

Public Health Promotion (BMNS5006) (Smoking)

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1000 word supporting paper

Smoking in the UK has seen dramatic changes over recent years. With the combination of new research and changes to attitudes, it has resulted major changes within the UK. The paper will commence by initially looking at the trends of smoking within the UK – giving a background to the statistics of those affected by smoking. Following this, the paper will then explore the health implications that are inflicted as a result and the affect this has on the UK economy. The paper will then conclude with exploring both the methods that have been put in place to assist people stop smoking and the schemes introduced to reduce the numbers. The following assignment will discuss why smoking is an issue in the UK and explore the impact it has on individuals and society today.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) 2023, the harmful effects of smoking on both individuals and society makes it a significant public health concern. Smoking accounts for more than 8 million deaths annually, including an estimated '1.3 million non-smokers who experience exposure to second hand smoke'. Smoking is a leading cause of death in the UK, with an estimated 76,000 deaths per year, smoking causes severe health implications for many others. Smoking is a significant contributor to various life-threatening diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease, respiratory disorders, and many other health complications (National Health Service 2022).

The addictive power of nicotine, a primary component in tobacco, makes it challenging for individuals to quit, leading to long-term health consequences (Mannino,2009). Beyond individual health, smoking has a significant economic impact on society. The costs of treating smoking illnesses related to smoking are 'substantial', putting major pressure on public health systems (Department of health and social care 2023).

According to The National Health Service (2022), A comprehensive support system is provided by them, providing resources that are free of cost such as kits to assist in stopping smoking, mobile apps, and a dedicated quit line. Additionally, specialized smoking cessation services, often delivered by local NHS providers, offer personalised support through one-on-one counselling or group sessions. Smoking cessation medications, including nicotine replacement therapy such as patches and gum, are provided to aid individuals in managing withdrawal symptoms.

Sutherland and Balogun (2022), explain as figures continue to decrease the government aims to achieve a smoke- free environment by 2030, marking a significant commitment to public health. This ambitious plan underscores the urgency to reduce the harmful impact on both smoking and individuals and the broader community. Implementation involves stringent 'policies, public awareness campaigns, and support for smoking cessation programs'. To prevent younger people from smoking, it is suggested that the government implements a raise the age for sale from 18 by a year every year until tobacco products can no longer be available in this country. The Welsh Government (2022) states that Smoke free wales is a progressive initiative aimed at creating healthier environments by eliminating this was launched to safe-guard public health, the campaign advocates for smoke- free public spaces, reducing exposure to second hand smoke and promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle. Wales has seen a huge success in reducing the using of tobacco products with a focus on making 'smoke-free' the new norm. They also launched a 'Help me quit' programme which has been

successful in helping more than 14,800 people stop smoking in Wales from 2020-2021. Additionally, programmes such as 'just B smoke-free' which aim to focus on secondary schools in areas with a high prevalence of smoking. In order for smoke-free by 2030 to be successful figures need to show a decrease in the number of people taking up smoking and an increase of people who are willing to quit. (Welsh Government 2022).

Promoting e-cigarettes as an effect to help prevent individuals to quit smoking tobacco is crucial to the government. Whereas Marques, Piqueras and Sanz (2021) confirm that reports have been made that 'the heating process can cause the creation of new decomposition found to have questionable toxicity. Whereas short term use of e-cigarettes is safer than the use of tobacco use the long term affects of using e-cigarettes have not been found due to a lack of investigation. The Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2022) explain the rise of e-cigarettes has introduced a new dynamic to the landscape of tobacco use in the UK. While these devices are considered less harmful alternative to traditional smoking, ongoing research is necessary to fully understand their long-term health implications. Government health agencies continue to monitor and regulate the use of e-cigarettes to ensure they contribute positively to public health outcomes.

The prevalence of smoking in the UK has experienced a noteworthy decline over the years, yet it remains a significant public health issue. In 2019, approximately 14.1% of UK adults were smokers, reflecting progress but also ongoing challenges, the UK in 2022 had a 12.9% current smoker population equivalent to 6.4 million people according to APS data. Although not statistically significant, there has been a decrease in current smokers of 7.3% compared to 2011 (20.2%), which is a decrease from 2021. (Office for National Statistics 2023).

Smoking in the UK poses significant public health challenges, with limitations evident in various aspects. Health consequences, ranging from respiratory diseases to cardiovascular issues, underscore the adverse impact on individuals. Moreover, the economic burden on the National Health Service (NHS) raises concerns about resource allocation. Socioeconomic disparities are apparent, as smoking prevalence often correlates with lower income groups. Despite anti-smoking campaigns, challenges persist in curbing tobacco use, necessitating ongoing policy adjustments. *Addressing* these limitations requires comprehensive strategies that encompass both public health initiatives and targeted interventions (Smith and Brown, 2020).

To conclude, the health implications that smoking leads to has shown to have a detrimental affect on both the individual and the UK economy. The number of those who have died from first/second hand smoking and additionally developed diseases as result of smoking is a staggering number. It is no surprise as to why the Government have introduced several methods specifically aimed at reducing the amount of people who smoke. There is hope that with the reducing number of people smoking in the UK, the number of those developing illnesses related to smoking will also decrease.

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