

## SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE IN RESTAURANT AND BAR WORKERS

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**Purpose:** The aims of the study were to test the effect of a smoke-free law on: (a) the exposure of restaurant and bar workers to secondhand smoke, as measured by hair nicotine levels; (b) self-reported respiratory symptoms; and (c) self-reported smoking and quit attempts.

**Method:** 104 smoking and nonsmoking participants were recruited from randomly selected establishments in Lexington, Kentucky including restaurants not serving alcohol, restaurants serving alcohol, and freestanding bars. The mean age of participants was 26 years and nearly two-thirds were female. Nearly 4 of 10 were cigarette smokers (38%), reflecting the smoking prevalence of this age group in Kentucky. The participants were recruited by flyers distributed at the establishments and by in-person visits. Participants were screened for eligibility, interviewed over the phone or in person before implementation of the smoke-free law and at 3 months post-implementation. Hair samples were collected and tested for nicotine. Interviews assessed respiratory symptoms, secondhand smoke exposure, attitudes toward the law, tobacco use patterns, and quit attempts.

**Findings:** Prior to implementation of the law, nonsmokers working in establishments that allowed smoking had higher hair nicotine levels than nonsmokers working in smoke-free establishments. When asked at baseline about respiratory symptoms in the previous 6 months, 84.5% of participants reported having a cold or sinus infection and 81.5% reported having runny nose, sneezing or nose irritation. Most participants (82.8%) believed that secondhand smoke had a “serious” or “moderate” impact on their health. At baseline, two-thirds (65.7%) reported that they “strongly” or “somewhat” supported the smoke-free law in Lexington. When asked to what extent being in a smoky environment made it difficult to quit smoking or stay quit, 85% of current or past smokers said it was “somewhat” or “very” difficult. The majority (50.5%) reported that smoking was not permitted in their homes, and 41% reported that smoking was not permitted in their automobiles. Nonsmoking servers exposed to secondhand smoke at work were less satisfied with their policies than those who worked in smoke-free places. Pre- and post-implementation data will be reported.

**Discussion:** Hospitality workers are disproportionately affected by exposure to secondhand smoke on the job. Prior to the smoke-free law, restaurant and bar workers reported high levels of respiratory symptoms and they recognized the health impact of exposure to SHS. Findings of this study will contribute to the science on the public health benefits of smoke-free laws.