

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000234

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Plain Packaging Article

Type of Question: Hansard Page 130, 10 February 2016

Senator: Leyonhjelm, David

Question:

Senator LEYONHJELM: One of the articles cited by the department is a report on survey data entitled 'Short-term changes in quitting-related cognitions and behaviours after the implementation of plain packaging with larger health warnings', by Sarah Durkin and others. Even though the article does not seek to report on the rate of giving up smoking, Professor Sinclair Davidson of RMIT argues on the Catallaxy Files website that table 1 of the article indicates that the rate of giving up smoking fell in the first year of plain packaging. Are you familiar with that article? Can you confirm that this conclusion can be drawn from table 1 of the article?

Answer:

The data underlying this article was derived from the National Monthly Tracking Survey of smokers and recent quitters. This was a cross-sectional survey undertaken each month between April 2012 and March 2014 of 400 smokers and recent quitters aged 18-69 years, with a follow-up survey conducted approximately one month after the baseline interview.

The study by Durkin et al excluded people identified as recent quitters in the baseline interviews, restricting the study sample to 'smokers of factory made or roll-your-own-cigarettes'. This means that recent quitters who had already successfully quit by the time of their baseline survey and who may have been influenced by tobacco plain packaging were not included in the analyses. As noted in the study, "the overall impact on quitting and smoking prevalence will need to be examined in cohort studies with longer-term follow-up and repeated national surveys using standardised methods."