

Tuesday 23 August 2022

Parliament Select Committee

Re: Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill

About the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA)

The NZSA is a professional medical education society which represents over 750 anaesthetists in New Zealand. Our members include specialist anaesthetists in public and private practice, and trainee anaesthetists. Our key roles are advocacy, facilitating and promoting education, and strengthening networks of anaesthetists nationwide.

Overview

The NZSA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the smokefree environments and regulated products (smoked tobacco) amendment bill. The negative health impacts of smoking tobacco are clear. As health professionals we are in support of these additional measures as the next step in reaching Smokefree Aotearoa 2025. A reduction in smokers will reduce the surgical and anaesthetic related risks for smokers, the number of patients requiring medical intervention from the effects of smoking and relief on the health system.

Comments

As one of the many organisations who have signed the *Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Health Coalition Aotearoa Open Letter of Support* we stand by the letter's opening statement. Particularly, that by implementing this package of changes "you can relieve the pressure on our already strained health system, freeing up precious resources."¹

As Anaesthetic specialists we can advocate for a patient to cease smoking in relation to the risks associated to their surgery and recovery. One such resource to assist us in doing so is The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists' (ANZCA) resource PG12(POM) 2014 '[Guideline on smoking as related to the perioperative period](#)'. This resource outlines clear research that supports the short- and long-term benefits apparent for a patient that does not, or ceases, smoking around the time of surgery. The following two statements are included in this resource:

- Smokers are at increased risk of perioperative respiratory, cardiac and wound related complications, and quitting smoking may reduce the risk of complications.²
- Smoking worsens surgical outcome. This has been demonstrated in over 300 studies that have been carried out since the first published study in 1944 by a British anaesthetist who found a six-fold increase in pulmonary complications in smokers following abdominal surgery.³

Both statements demonstrate how a reduction in the number of smokers in Aotearoa would lead to a reduction in medical intervention required in relation to surgery thereby another means that would relieve some of the pressure on our health system and improve outcomes for patients.

We support these additional measures outlined in this amendment bill, to offer a more societal approach to reduce smoking rates and significantly reduce the likelihood of future generations to start smoking. They will further improve the chances of our patients to successfully cease smoking. Therefore, improving their recovery rate and reducing surgery and anaesthetic related risks or in some circumstances the need for surgery or medical intervention altogether.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are happy to answer any questions if required.

Yours sincerely, ngā mihi nui



Dr Sheila Hart
NZSA President

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1. Health Coalition Aotearoa. Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand 2025 Health Coalition Aotearoa open letter of support. <https://www.healthcoalition.org.nz/smokefree2025/>
 2. Khullar D, Maa J. The impact of smoking on surgical outcomes. J Am Coll Surg 2012 Sep;215(3):418-426.
 3. Stead LF, Bergson G, Lancaster T. Physician advice for smoking cessation. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2008 (2):CD000165.