

## KNOWLEDGE OF SMOKING-RELATED RISKS AND OPINIONS ON TOBACCO CONTROL BY SMOKING STATUS AND EDUCATION LEVEL IN JAPAN

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**Objective** We aimed to examine knowledge of smoking-related risks and opinions on tobacco control by smoking status and education level in Japan.

**Methods** We conducted a questionnaire survey in 2002 on a random sample of residents aged 20 to 79 years in two neighboring districts of northern Japan. In a total sample of 7,136, we analyzed data from 5,638 (79.0%) subjects (2,659 men and 2,979 women).

**Results** The length of education was positively associated with knowledge of smoking-related risks. Compared to current smokers, past male smokers and never female smokers were more likely to know about the harm of passive smoking. As for causal links between smoking and lung cancer, stroke, and low birth weight, those who had been educated longer tended to be more aware of the associations in both sexes. Compared to current smokers, past and never smokers of men and past smokers of women were more likely to know that smoking contributes to low birth weight, but no difference was observed between current and never female smokers in this regard. Opinions on tobacco control were associated with both smoking status and education level; past and never smokers compared to current smokers and those who were educated longer tended to be affirmative about tobacco control.

**Conclusion** Knowledge of smoking is largely associated with education, but opinions on tobacco control are dependent on both smoking status and education.

**Key words** : knowledge, opinion, tobacco control, smoking status, education

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