kingdom except Scotland.

Source: AFP

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