

5-3-2016

Epidemiology News

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Epidemiology News" (2016). *Epidemiology News (through 6/2018)*. 38.
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Georgia Southern Estimates the Effects of Smoking Bans on Neonatal Health

May 3, 2016



Cigarette smoking is widely believed to be damaging to health causing a large number of policies to regulate smoking indoors. Dr. Scott Hankins and Dr. Yelena Tarasenko, Assistant Professor of health policy and management and epidemiology at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University, estimated the effects of smoking bans on neonatal health outcomes and maternal smoking behavior during pregnancy.

The researchers conducted a quasi-experimental study using difference-in-differences estimation based on legislative history of smoking restrictions or bans by type/place/county/state level. The data from three data sources were combined using Federal Information Processing Standard Codes, Restricted-use 1991–2009 Natality Detail Files, a Clean Air Dates Table Report, and the Tax Burden of Tobacco. While other research has examined aspects of smoking bans and neonatal health, this study

is unique because the researchers exploit city and county-level smoking bans as well as state-level bans. The researchers also used a sufficiently long panel which allowed them to examine the effect of the first restriction or ban introduced in almost every city or county in the U.S.

Results of the overall and stratified by maternal smoking status, educational level, and age regression analyses suggested no appreciable effect of smoking bans on neonatal health. Smoking bans had also no effect on maternal smoking behavior.

While there are health benefits to the general population from smoking bans, their effects on neonatal health outcomes and maternal smoking during pregnancy seem to be limited.

“[Do Smoking Bans Improve Neonatal Health?](#),” was published in Health Services Research.

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