

University Smoke-Free Policies in Australia: Lessons for Indonesia

Mentari WIDIASTUTI^a, Coral GARTNER^b, Sheleigh LAWLER^b

^aCenter of Health Behaviour and Promotion, Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

^bSchool of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, The University of Queensland Australia

BACKGROUND

Eliminating exposure to second-hand smoke is among the best practices to control noncommunicable diseases.¹ Indonesia has been dealing with growing burdens of noncommunicable disease due to its high and persistent tobacco smoking prevalence.² On the other hand, Australia shows an impressive progress in altering its national tobacco epidemic through the establishment of smoke-free policies.³ Recently, many universities in Australia have implemented smoke-free policies⁴, providing a good example of tobacco control through educational settings.

AIMS

- To compare evidence of university smoke-free policies in Australia and Indonesia
- To provide suggestions for an effective adoption of smoke-free policies in Indonesian universities.

METHODS

Findings from an unpublished preliminary cross-sectional study on 100% smoke-free policies at The University of Queensland, Australia involving staff ($N=677$) and students ($N=5172$)⁵ were synthesized with published literature on smoke-free policies at other Australian universities and higher education institutions. Other relevant information regarding campus smoke-free policies was further obtained from official university websites. As for the evidence of university smoke-free policies in Indonesia, an online search was conducted on Google, Google Scholar, and PubMed.

FINDINGS



Figure 1. Summary of evidence from Australia and Indonesia included in the review

UNIVERSITY SMOKE-FREE POLICIES IN AUSTRALIA

- Most Australian universities have implemented smoke-free policies to various degrees.⁶
- Aim: to promote wellness and protect from second-hand smoke exposure
- Research is integral to policy development and implementation.
- Various channels are used to communicate the policies and to increase awareness (e.g. university websites and visible signs in prominent places).
- Some universities integrate smoking cessation services in their campus clinics.
- Policies are enforced by security staff mostly through verbal warnings.

ARE THE POLICIES EFFECTIVE?

- Australian university students and staff generally supported campus smoke-free policies
- Support outdoor smoking bans were less strong.
- One study comparing pre- and post-policy implementation indicated an increase in support towards 100% smoke-free policies and awareness of campus smoke-free policies.⁷
- Although the study reported a marginal decrease in smoking prevalence (from 9.3% to 8.4%), there was a significant decrease in reported secondhand smoke exposure before and after policy implementation (79.4% and 58.1%, respectively).⁷

WHAT ABOUT INDONESIA?

- Whether research is integrated into development process remains questionable
- Some universities have declared to be smoke-free, but the implementation varies among their faculties
- Enforcement is challenging because of limited resources and support
- There is a lack of special agencies to communicate, implement, and enforce smoke-free policies in universities

LESSONS LEARNT

Collaborative efforts are the key to a successful adoption of campus smoke-free universities in Indonesia. Indonesian universities should establish a certain agency or initiative to successfully adopt campus smoke-free policies by involving university stakeholders, researchers, staff, and students.

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