

ASPIRE2025

How Do Pregnant Smokers Interpret Different Cessation Message Themes?

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Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtāgo

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Health Promotion Agency

Overview

- We aimed to
 - Explore how smokers understand and interpret smoking and quitting
 - Identify and evaluate new cessation messages

- Three phases of data collection
 - P1: Interviews, generate message ideas
 - P2: Focus groups + interviews, explore reactions
 - P3: Online survey, measure effectiveness

Phase Two pregnant participants

- Pregnancy status: 7 pregnant, 8 with children
- Smoking status: 12 currently smoking, 4 quit
 - All smoked during at least part of one pregnancy
- Living in Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington, or Dunedin
- Aged 17 to 39 years old
- Range of ethnicities, family sizes, educational and employment statuses

Key Message Themes

- Phase one identified choice and control as key metaphors
 - Smoking provided structure, addiction removed control
 - Rejected smoking around children, who could not choose to be in other environments
- **BUT**
 - Also rejected perceived attempts to impinge on their freedom to be a smoker
 - Wanted a smokefree future, but would choose when and how they would quit

Pregnant message themes

- Protecting children
 - Effect of tobacco on unborn babies
 - Children and second-hand smoke
- Protecting families
 - Effect of disease on families
 - Child losing a parent
- Autonomy
 - Quitting is the smokers' decision

Smoking cuts off oxygen

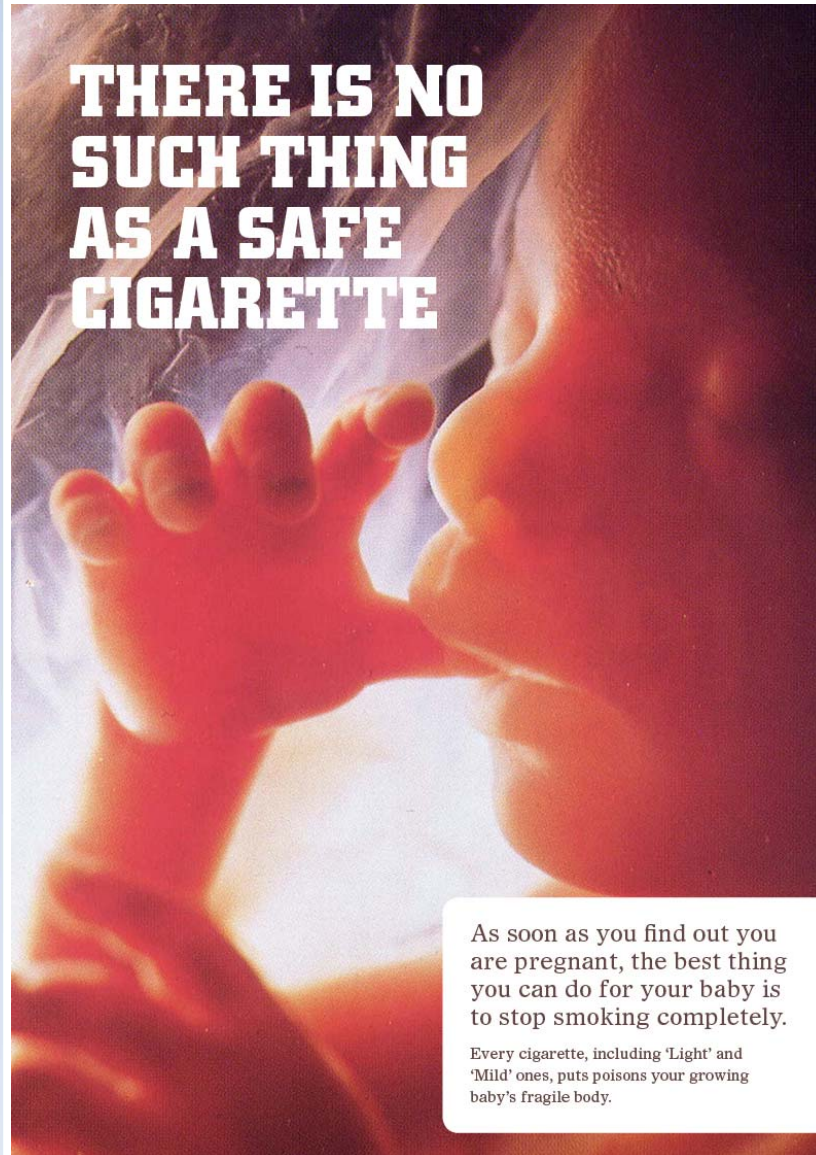


Smoking cuts off your baby's oxygen supply

Your baby could suffer physical and mental impairments without enough oxygen, such as breathing problems and lifelong learning difficulties.

- *"...especially when they're in there they've got no choice and – at THAT age they've got no choice"*
- *"I think that's so sad....It's like you're responsible... And like I said before, like they can't make choices for themselves... Like you've gotta make the right ones for them"*

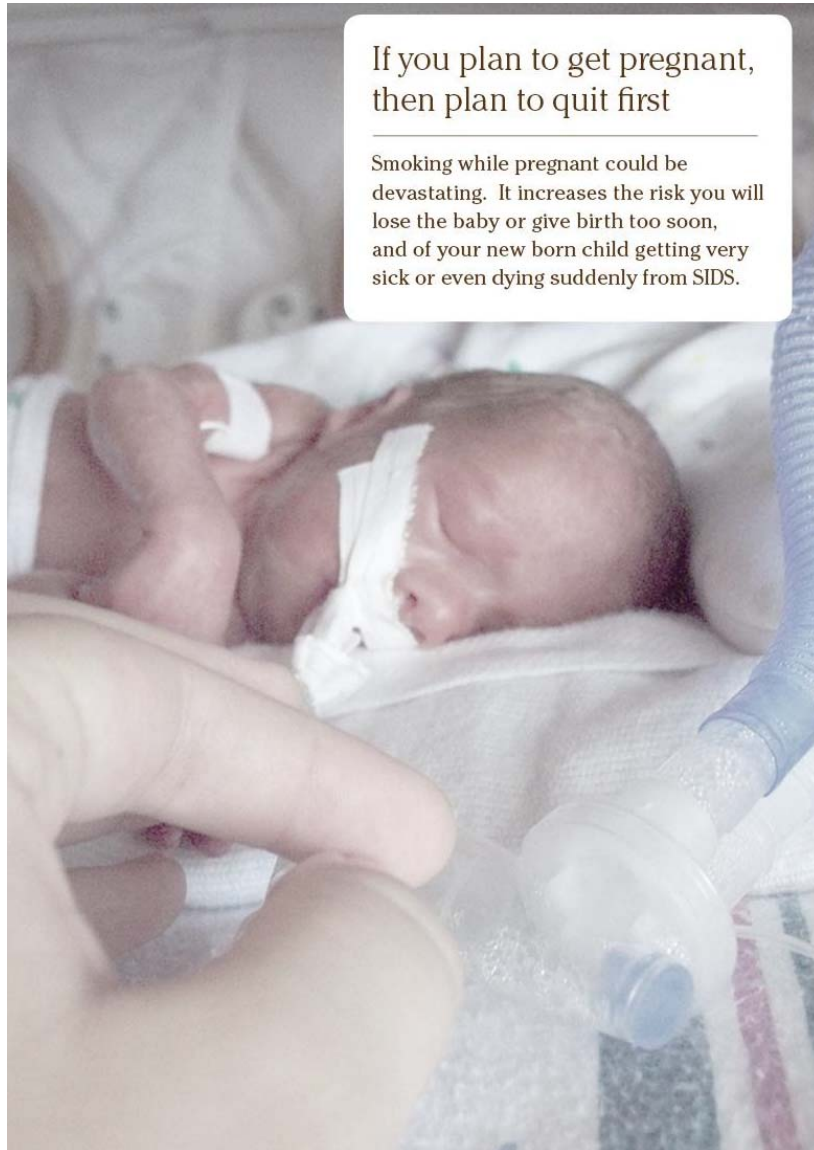
No such thing as a safe cigarette



- *“...my baby could get everything that I’ve put into my body, including all the bad things like the cigarettes... and it’s – **you know about it and you think about it** but like when you smoke and you’re pregnant and things **I guess it just doesn’t really hit home until you see things like this**”*

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If you plan to get pregnant...

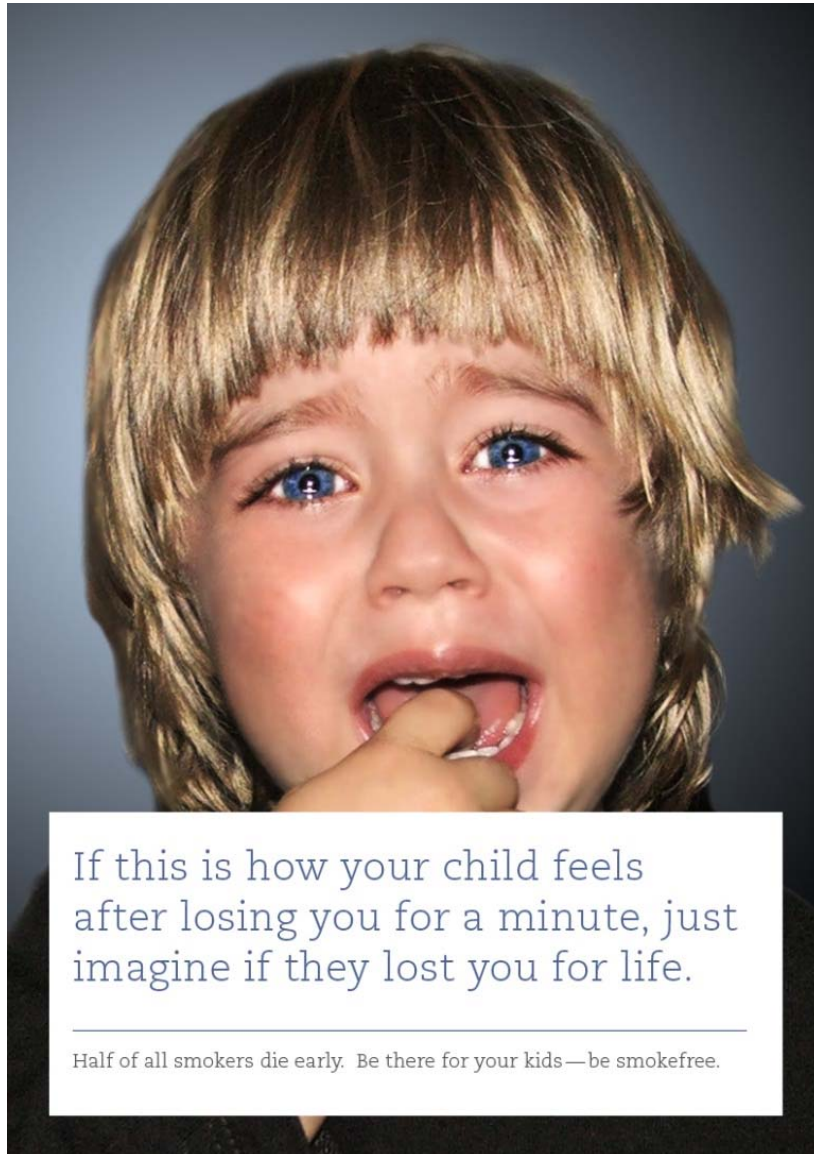


If you plan to get pregnant,
then plan to quit first

Smoking while pregnant could be devastating. It increases the risk you will lose the baby or give birth too soon, and of your new born child getting very sick or even dying suddenly from SIDS.

- *“I think it’s sad... or um – that **the kid don’t get the choice to – you know – make that choice** and you’re – they’re older and stuff...That the Mum’s just taken it away...The parents are just taking it away from them. **You know – they don’t get the choice to say ‘no’ to smoke**”*

If this is how your child feels...



If this is how your child feels after losing you for a minute, just imagine if they lost you for life.

Half of all smokers die early. Be there for your kids—be smokefree.

- *“It would make me wanna quit... That’s a-a jolt... You can’t ignore that. You can’t walk away from that”*
- *“we don’t really think of-of it the other way round like – you know... If they would cope at that age what they would have to go through having no parents at all”*

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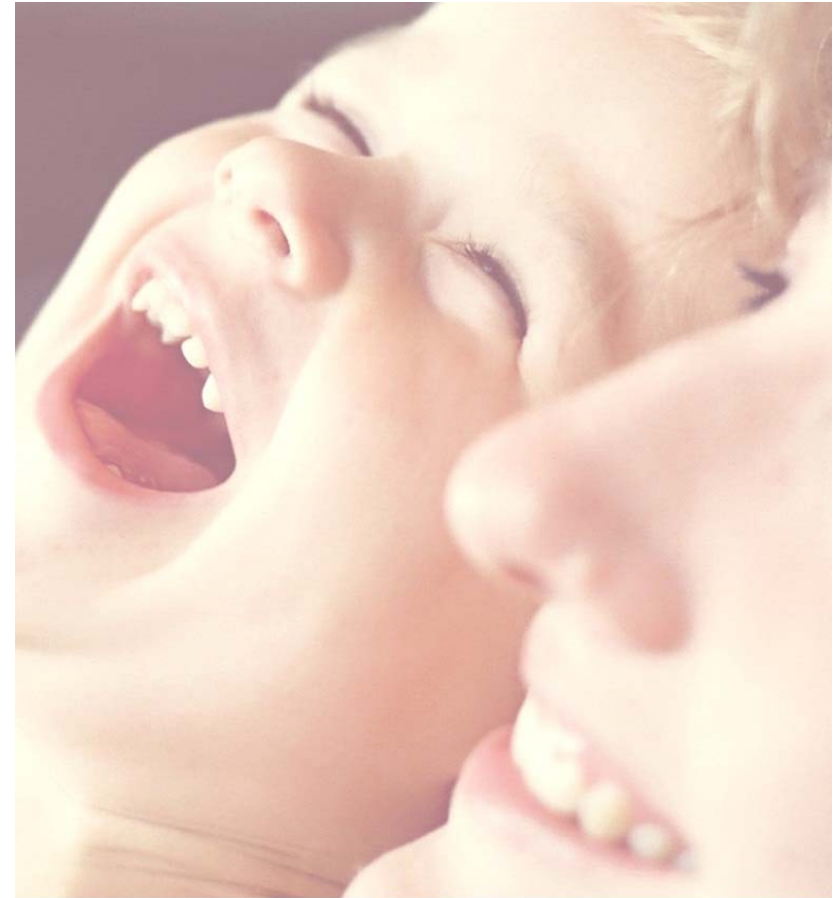
What's worse...?



What's worse than hearing your doctor say 'You've got cancer'?

Telling your family.

Smoking kills nearly 5,000 New Zealanders every year. If you want to be around for your kids, become smokefree.



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Counter arguments

- Quitting completely is not an option
 - “I felt that *I couldn't stop smoking completely*, I wouldn't look twice at it ... I'd look at that and go ‘well, that's not gonna happen’. *I can cut down is the best I could do...*”

Summary of results

- More effective
 - Arouse emotions
 - Choice and control themes
 - Pictures of unwell babies and distressed children

- Less effective
 - Factual statements
 - Ambiguous images, lack of fit with text

Conclusions

- Awareness exists
- Emotional messages may encourage quit attempts
- Complement messages with community support
 - Messages have limited potential if placed in unsupportive environments

Thank you

- For more information or copies of presentation –
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