

# TERTIARY EDUCATION SMOKEFREE CAMPUS POLICIES IN NEW ZEALAND

Dr Louise Marsh,<sup>1</sup> Lindsay A Robertson<sup>1</sup>, Dr Claire Cameron<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cancer Society Social & Behavioural Research Unit,

<sup>2</sup>Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

Email: louise.marsh@otago.ac.nz

## INTRODUCTION

A key aim of smokefree outdoor environments is the de-normalisation of smoking. Time spent attending tertiary education is an important period of transition when behaviours like smoking become established, when experimentation may shift to addiction, and when smokers may decide to quit.

In New Zealand (NZ), several public tertiary education institutions (TEIs) have begun to implement smokefree campus policies, though little is known about their content, effectiveness and the barriers and facilitators to their development.

## STUDY ONE

### AIMS

- Examine prevalence of smokefree campus policies at NZ TEIs
- Explore process of developing & implementing smokefree campus policies from TEI perspective

### METHODS

- Telephone interviews with 22 TEI Health & Safety Managers & qualitative data analysis of transcripts

## RESULTS

- 14 /29 TEIs had 100% smokefree campus policy
- A further 7 TEIs were actively progressing policy (Sept 2012)

### Barriers & challenges:

- How to enforce policy effectively
- Shifting smokers to campus boundaries/ neighbouring property
- Geographical characteristics of campus (e.g. size, location)
- Perceived resistance from staff & students

### Facilitating factors:

- High-level support for smokefree campus
- Support from staff & students
- Poor compliance with existing designated smoking areas
- Society becoming progressively smokefree
- Collaboration with external providers

### Implementation:

- Minimal resistance from staff and students
- Few costs involved (signage mainly)
- Ensuring smoking cessation available
- Educational/ supportive approach to enforcement
- Compliance variable
- Policies generally perceived to be successful (less smoking on campus; reports of quitting)
- Impact evaluation of policies is required

## STUDY TWO

### AIM

- Examine the level of support for campus tobacco control policies among staff & students at a NZ university, particularly regarding a 100% smokefree campus policy.

### METHODS

- Online survey of university staff (n=336/650; 52% response rate) and students (n=268/650; 41% response rate). Descriptive statistics and 2-sample t-tests used.

## RESULTS

| Policy  | (0 = no support; 10 = full support) |          |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------|
|   | Staff                               | Students |
| 100% smokefree campus                           | 8.0                                 | 7.7      |
| Tobacco products not available for purchase     | 8.9                                 | 8.5      |
| Not accepting funding from the tobacco industry | 8.2                                 | 7.2*     |

Table 1.  
Level of support for smokefree policies amongst university staff and students

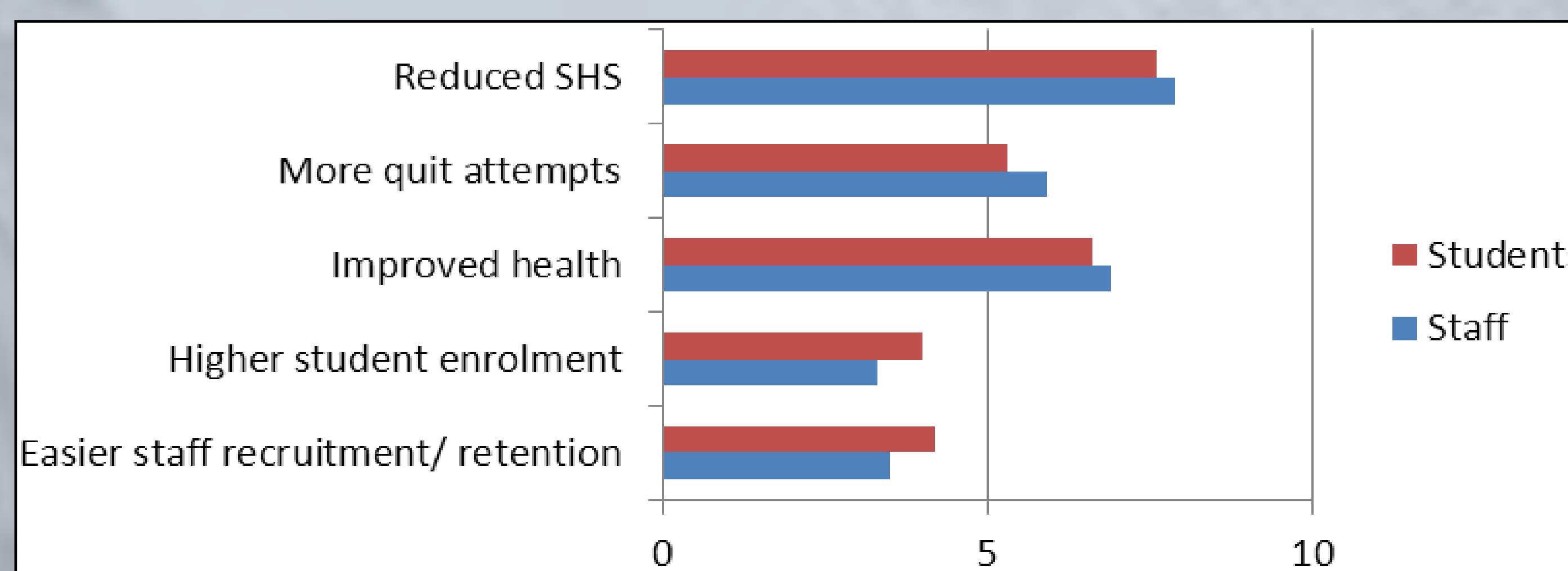


Figure 1.  
Perceived outcomes of 100% smokefree campus policy (0-10 scale; 0=no chance and 10=certain)

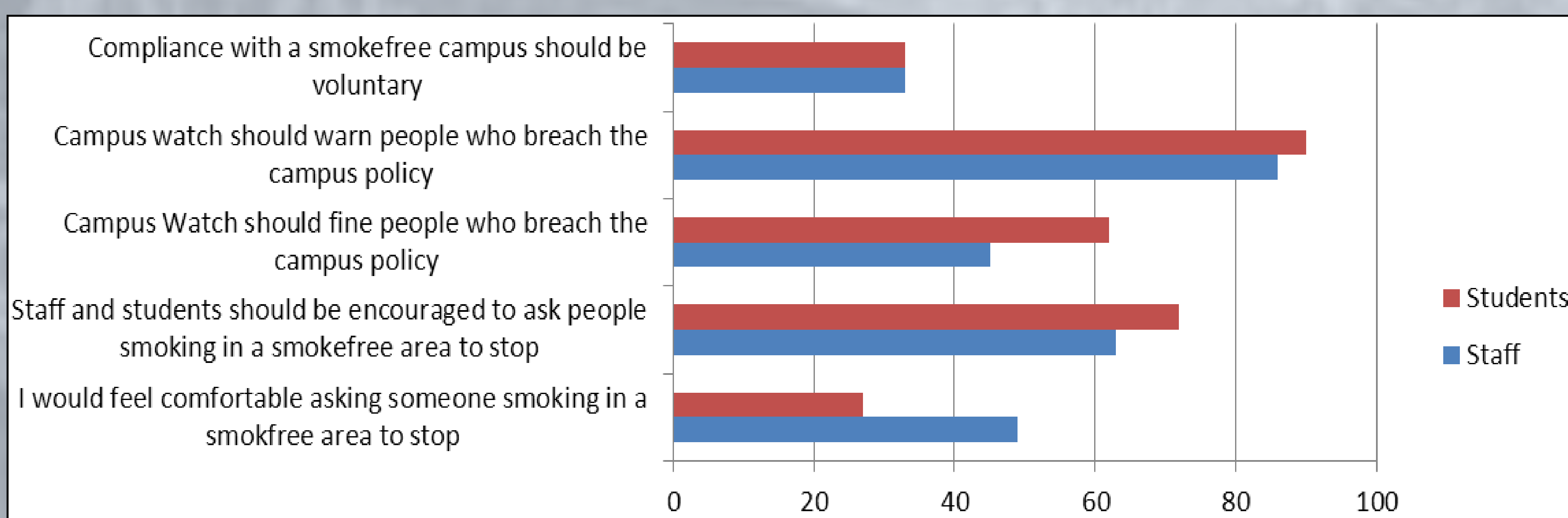


Figure 2. Attitudes to campus smokefree policy enforcement (% agree or strongly agree)

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Around half of the public tertiary education institutions in NZ have a 100% smokefree campus policy. A barrier preventing TEIs becoming smokefree is perceived resistance from staff and students, however, institutions that had become smokefree survey reported little resistance and few costs involved. Facilitating factors include having high-level support to drive policy and collaboration with external providers and other TEIs. Compliance was reported to be variable and there remain challenges with how best to enforce a smokefree campus policy. Our online survey found strong support for smokefree campus policies amongst both staff and students. These findings could be used to encourage and support universities, polytechnics and other tertiary education providers to become smokefree.