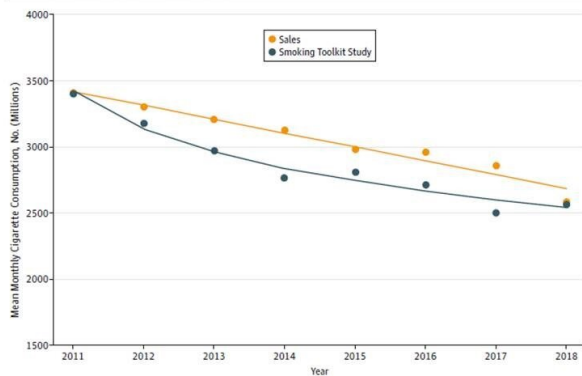


More than a billion fewer cigarettes smoked each year as people ditch the cigs

28 August 2019

Figure 1. Trend Models for the Sales and Smoking Toolkit Study Data: Annualized Averages of Monthly Cigarette Consumption in England From 2011 Through 2018



Comparison of Trends in Self-Reported Cigarette Consumption and Sales in England, 2011 to 2018. Credit: *JAMA Network Open*. 2019. DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.10161

Around 1.4 billion fewer cigarettes are being smoked every year according to new research funded by Cancer Research UK, published today in *JAMA Network Open*.

Between 2011 and 2018, average monthly cigarette consumption fell by nearly a quarter, equating to around 118 million fewer cigarettes being smoked every month.

This decline suggests that stricter [tobacco](#) laws and taking action to encourage people to quit [smoking](#) are working.

The researchers, based at UCL, looked at cigarette sales data for England and compared this with the monthly self-reported cigarette use of over 135,000 individuals from the Smoking Toolkit Study. They found that the two different methods of looking at how many cigarettes people are smoking provided similar results.

Over the whole period, the average number of cigarettes smoked monthly declined by 24.4% based on [survey data](#) and 24.1% based on sales data from 3.40 billion and 3.41 billion a month to 2.57 billion and 2.58 billion, respectively.

Lead author, Dr. Sarah Jackson from UCL's Tobacco and Alcohol Research Group, said: "It's brilliant that over a billion fewer cigarettes are being sold and smoked in England every year. The decline in national cigarette consumption has been dramatic and exceeded the decline in smoking prevalence, which, over the same time period, was around 15%. This means that not only are fewer people smoking, but those who continue to smoke are smoking less."



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

"Studies like this help to give us an accurate picture of cigarette consumption so we know where we're at and what more needs to be done."

Currently 16% of English adults smoke cigarettes.

George Butterworth, senior policy manager at Cancer Research UK, said: "It's great news that fewer cigarettes are being sold and smoked. Big tobacco said that introducing stricter regulation wouldn't work and campaigned against it, but this is proof that smoking trends are heading in the right direction. But smoking is still the biggest preventable cause of cancer, and certain groups have much higher rates of smoking, such as routine and manual workers, so we can't stop here and think job done.

"Last month the government committed to making the UK smokefree by 2030. But stop smoking services, which give smokers the best chance of quitting, have been subject to repeated cuts in recent years. We need the government to fix the funding crisis in local stop smoking services. The [tobacco industry](#) could be made to pay for these services to clean up the mess their products have created."

More information: Jackson S, Beard E, Kujawski B, Sunyer E, Michie S, Shahab L, West R, Brown J. Comparison of Trends in Self-Reported Cigarette Consumption and Sales in England, 2011 to 2018. *JAMA Network Open*. 2019. [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.10161](#)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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