

Smoking prevalence in England: Authors' reply to Roscoe

To answer Roscoe, the key issue is the quality of the data being collected rather than the numbers entailed.^{1 2} Although the Quality and Outcomes Framework database comprises a much larger sample, smoking status is not assessed using a standardised question and the exact timing of the assessments is unclear. The large sample included in that database is also unlikely to be representative of the general population. For example, as pointed out by Roscoe,¹ smokers are more likely to have had contact with their GP than non-smokers.

As a point of information, the total sample size for our study in 2013 was 22 167, rather than the 1800 cited by Roscoe. The figure of 1800 refers to the approximate monthly sample size.

References

1. Roscoe T. Is it a premature to announce that smoking prevalence in England is below 20%. *BMJ*2014;348:g1943.
2. Brown J, West R. Smoking prevalence in England is below 20% for the first time in 80 years. *BMJ*2014;348:g1378.

Competing interests

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undertakes research and consultancy and receives fees for speaking from companies that develop and manufacture smoking cessation aids (Pfizer, J&J, McNeil, GSK, Nabi, Novartis, and Sanofi-Aventis) and he has a share of a patent for a novel nicotine delivery device.