

Smoke-free-air laws should include bars

27 January 2012

Exempting bars from a statewide smoking ban in Indiana would significantly reduce the health benefits of a smoke-free-air law. Including bars not only protects the health of employees, say Indiana University tobacco control experts, but would not negatively impact the hospitality industry financially.

"Of all public places, bars and nightclubs have the highest concentration of secondhand smoke," said Dong-Chul Seo, associate professor in Indiana University's School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. "This poses a serious [health threat](#) to the employees who spend long hours working in these conditions."

Seo and Jon Macy, assistant professor in the School of HPER, have conducted numerous studies involving the impact smoking bans can have on [health factors](#) and smoking behavior. They also pointed to a new study published this week in the journal Tobacco Control. The study, by researchers in Maryland and California, demonstrated high levels of secondhand smoke in bars and nightclubs all over the world -- and also high levels of hair nicotine in both smoking and nonsmoking employees. Studies have shown, they say, that hospitality industry workers have a 50 to 60 percent increased lung cancer risk compared to other populations.

"If we want to protect workers who are at most risk of [negative health consequences](#) due to [secondhand smoke exposure](#), then we have to pass comprehensive legislation that includes bars," Macy said. "Moreover, this can be done without fear of negative [economic consequences](#). Many studies -- including our own -- have demonstrated no negative impact on the hospitality industry after implementation of a smoke-free-air law."

Provided by Indiana University

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