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Smoking bans in Victorian workplaces: 2003 update

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ABSTRACT

Recent changes in Victorian legislation have aimed to increase the proportion of indoor workers who experience smokefree working environments.

Since 1988 the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer has been monitoring the level of smoking restrictions in Victorian workplaces. Trends over time indicate there was a period of rapid increase in total smoking bans between 1988 and the early 1990s, followed by relatively little change up to 2001.

In 2003, 68% of indoor workers reported total smoking bans at their workplace. A further 28% had partial bans where they worked, while 5% reported no smoking restrictions at work. While the proportion of indoor workers with total smoking bans has plateaued over the previous five years, the proportion with no smoking restrictions has continued to decline since 1988.

In 2003, indoor workers (68%) were more likely than outdoor workers (25%) to be protected by total smoking bans. Regular smokers were also significantly less likely to work in workplaces with total smoking bans (58%) than were those who did not regularly smoke (70%).

Smoking restrictions varied across different indoor workplace types. School/classroom, open plan office and shop/supermarket workers reported the highest proportion of workplaces with total smoking bans in 2003 (89%, 78% and 73%, respectively). Hotel, club, gaming venue and bar workers experienced the lowest levels of total smoking bans in 2003 (13%). By comparison, 68% of restaurant workers reported total smoking bans, attributable to legislation introduced in 2001, requiring total smoking bans within indoor restaurants.

On 12 October 2004, the Victorian State Government announced legislation introducing total smoking bans for the first time in all Victorian bars, pubs, nightclubs, hotels and gaming venues, to be implemented by July 2007. The introduction of such bans will finally create a smokefree environment for hospitality workers. It is expected that exposure to ETS for those who work in the hospitality industry will dramatically decline after the implementation of such bans, to be on par with other indoor workplaces.

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INTRODUCTION

Restrictions on smoking at work protect employees from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), with total bans offering the best protection.

In Victoria, over the last few years, the Government has introduced a range of legislative reforms enforcing smoking restrictions in various workplaces. Smoking has been banned in enclosed restaurants and cafes, and in dining areas in premises with a general or club licence, since July 1 2001, and in enclosed retail shopping centres since November 1 2002, through the Tobacco (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Tobacco (Further Amendment) Act 2001. From September 1 2002, smoking restrictions were also introduced in hotels and gaming venues, through the Tobacco (Miscellaneous) Act 2002.

Recent changes in Victorian legislation have aimed to increase the proportion of indoor workers who are protected by smokefree working environments.

Since 1988 the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer (CBRC) has been monitoring the level of smoking restrictions in Victorian workplaces. Data have been collected annually up to 1999 (excluding 1996), and every two years thereafter. Trends over time indicate there was a period of rapid increase in total smoking bans between 1988 and the early 1990s, followed by relatively little change up to 2001.

This paper reports the findings of the 2003 population survey regarding the levels of smoking restrictions in the workplace reported by Victorian workers, and compares these with findings from previous years.

METHOD

The data presented in this report are from telephone surveys of randomly sampled Victorians conducted from 1988 to 2003. These annual population surveys are commissioned by CBRC from a large market research company which interviews a representative sample of Victorians by telephone each year. The questions, designed by the CBRC, are asked in an eight to thirteen minute interview conducted on weekends and weeknights during November.

Readers should be aware of some method changes when making comparisons with previous years. Since 1998, annual surveys have been conducted by telephone rather than the face-to-face method used in previous years, and since 1997 the standard tobacco use question¹ has been used rather than the self-definition smoking status question used in previous surveys.

The standard tobacco use question¹ categorises smoking status into four groups: *regular smokers* (smoke daily or at least weekly); *irregular smokers* (smoke less than weekly); *former smokers* (do not smoke currently but have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime, regardless of whether they have ever smoked daily); and *never smokers* (do not smoke at all and have not smoked 100 or more cigarettes in their lifetime).

Statistical analysis

A comparison of the sample socio-demographic characteristics with the Australian Bureau of Statistics counts of the Victorian population² revealed that women and older people were over-represented in the telephone survey samples. To adjust for this, the data were weighted by age and sex according to ABS 2001 Census data for the Victorian population.

Sample

In 2003, 3001 Victorian adults aged 18 years and over were interviewed by telephone. Respondents who were in paid employment were asked about smoking restrictions in their workplace and their main workplace setting (whether they mainly worked indoors, in a vehicle, or in a varied work situation).

Respondents were asked to classify the smoking restrictions, if any, at their place of work, as follows:

- total ban on smoking
- a ban everywhere except for a smoking room
- a ban in some areas
- no restrictions

Workers who reported some bans were asked to indicate whether or not the ban applied in the area where they normally worked.

In household surveys from 1990 onwards, only indoor workers were asked to describe their normal workplace, defined as where they spend most time at work, and were shown a card with response options (for example, warehouse, factory, supermarket or school). In 1998, 2001 and 2003, indoor workers were asked what was their usual workplace (for example, a shop, own office, open-plan office or workshop/factory floor). In 1999, all except those who worked mainly in a vehicle were asked this question. Unless otherwise specified, only results for indoor workers are reported.

RESULTS

In 2003, 64% of respondents were in paid (full- or part-time) employment. Of these, 81% (n=1532) of workers reported that they usually worked indoors (compared to 78% in 2001).

As shown in Table 1, the percentage of indoor workers reporting total smoking bans in their workplace significantly increased over the past 16 years, from 17% in 1988 to 68% in 2003. Total smoking bans within indoor workplaces plateaued at around 70% from 1999 to 2003.

Also shown in Table 1, partial smoking bans within indoor workplaces significantly declined between the years 1988 to 2003 (ranging from 47% to 19% over this period). Although the percentage of indoor workers with partial smoking bans continued to decline up until 1998, there was a significant increase between 1998 (19%) and 2003 (28%).

The proportion of indoor workers reporting no smoking restrictions within their workplace declined almost ten-fold between 1988 and 2003 (ranging from 36% to 5% over this period). By 2003, only 5% of indoor workers reported no smoking restrictions within their workplace, a significant decrease from 1999 (8%).

Table 1:
Workplace smoking restrictions for indoor workers aged 18 years and over, 1988 to 2003*

	1988 (n=922)	1989 (n=970)	1990 (n=894)	1991 (n=1015)	1992 (n=587)	1993 (n=980)	1994 (n=953)	1995 (n=995)	1997 (n=972)	1998 (n=740)	1999 (n=906)	2001 (n=975)	2003 (n=1532 [^])
Total bans	17.3	29.1	33.7	48.3	57.8	59.7	62.9	65.4	60.4	74.5	70.2	68.8	67.5**
Partial bans	46.8	46.8	41.5	35.2	29.8	28.7	24.7	23.9	27.0	18.7	22.0	25.2	27.8**
No restrictions	35.9	24.1	24.8	16.5	12.4	11.6	12.5	10.7	12.6	6.9	7.8	6.0	4.6**

* Due to rounding, not all columns sum to 100.

** Significant change across 1988 to 2003, p<.01.

[^] Excludes those workers who did not state current restrictions.

Workplace bans for indoor and outdoor workers, 1988–2003

Respondents who worked indoors were more likely to report a total smoking ban at work compared with outdoor workers. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the trends in smoking restrictions among indoor and outdoor workers, respectively, from 1988 to 2003.

The percentage of both indoor and outdoor workers that reported total smoking bans at work significantly increased between 1988 and 2003. However, consistently over this period, a significantly higher percentage of indoor workers reported total smoking bans at work (ranging from 17% to 75%) than outdoor workers (ranging from 9% to 29%). Total smoking bans for indoor workers increased rapidly during the early 1990s (Figure 1), while for outdoor workers there has been a more modest and gradual increase (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Trends in smoking restrictions among Indoor workers 1988-2003

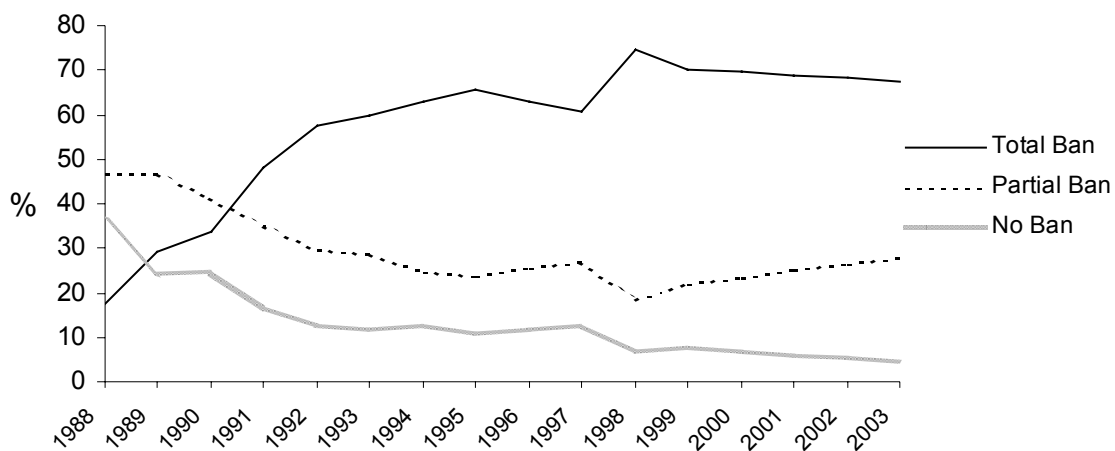
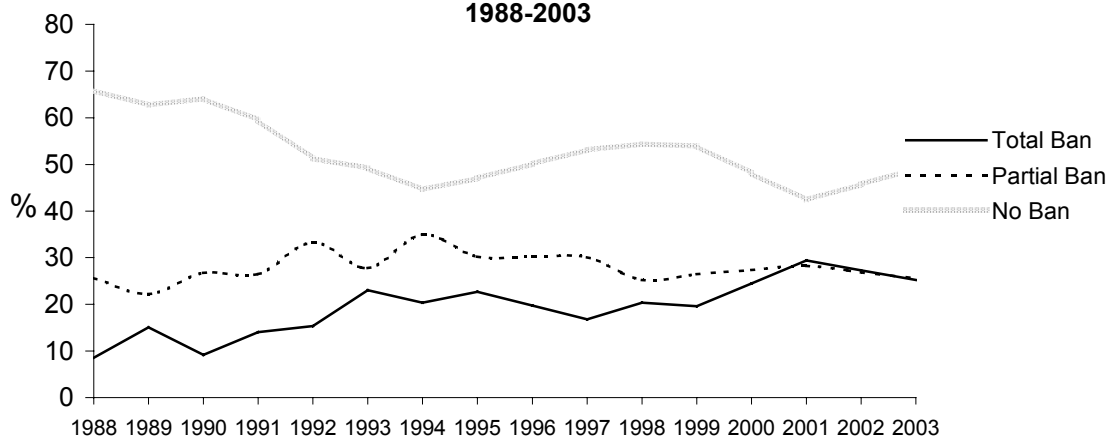


Figure 2. Trends in smoking restrictions among Outdoor workers 1988-2003



The percentage of both indoor and outdoor workers reporting no smoking restrictions in their workplace declined significantly from 1988 to 2003. However, as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, indoor workers consistently reported significantly lower proportions of 'no smoking restrictions' (ranging from 36% to 5%) compared with outdoor workers over this period (ranging from 66% to 42%). By 2003, outdoor workers were over 10 times more likely to report no smoking restrictions in their workplace, compared to indoor workers (49% compared with 4.6%, respectively). Outdoor workers had consistently higher rates of 'no smoking restrictions' in their workplaces over this period, than either partial (ranging from 25% to 35%) or total smoking bans (from 9% to 29%).

From 1991, there were no significant differences between indoor and outdoor workers, in the percentage reporting partial smoking bans.

In 2003, total smoking bans were also reported by around 45% of workers whose primary place of work was a vehicle. Similarly, 39% of these workers reported having partial smoking bans, with 16% indicating their workplace had no smoking restrictions in place (Appendix A).

Percentage of indoor workers exposed to ETS at work, by smoking status

In 2003, indoor workers who were regular smokers were significantly less likely to report total smoking bans in their workplace than those who did not regularly smoke (58% compared with 70%, respectively) (Table 2). Similarly, regular smokers were significantly more likely to report having either no smoking restrictions or partial smoking bans where they worked, than those who were not regular smokers (11% compared with 6%, respectively, for no smoking restrictions; and 31% compared with 25%, respectively, for partial smoking bans).

An analysis of respondent's workplace type in 2003 found that hotel, club, bar and gaming venues, restaurants, and warehouse/stores had the highest proportion of workers who were regular smokers (31%, 30% and 28%, respectively). In 2003, the average proportion of regular smokers across all indoor workplaces was 17%.

Table 2:

Level of workplace restrictions in usual work area as a function of smoking status for indoor workers, 2003

Level of ban	Regular smoker (n=264) %	Not regular smoker* (n=1246) %	Total (n=1510) %
Total ban	57.6	69.8	67.7
Ban where I work	31.4	24.5	25.7
No ban where I work	11.0	5.7	6.6

* Respondents other than regular smokers, including non-smokers and irregular (less than weekly) smokers.

Smoking restrictions in usual area of work and indoor workplace type, 2003

Although it is important to look at the level of overall smoking restrictions in a workplace, for those without total smoking bans, the types of restrictions reported in a person's usual work area indicates the likelihood of exposure to ETS at work. The extent of restrictions, as a function of where they applied at work, was therefore examined. The categories 'A ban everywhere except for a smoking room' and 'A ban in some areas, including where I normally work' were combined to indicate the respondent usually worked in an area where a smoking ban applied. Combining the categories 'A ban in some areas, but not where I normally work' and 'No restrictions' provided the proportion of employees who usually worked in an area with no smoking restrictions.

As indicated in Table 3, the extent of smoking restrictions reported by indoor workers varied across workplace type. In 2003, those who worked in schools/classrooms, open plan offices and shops/supermarkets were more likely to have total smoking bans in their workplaces (89%, 78% and 73%, respectively). Warehouse, workshop and factory workers and hotel, restaurant and club workers were the least likely to work in a total smoke free environment, with total bans reported by 40% and 46% of these workers, respectively.

In 2003, restaurant workers were questioned about smoking restrictions in their workplace separate to hotel, club, bar and gaming venue workers (in previous years, these workplaces were combined into one category). Over two-thirds (68%) of restaurant workers reported total bans in their workplace. On the other hand, only 13% of other hospitality workers working in hotels, clubs, bars and gaming venues, worked in a smoke free environment, the lowest of all indoor workplaces.

Table 3:

Workplace type by level of smoking ban experienced by indoor workers usual place of work, 1999 & 2003

Workplace type	Type of ban								
	Total ban			Ban where I work			No ban where I work		
	1999 (n=636)	2001 (n=672)	2003 (n=1022)	1999 (n=173)	2001 (n=216)	2003 (n=389)	1999 (n=95)	2001 (n=84)	2003 (n=100)
Warehouse/workshop/factory	48.7	46.3	39.5	33.6	34.1	47.3 ^{t(b)}	17.6	19.5	13.2
Shop/supermarket	68.1	77.1	72.6	23.1	13.5	19.1	8.8	9.4	8.3
Open plan office/office	78.8	78.5	77.6	15.7	19.9	19.0	5.5	1.7 ^{t(b)}	3.4
Own office/home office	67.5	73.8	70.0	15.1	19.0	21.7	17.5	7.1*	8.3 ^{t(b)}
Hotel/restaurant/club	28.6	34.9	45.9	35.7	30.2	42.6	35.7	34.9	11.5***
<i>Restaurant</i>	n/a	n/a	67.6	n/a	n/a	24.3	n/a	n/a	8.1
<i>Hotel/club/bar/gaming venue</i>	n/a	n/a	13.0	n/a	n/a	69.6	n/a	n/a	17.4
School/classroom	93.8	92.5	88.7	6.2	7.5	11.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hospital/medical centre/lab	82.5	66.0 ^{t(b)}	65.1*	16.3	32.0 ^{t(b)}	32.2*	1.3	2.0	2.7
Other (including 'can't say')	52.5	52.6	53.6	22.5	25.6	33.0	25.0	21.8	13.4
Total	70.4	69.1	67.6	19.1	22.2	25.7	10.5	8.6	6.6

* Significant difference since 1999, $p < .01$

** Significant change since 2001, $p < .01$

*** Significant change since 1999 and 2001, $p < .01$

^{t(a)} Trend toward a significant difference since 2001, $p < .05$

^{t(b)} Trend toward a significant difference since 1999, $p < .05$

Note: Due to rounding, not all rows sum to 100.

Smoking restrictions in usual areas of work and indoor workplace type, from 1990 to 2003

The levels of smoking restrictions in the workplace have changed over the past 16 years. However, some workplaces have experienced greater change than others. In Victoria, over the last few years, the Government has introduced a range of legislative reforms that may have contributed to recent changes in the levels of reported smoking restrictions within certain workplaces.

Since July 1 2001, smoking has been banned in enclosed restaurants and cafes, and in dining areas in premises with a general or club licence. Since September 1 2002, smoking restrictions have also been introduced in hotels and gaming venues. The introduction of such legislation has contributed toward a significant decline in the proportion of hotel, restaurant and club workers reporting no smoking bans in their usual workplace from 36% in 1999 to 12% in 2003 (Table 3). The proportion of hotel, restaurant and club workers reporting no bans also significantly declined overall between 1990 and 2003. Conversely, over this period, the proportion of restaurant, hotel and club workers reporting partial bans within their usual place of work significantly increased (Appendix B).

The proportion of hospital/medical centre and lab workers reporting total smoking bans in their usual place of work significantly declined from 1999 (83%) to 2003 (65%), paralleled by a significant increase in 'bans where I work' over the same period (16% in 1999, to 32% in 2003) (Table 3). However, the proportion of these workers reporting total bans, partial bans or no bans did not significantly change overall from 1990 to 2003 (Appendix B).

From 1990 to 2003 reported total smoking bans significantly increased for warehouse, workshop and factory workers; shop/supermarket workers; those who worked in open plan offices and own/home offices; and those who worked in schools or classrooms. With the exception of hospital/medical centre and lab workers, all indoor workers reported a significant reduction in 'no smoking restrictions' within their usual place of work over this period (see Appendix B). Those who worked in their own office or a home office also reported a significant decline in 'no smoking restrictions' between 1999 (18%) and 2001 (7%) (Table 3).

For a number of workers, partial bans in their usual place of work did not significantly change between 1990 and 2003. However, during this period, restaurant, hotel and club workers and those who worked in schools/classrooms, reported significant increases in partial bans within their usual place of work. Warehouse, workshop and factory workers, and those who worked in their own/home office also reported a trend toward a significant increase in partial bans over this period (Appendix B).

DISCUSSION

Recent Victorian legislation is likely to have contributed to increases in reported total smoking bans and partial bans in hospitality workplaces over the past few years, while the overall change experienced within indoor workplaces since the early 1990s may reflect increased concern in Victoria about the risk of exposure to ETS.

In 2003, nearly two-thirds (68%) of indoor workers experienced total smoking bans at their workplace, a similar proportion to 1999 (70%). A further 28% had partial bans enforced in their workplace, while a further 5% experienced no smoking restrictions at work. While the percentage of workers with total smoking bans within indoor workplaces has plateaued over the previous 5 years, the proportion with no smoking restrictions has continued to decline since 1988.

Indoor workers were more likely than workers in other environments to be protected by total smoking bans (68%), while outdoor workers were the least likely to be protected by total bans (25%). Although total bans in outdoor workplaces remained low in 2003 compared with other workplaces, there has been a gradual increase in total smoking bans in outdoor workplaces since 1988.

As found in previous years, regular smokers were significantly less likely to work in workplaces with total smoking bans than were those who did not regularly smoke. This may be for a number of reasons. Firstly, workplaces with many staff who smoke may be less likely to institute bans. Smokers may also seek out workplaces where they are able to smoke. On the other hand, total smoking bans in workplaces may stimulate regular smokers to quit (ie, smokers may feel more pressure to quit if there is limited opportunity to smoke, or if the environment is not conducive to smoking). This is supported by previous research examining change in smoking behaviour following workplace smoking bans^{3,4}.

Smoking restrictions also varied across different indoor workplace types. Schools, open plan offices and shop/supermarket workers reported the highest proportion of workplaces with total smoking bans (89%, 78% and 73%, respectively), while hotel, club, gaming venue and bar workers experienced the lowest levels of total smoking bans in 2003 (13%). With the exception of hospital/medical centre and lab workers, all indoor workers reported a significant reduction in 'no smoking restrictions' within their usual place of work between 1990 and 2003. Similarly, most indoor workers (except those working in hotels, restaurants, and clubs, and hospital/medical centre and lab workers) reported a significant increase in total smoking bans over this period.

Legislation introduced in Victoria during 2001 and 2002, enforcing total smoking bans in indoor restaurants and restricting smoking in licensed venues, has contributed to the significant decline in hotel, restaurant and club workers reporting no smoking restrictions in their usual place of work; declining from 35% in 2001 to 12% in 2003 (6% for restaurant workers). However, reflecting the introduction of *total* smoking bans in indoor restaurants as opposed to smoking *restrictions* for hotels, clubs, bars and gaming venues, in 2003 68% of restaurant workers experienced smokefree workplaces compared with only 13% of those who worked in hotels, clubs, bars and gaming venues.

On October 12, 2004, the Victorian State Government announced legislation introducing total smoking bans for the first time in all Victorian bars, pubs, nightclubs, hotels and gaming venues to be implemented by July 2007. The introduction of such bans will finally create a smokefree work environment for hospitality workers. It is expected that exposure to ETS, for those who work in the hospitality industry, will dramatically decline to be on par with other indoor workplaces.

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Appendix A

Table A1:
Levels of smoking bans by location of work, 1988–2003

	1988	1989–1990	1991	1992–1993	1994,1995, 1997	1998–1999	2001	2003
	(n=1274)	(n=2550)	(n=1287)	(n=2014)	(n=3746)	(n=2206)	(n=1243)	(n=1855)
a) Total Bans (%)								
Indoor	17.4	31.3	48.3	59.0	62.9	72.1	68.8	67.5**
Outdoor	8.6	12.1	14.0	20.1	20.0	20.0	29.4	25.0**
Vehicle	11.1	18.7	34.0	28.4	39.9	47.4	48.6	45.1**
Varies/Other	n/a	30.2	31.1	43.8	42.4	54.2	39.3	47.9**
b) Partial Bans (%)								
Indoor	46.7	44.3	35.2	29.1	25.1	20.5	25.1	27.8**
Outdoor	25.7	24.5	26.4	29.9	31.6	25.9	28.2	25.8
Vehicle	27.8	40.7	35.8	46.9	35.6	29.5	37.1	39.2
Varies/Other	n/a	33.5	35.4	30.9	35.2	19.5	35.2	40.5
c) No restrictions (%)								
Indoor	35.9	24.4	16.6	11.9	11.9	7.4	6.1	4.6**
Outdoor	65.8	63.4	59.5	50.0	48.4	54.1	42.4	49.2**
Vehicle	61.1	40.7	30.2	24.7	25.2	23.1	14.3	15.7**
Varies/Other	n/a	36.3	33.3	25.3	22.5	26.4	25.5	11.7**

** Significant difference since 1988, $p < .01$

Appendix B

Table B1:
Levels of smoking bans in usual place of work by indoor workplace type, 1990–2003

Total smoking bans											
Workplace Type	1990 (n=723)	1991 (n=845)	1992 (n=506)	1993 (n=858)	1994 (n=856)	1995 (n=888)	1997 (n=868)	1998 (n=734)	1999 (n=904)	2001 (n=972)	2003 (n=1511)
Warehouse/workshop/factory	14.8	27.9	41.4	52.3	47.9	47.7	41.1	51.0	48.7	46.3	39.5**
Shop/supermarket	41.3	45.6	47.1 ^a	59.1	76.7	75.6	77.3	76.2	68.1	77.1	72.6**
Open plan office/office	45.8	71.1	78.2	76.7	79.8	81.7	79.3	84.8	78.8	78.5	77.6**
Own Office/home office	48.0	57.9	63.6	66.2	67.1	69.3	65.3	75.2	67.5	73.8	70.0**
Hotel/restaurant/club	n/a	11.1 ^a	41.7 ^a	41.9	36.4 ^a	35.7 ^a	52.6	35.1 ^a	28.6 ^a	34.9 ^a	45.9
School/classroom	70.3	74.3	86.7	86.0	92.2	93.4	85.7	91.7 ^a	93.8	92.5	88.7**
Hospital/medical centre/lab	32.3	66.7	77.3	66.1	73.9	76.4	67.6	83.6	82.5	66.0	65.1
Other*	40.8	51.3	78.6 ^a	63.6 ^a	57.1 ^a	78.1 ^a	61.3 ^a	60.0 ^a	52.5 ^a	52.6	53.6
Bans where I work											
Warehouse/workshop/factory	27.8	40.3	34.5	25.8	31.5	25.8	27.6	31.0	33.6	34.1	47.3 [†]
Shop/supermarket	31.7	26.5	17.6 ^a	16.7	4.1	10.0	10.7	9.5	23.1	13.5	19.1
Open plan office/office	26.3	16.5	12.8	17.2	13.8	12.2	14.5	13.4	15.7	19.9	19.0
Own Office/home office	15.3	15.7	15.2	13.6	11.0	12.4	14.6	13.2	15.1	19.0	21.7 [†]
Hotel/restaurant/club	n/a	5.6 ^a	33.3 ^a	16.3	24.2 ^a	17.9 ^a	17.5	24.3 ^a	35.7 ^a	30.2 ^a	42.6**
School/classroom	24.3	18.8	11.7	12.9	5.2	6.6	12.9	8.3 ^a	6.2	7.5	11.3**
Hospital/medical centre/lab	62.9	30.3	22.7	33.9	24.6	23.6	32.4	12.7	16.3	32.0	32.2
Other*	18.3	15.4	14.3 ^a	27.3 ^a	14.3 ^a	15.6 ^a	25.8 ^a	10.0 ^a	22.5 ^a	25.6	33.0 [†]
No ban where I work											
Warehouse/workshop/factory	57.4	31.8	24.1	21.9	20.5	26.6	31.0	18.0	17.6	19.5	13.2**
Shop/supermarket	27.0	27.9	35.3 ^a	24.2	19.2	14.4	12.0	14.3	8.8	9.4	8.3**
Open plan office/office	27.9	12.3	9.0	6.1	6.4	6.1	6.2	1.9	5.5	1.7	3.4**
Own Office/home office	36.7	26.4	21.2	20.1	21.9	18.3	20.1	11.6	17.5	7.1	8.3**
Hotel/restaurant/club	n/a	83.3 ^a	25.0 ^a	41.9	39.4 ^a	46.4 ^a	29.8	40.5 ^a	35.7 ^a	34.9 ^a	11.5**
School/classroom	5.4	6.9	1.7	1.1	2.6	0.0	1.4	0.0 ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0**
Hospital/medical centre/lab	4.8	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.6	1.3	2.0	2.7
Other*	40.8	33.3	7.1 ^a	9.1 ^a	28.6 ^a	6.3 ^a	12.9 ^a	30.0 ^a	25.0 ^a	21.8	13.4**

* Other includes 'don't know/can't say'

** Significant difference since 1990, $p < 0.01$

[†] Trend toward a significant difference since 1990, $p < 0.05$.

^a Cell counts are small (denominator = $n < 50$) and should be interpreted with caution.