

6. British Columbia South Asian Population

6.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this report, members of the South Asian population are defined as anyone who considers the ethnic/cultural background of their parents or grandparents to be from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka or other similarly situated countries.

The results in this report are based on 561 telephone interviews, 295 of which were randomly obtained throughout the course of the survey. The remaining 266 telephone interviews were obtained via a booster sample. The margin of error for a sample size of 561 is $\pm 4.1\%$ nineteen times out of twenty. Information on age and gender proportions for the South Asian population was not available. Therefore, the entire provincial sample was weighted to known age and gender proportions (as per Stats Can) and then the South Asian sample was tabulated separately.

Comparisons between the South Asian population and the entire province are made throughout this report. The reader is reminded that the South Asian population is also included in the provincial sample; the samples are not mutually exclusive.

6.2 Tobacco Use Status of South Asian Population

Detailed information concerning past and present use of all forms of tobacco, by the province's South Asian population (aged 12+), allows for a precise determination of their tobacco use status at the time of the survey. These survey findings (based on interviews

with 557 respondents) concerning the use of cigarettes and alternate forms of tobacco (cigars, pipe tobacco and smokeless tobacco) are presented below.

6.2.1 Cigarette Smoking Status

For cigarette smoking, eight user groups are identified: current daily; current non-daily; former daily; former non-daily; former, but less than a year; lifetime abstainer; past experimenter; and beginner (see graph below).

The current prevalence of cigarette smoking among the South Asian residents of B.C. (aged 12+), is just 7%. Daily users make up slightly more than half of current cigarette smokers at 4%, while non-daily smokers represent 3%. As shown in the graph, this prevalence rate is about one-third of that for all residents of the province (22%).

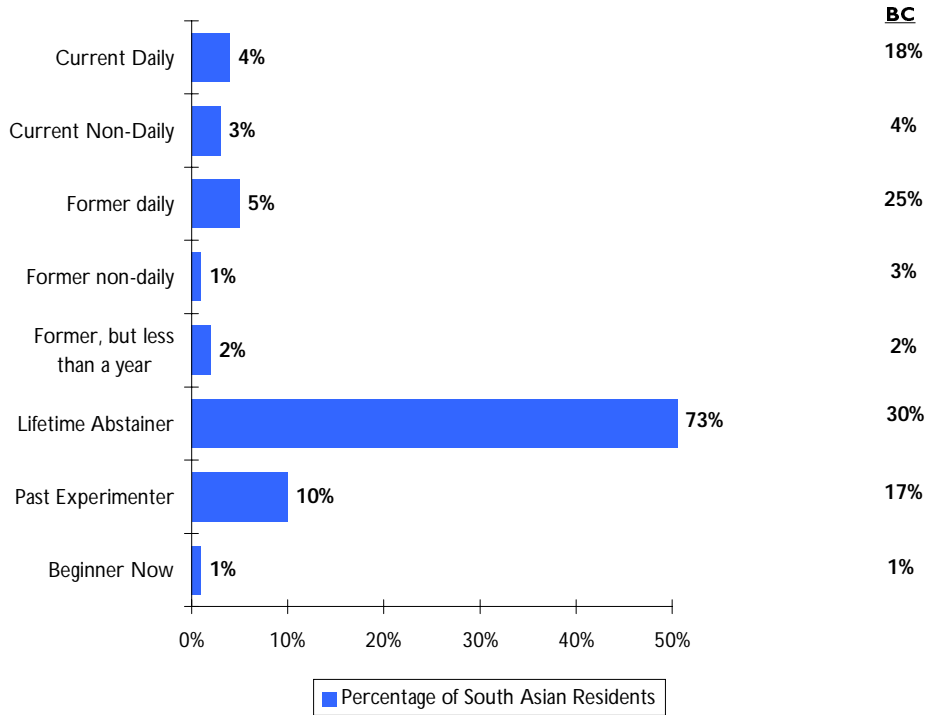
Former cigarette smokers comprise 8% of South Asian residents. This percentage includes former daily smokers (5%), former non-daily smokers (1%), and former smokers, who quit less than a year ago (2%). While percentages for former non-daily smokers and former smokers who quit less than a year ago are similar to the provincial results, the South Asian population has substantially fewer former daily smokers (5% vs. 25%).

By contrast, the proportion of South Asian residents who have never smoked cigarettes is 84%. These never users include lifetime abstainers (73%), past experimenters (10%), and beginners (1%). In comparison to rates for all residents of the province, the South Asian population has considerably more residents who have never smoked cigarettes (84% vs. 48%), and more than double the rate for lifetime abstainers (73% vs. 30%).

In sum, current cigarette smokers make up just 7% of the South Asian population, while former smokers represent 8% and never smokers 84%. Compared to the results for all

residents of the province, the South Asian population has a much lower proportion of current (7% vs. 22%) and former cigarette smokers (8% vs. 30%), but a substantially higher proportion of residents who have never smoked cigarettes (84% vs. 48%).

Cigarette Smoking Status of South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



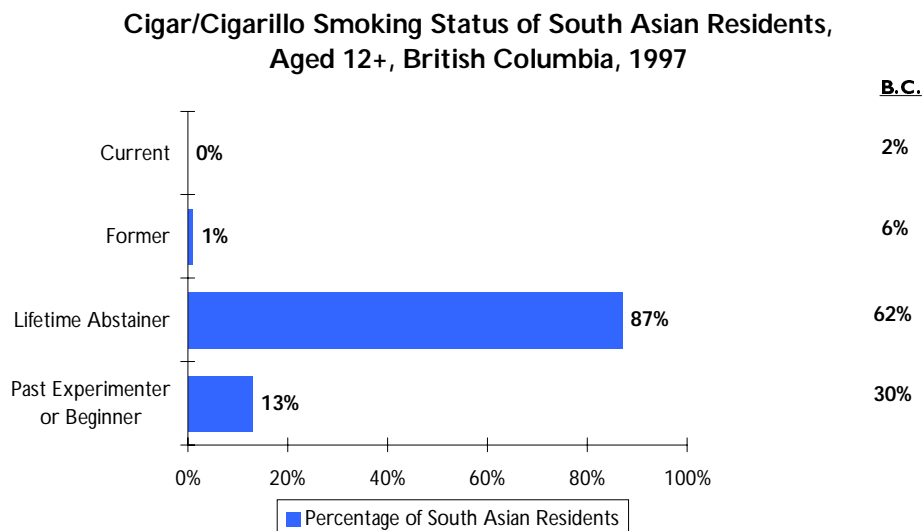
6.2.2 Alternate Tobacco Use Status

Cigar/Cigarillo Smoking Status

For cigar smoking among South Asian residents, four user groups are identified by the survey: current (daily & non-daily), former, lifetime abstainer, and past experimenter or beginner (see graph below).

The current prevalence of cigar smoking among South Asians in B.C. is 0% at this time. As shown in the graph, this 0% for current users is lower than the 2% found for all residents of the province.

The graph also shows that former cigar smokers in the South Asian population represent just 1% of residents, while those who have never smoked cigars make up the remaining 99%. This never user group includes lifetime abstainers (87%) and past experimenters or beginners (13%). Overall, the percentage of South Asians who have never smoked cigars is somewhat higher than that for all residents of the province (99% vs. 92%), but the real differences emerge between the percentages for lifetime abstainers (86% vs. 62%) and past experimenters/ beginners (13% vs. 30%).

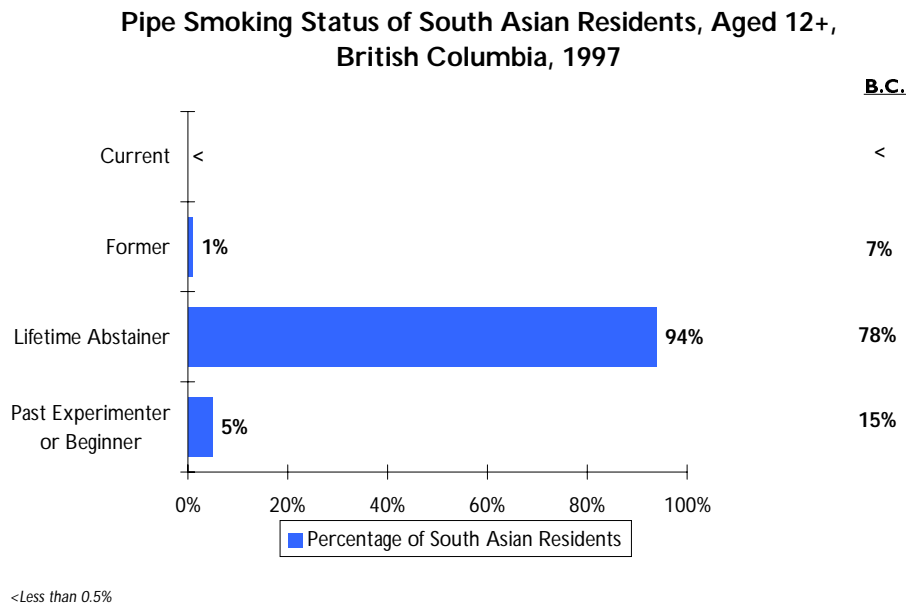


Pipe Smoking Status

For the smoking of pipe tobacco among South Asian residents, the survey also identifies four user groups: current (daily & non-daily), former, lifetime abstainer, and past experimenter or beginner (see graph below).

The current prevalence of pipe smoking among the South Asians in BC is less than half of 1%. There are insufficient numbers of pipe smokers in the South Asian population to distinguish between daily and non-daily users. As exhibited in the graph below, this extremely low prevalence rate is consistent with that found among all residents of the province.

The graph also indicates that just 1% of the South Asian population are former pipe smokers, while 99% have never smoked pipe tobacco. This never user group primarily includes lifetime abstainers (94%) and a much smaller group of past experimenters or beginners (5%). Compared to all residents of the province, South Asians are much less likely to be former pipe smokers (1% vs. 7%) and past experimenters/beginners (5% vs. 15%), but much more likely to be lifetime abstainers (94% vs. 78%).



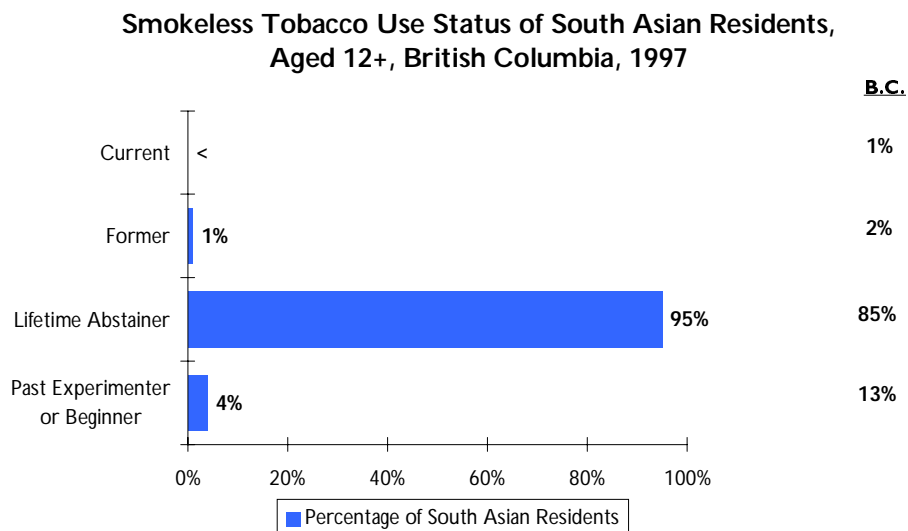
Smokeless Tobacco Use Status

Smokeless tobacco use (i.e., snuff, pinch and chewing tobacco) among South Asian residents was treated similarly by the survey and four user groups are identified: current

(daily & non-daily), former, lifetime abstainer, and past experimenter or beginner (see graph below).

The current prevalence of smokeless tobacco use among the South Asian residents of B.C. is less than half of 1%. Like pipe smoking, there are insufficient numbers of smokeless users to distinguish between daily and non-daily use. While the prevalence of smokeless tobacco use in the South Asian population is extremely low, it is just 1% among all residents of the province.

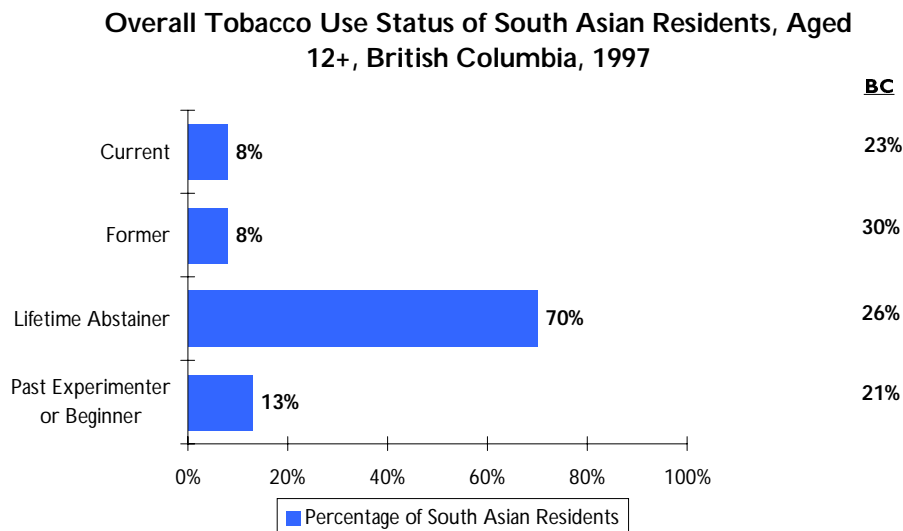
Former users of smokeless tobacco products represent only 1% of South Asian residents, while those who have never used smokeless tobacco represent nearly 99% of the population aged 12+ years. As shown in the graph, this never user group includes both lifetime abstainers (95%) and past experimenters or beginners (4%). Compared to the results for all provincial residents, there are substantially fewer former users (1% vs. 2%) and past experimenters/beginners (4% vs. 13%), but more lifetime abstainers (95% vs. 85%) among South Asian residents.



6.2.3 Overall Tobacco Use Status

The current prevalence of any form of tobacco use among the South Asian population aged 12+ years is summarized in the graph below. This figure combines some of the information contained in the previous graphs, to provide a present snapshot of the overall use of tobacco among the South Asian residents of B.C.

The current prevalence of tobacco use among South Asian residents (aged 12+) is quite low, with just 8% indicating they presently use at least one form of tobacco. Former tobacco users also represent 8% of South Asian residents, while 83% are never users which includes past experimenters or beginners at 13% and lifetime abstainers at about 70%. As shown in the graph, these findings are quite different to that found for all residents of the province; as rates for both current use and former use are about one-third (i.e., 8% vs. 23% and 8% vs. 30% respectively), while the rate for never use is considerably higher (83% vs. 47%).



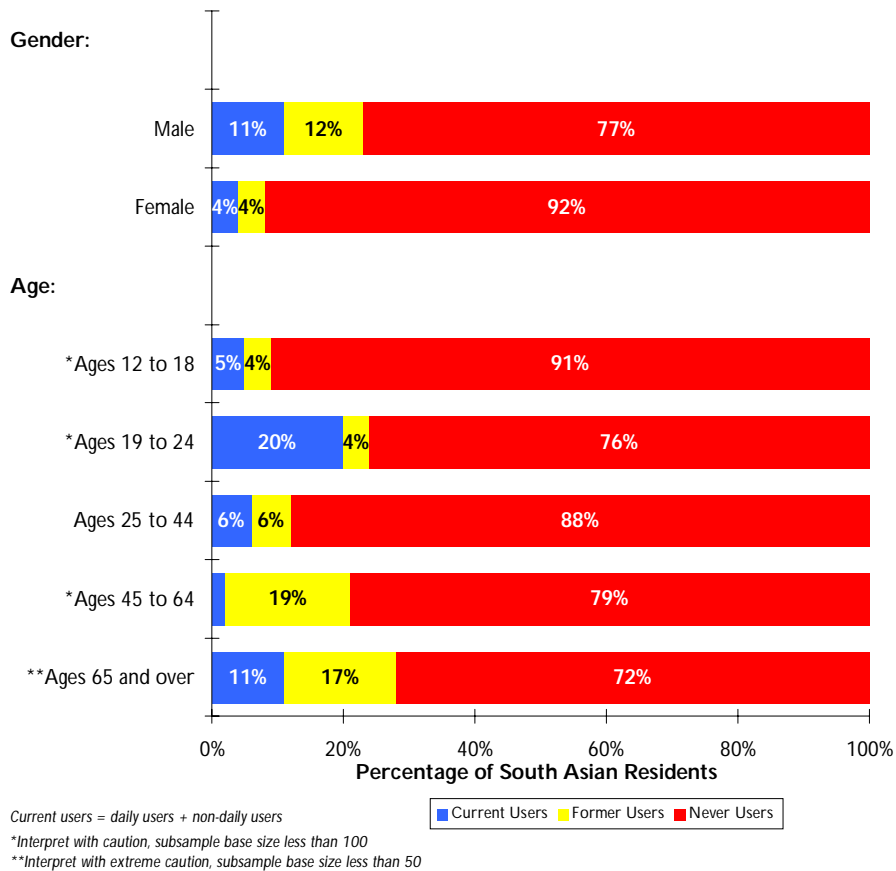
6.3 Social Demographics of Tobacco Use

In this section, use of any form of tobacco (i.e., current, former vs. never) has been cross tabulated against a range of social demographic characteristics of residents, in order to demonstrate a number of social and economic variations in tobacco usage. As already outlined in *Overall Tobacco Use Status*, 8% of the South Asian population are current tobacco users, 8% are former users, and 83% are never users.

6.3.1 Gender and Age

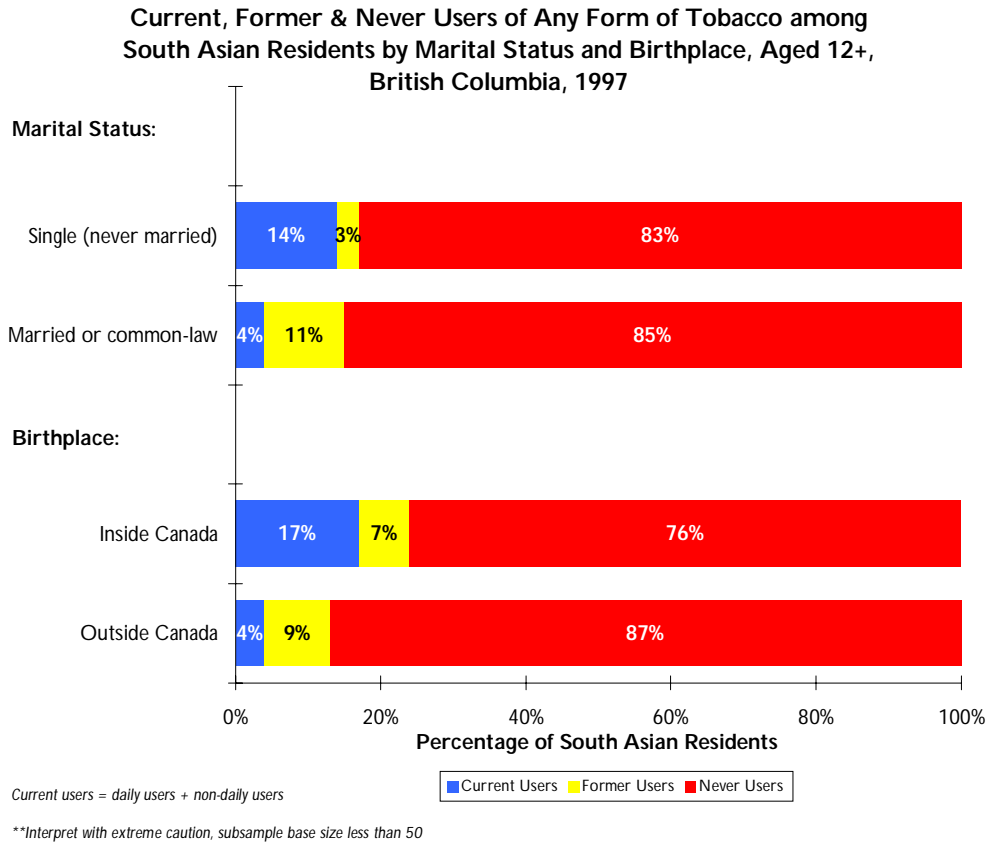
The graph below highlights differences in tobacco use in the South Asian population as a function of gender and age. Males are more likely than females to be both current users (11% vs. 4%), as well as former users of tobacco (12% vs. 4%), and conversely females are more likely than males to be never users (92% vs. 77%). In terms of age, current tobacco use is higher among those aged 19 to 24 years (20%) and aged 65 years and over (11%). It is slightly lower among those aged 45 to 64 years (2%) and 12 to 18 years (5%). Being a former user of tobacco rises steadily with age, from 4% of those under the age of 25 to about 18% among South Asian residents aged 45 and over. On the other hand, the proportion of South Asian residents who have never used tobacco declines from 91% of 12 to 18 years olds to 72% of those aged 65 and over.

Current, Former & Never Users of Any Form of Tobacco among South Asian Residents by Gender and Age, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



6.3.2 Birthplace and Marital Status

The graph below displays the relationship between tobacco use and marital status, as well as place of birth. Residents of the South Asian population of B.C. who were born in Canada are much more likely to be current tobacco users than are their counterparts who were born outside of Canada (17% vs. 4%). Some differences in rates of tobacco use are also evident as a function of marital status. For instance, the proportion of current users is slightly higher among residents who are single (14%), while the proportion of former users is highest among those who are presently married (11%). Base sizes for those separated/divorced or widowed are too small to estimate.

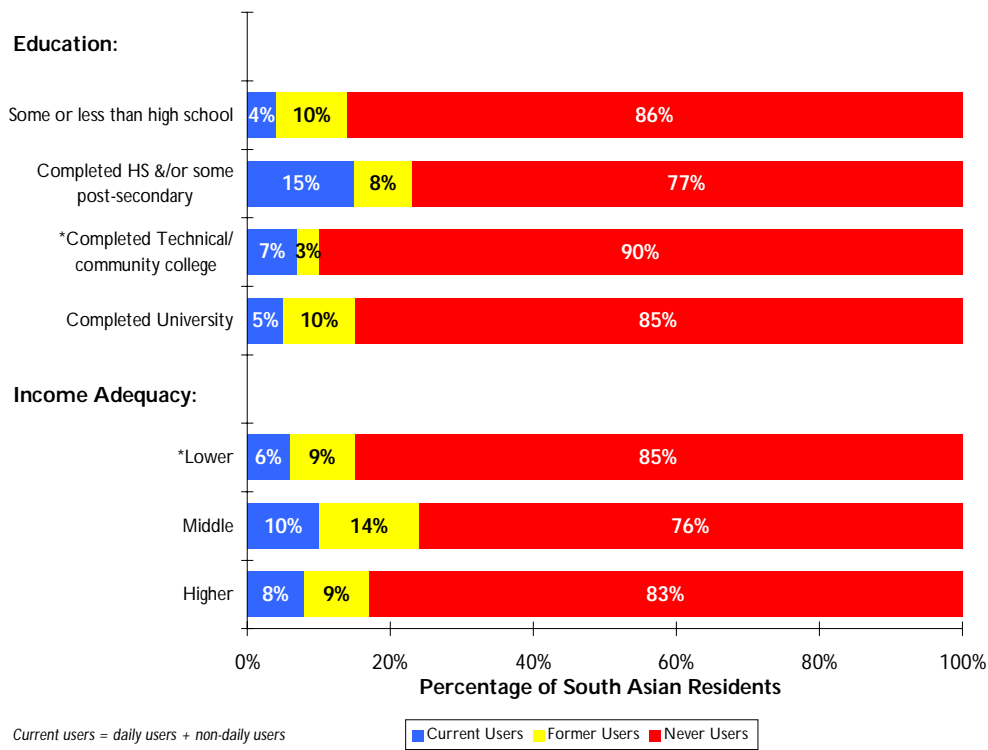


6.3.3 Income Adequacy and Education

The graph below shows the relationship between tobacco use and income adequacy for the household, as well as the educational achievements of South Asian residents. There is no clear relationship between usage and income adequacy except that those in the middle income adequacy category are more likely to be both current and former users.

In terms of education, the highest proportion of current users is found among South Asian residents who have completed high school and/or some post secondary (15%), while the lowest proportions are found for residents who are university graduates (5%) and those who have some or less than a high school education (4%). However, these latter residents are also just as likely as high school graduates to be former users of tobacco (8% & 10% respectively).

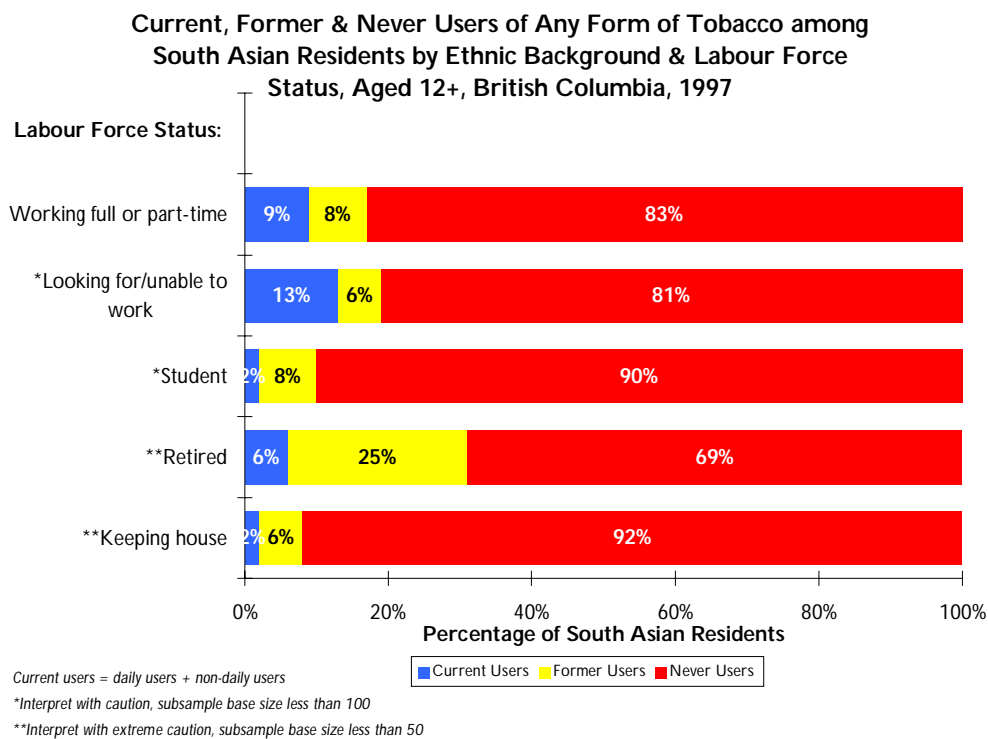
Current, Former & Never Users of Any Form of Tobacco among South Asian Residents by Education & Income Adequacy, British Columbia, 1997



6.3.4 Labour Force Status

The graph below exhibits the relationship between tobacco use and the labour force status of South Asian residents at the time of the survey. Variations in current tobacco use according to labour force status are fairly similar to that found among all residents of the province (data not shown in graph). Specifically, for South Asian residents who are either looking for work or who are unable to work the proportion of current users is 13%, while the same proportion for those who are working full or part-time is 9%. By way of comparison, the equivalent rates among all residents of the province are 39% vs. 26% respectively.

Former use of any form of tobacco is highest among retired residents (25%). Finally, the lowest proportion of never users of tobacco is found among those who are retired (69%), while the highest proportion is found among those keeping house (92%) or students (90%).



6.4 Frequency of Cigarette Smoking among Current Users

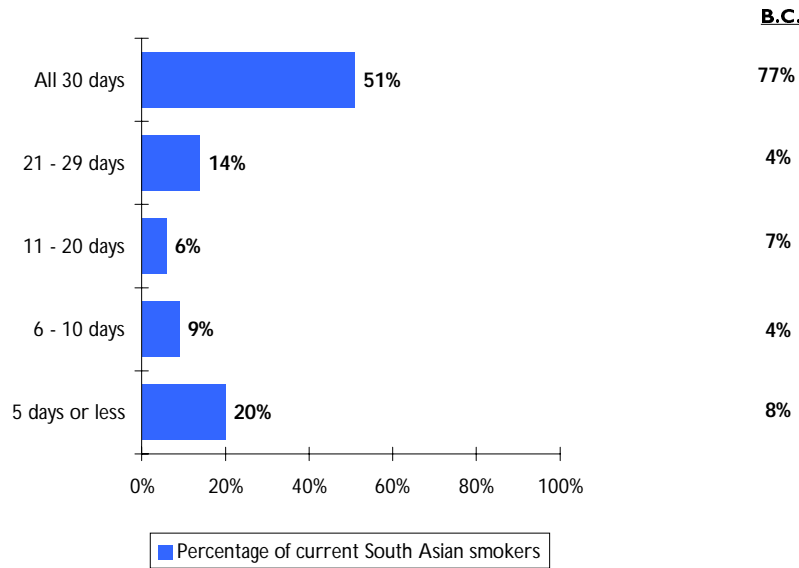
In addition to identifying current cigarette smokers, the survey also inquired about their frequency of smoking during the past month. All current cigarette smokers were asked on how many of the last 30 days they smoked at least one cigarette. If they smoked on 10 or fewer days in the past month, they were also asked how many cigarettes they usually smoked on these days. If they smoked on more than 10 days during the past month, they were asked how many cigarettes they smoked on each of the last seven days prior to conducting the survey.

The reader is reminded that sample sizes for current cigarette smokers among South Asian residents are generally less than 50 and should be interpreted with extreme caution.

6.4.1 Days Smoked in Past Month

The number of days in the past month in which current cigarette smokers in the South Asian population had at least one cigarette is displayed the graph below. Very infrequent smoking, such as on 5 or fewer days per month is reported by 20% of South Asian cigarette smokers, while smoking on all 30 days during the past month was reported by about half (51%) of these smokers. This rate for every day smoking is substantially lower than that found among all cigarette smokers in the province (77%) while those who smoke five days or less is much higher (20% vs. 8%). However, given the small sample numbers here for South Asian residents, at least some of this difference could be easily accounted for by sampling variability.

**Days Smoked in the Past month among Current
Cigarette Smokers†, South Asian Residents, Aged
12+, British Columbia, 1997**



†Interpret with extreme caution, total base size less than 50

6.4.2 Cigarettes per Day by Daily Smokers

The average number cigarettes smoked per day by daily cigarette smokers in the South Asian population is 8.0. This average is about half the average number for all daily cigarette smokers in the province (16.6 per day). The sample size is too small to perform a reliable analysis by demographic descriptors.

6.4.3 Cigarettes per Day by Non-Daily Smokers

The average number of cigarettes per day for this non-daily group is 3.0. This average is marginally lower than that for all non-daily cigarette smokers in the province (3.5 per day). However, given the very small sample size for South Asian residents who are current non-daily smokers, these differences could easily be accounted for by sampling variability.

6.5 Age of Initiation for Tobacco Use

Both former and current users of tobacco identified by the survey were asked their age when they first started using various tobacco products. In the case of cigarettes, they were asked either their age when they smoked their first whole cigarette (if aged 12 to 19 years), or alternatively, their age when they first started smoking cigarettes (if aged 20 years and older). For cigar, pipe and smokeless tobacco users, they were simply asked their age when they first started using the product.

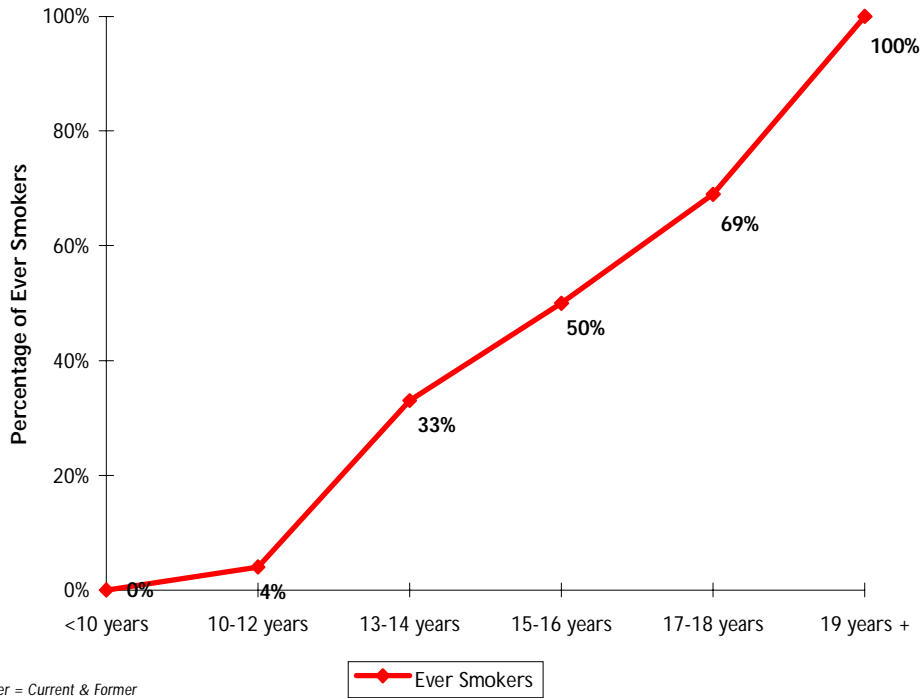
6.5.1 Age of Initiation for Cigarette Smoking

The cumulative age of initiation for cigarette smoking among residents of the South Asian population is displayed in the graph, for ever cigarette smokers since sample sizes are too small to report current and former smokers separately.

The pattern of responses for **ever** smokers shows that South Asian residents start smoking later than the rest of the province. Among South Asian ever smokers, 33% began smoking before the age of 15, 50% began before the age of 17 and 69% began before the age of 19. The average age of initiation for those South Asian residents who have ever smoked is 17.6 (vs. 16.1 for the entire province).

Cumulative Distribution for Age of Initiation among Ever Cigarette Smokers†, South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997

- Age when smoked first cigarette or started smoking cigarettes -



Ever = Current & Former

†Interpret with caution, total base size less than 100

6.5.2 Age of Initiation for Cigars, Pipes & Smokeless Tobacco

Due to the extremely low prevalence of cigar and pipe smoking, as well as smokeless tobacco use, it is not possible to examine the age of initiation for South Asian users of these tobacco products. Unfortunately, sample sizes for South Asian residents who have **ever** used (current + former) cigars, pipes or smokeless tobacco are just too small to provide reliable estimates.

6.6 Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) among Non-Smokers

In addition to inquiring directly about tobacco use, the survey also asked residents of the South Asian population in B.C. about their exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS, sometimes known as secondhand smoke), in their own homes, at work and school and in other public places. Being exposed to ETS was defined as spending at least 10 minutes in an enclosed area where someone is smoking or in a room where people are smoking.

6.6.1 Irritation From Exposure to ETS

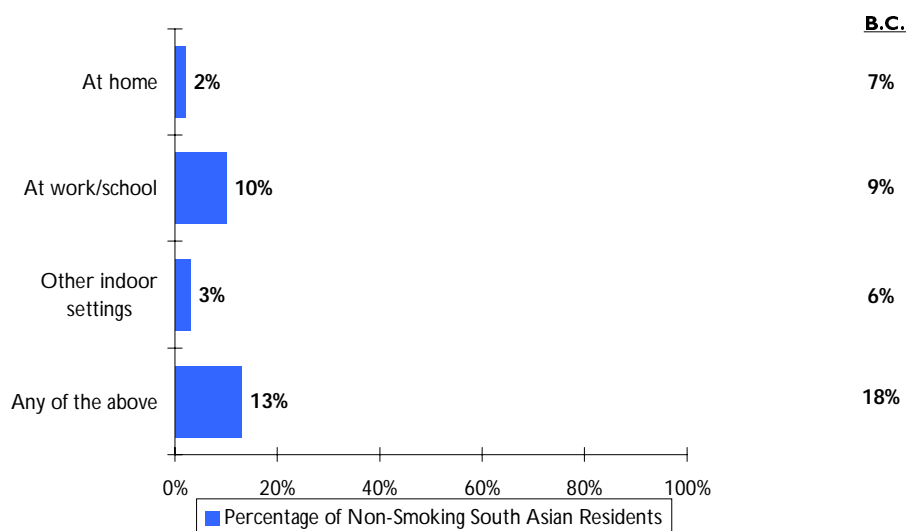
The survey asked all South Asian residents, if “tobacco smoke usually causes physical irritation to your eyes, your breathing or your throat.” Fully two-thirds (67%) of non-smokers (i.e., those South Asians who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or a pipe) report they are usually physically irritated by ETS. Interestingly, almost one-half (48%) of South Asian smokers also report some physical irritation. About the same percentage of both South Asian smokers and non-smokers report they are physically irritated by tobacco smoked as is found among all residents of the province.

6.6.2 Overall Exposure to ETS

Finally, the following graph combines some of the survey findings concerning exposure to ETS for the South Asian residents who do not smoke. Specifically, it displays the proportion of non-smoking residents who have daily or nearly daily exposure to ETS at home, at work or school, and in other public settings, separately. More importantly, however, this figure shows that 13% of South Asian residents who do not smoke, are

exposed to ETS daily or nearly daily in at least one of these three different types of settings. This proportion is slightly lower than that observed for non-smoking residents in the province generally (18%). However, this 13% of non-smoking South Asian residents who are exposed to ETS daily or nearly daily, translates into 12% of all South Asian residents in B.C.

**Frequency of Exposure to ETS Overall among Non-Smokers,
South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997**



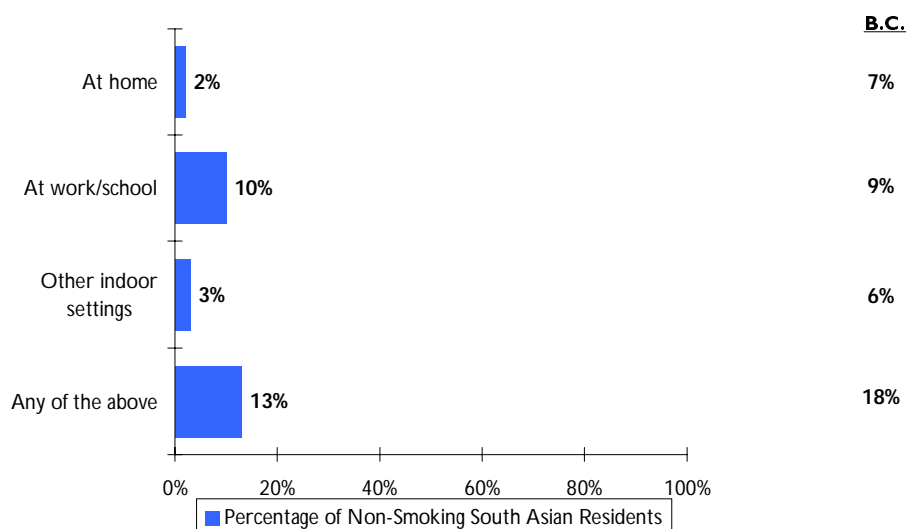
Non-smoking residents = those who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

6.6.3 Exposure to ETS at Home

Non-Smokers: For non-smoking residents, response options for frequency of exposure to ETS inside your own home included: every day, nearly every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, less than once a month, and not at all. As shown in the following graph, just 2% of non-smokers in the South Asian population report being exposed to ETS inside their home on a daily or nearly daily basis. On the other hand, 94% report no exposure to ETS at all in their homes. Overall, non-smokers in the South Asian population have even lower levels of exposure to ETS at home than do non-smokers in

the province generally (i.e., 8% for daily/nearly and 83% for not at all). Demographically based factors appear not to have an effect on whether or not the household of South Asian residents is ETS free.

**Frequency of Exposure to ETS Overall among Non-Smokers,
South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997**

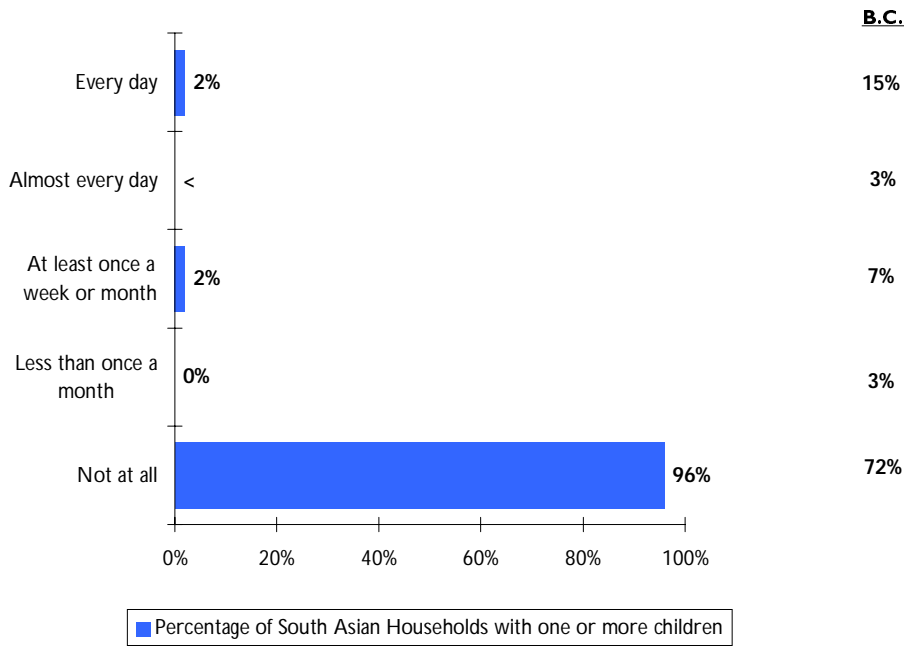


Non-smoking residents = those who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

Unfortunately, there is an insufficient number of South Asian residents in the sample who are exposed to ETS inside their homes every day or nearly every day, with which to reliably estimate the number of cigarettes that are smoked inside these homes on a typical day. Nevertheless, the average number for South Asian would be less than the average for such households in the province generally (14.3 per day).

Households with Children: ETS exposure in South Asian households with children age 11 and under are highlighted in the following graph. In about 2% of these households there is daily or nearly daily exposure to ETS, and in 96% there is no ETS exposure at all. These percentages are different, and much more positive, than are found for all households with children in the province (i.e., 18% - daily/nearly daily; 72% - not at all).

Frequency of Exposure to ETS in Homes with Children Aged 11 Years and Under, South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



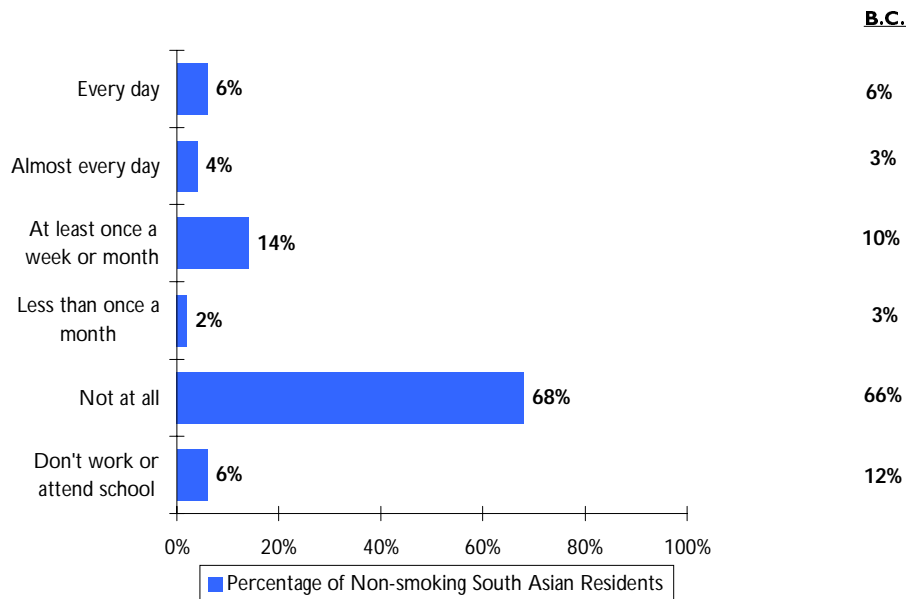
With the few South Asian households with children aged 11 and under, and that have daily or nearly daily exposure to ETS, it is not possible to reliably estimate the average number of cigarettes smoked inside these home on a typical day. However, this average would be considerably less than that found for such households with children in the province generally (18.2 per day).

6.6.4 Exposure to ETS at Work or School

Non-smokers in the South Asian population were also asked about exposure to ETS at work or school. Response options for frequency of exposure to ETS at work or school included: every day, nearly every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, less than once a month, and not at all.

As shown in the graph below, 10% of South Asian non-smokers report exposure to ETS every day or nearly every day when at work or school, while 68% say they are not exposed to ETS at all. These percentages indicate South Asians have very similar levels of exposure to ETS at work or school, as that found for non-smoking residents of the province generally (see graph).

Frequency of Exposure to ETS at Work or School among Non-Smokers, South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



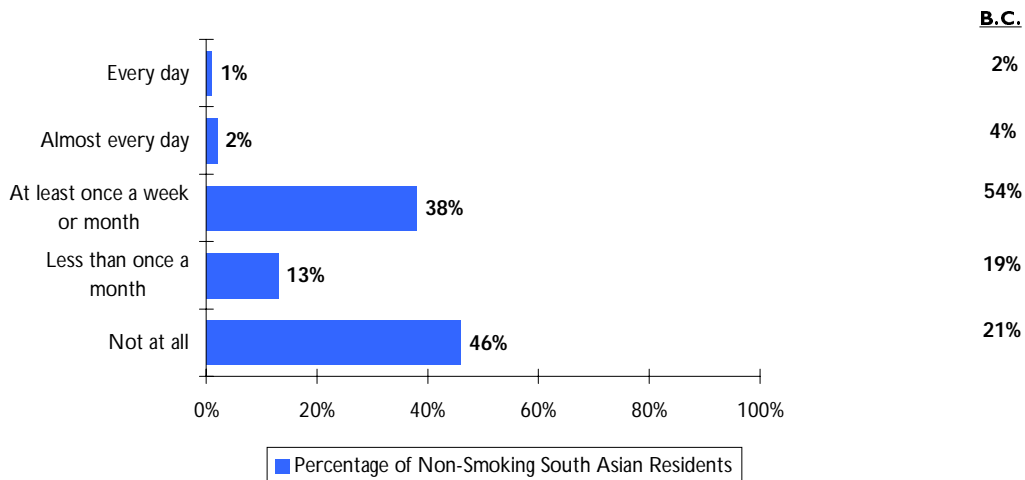
Non-smoking residents = those who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

6.6.5 Exposure to ETS in Other Indoor Settings

Finally, all non-smokers in the South Asian population were asked, “apart from your home and place of work/school, are you exposed to tobacco smoke in any other indoor settings, such as other people’s homes, bars or restaurants.” Response options for frequency of exposure to ETS in other indoor setting included: every day, nearly every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, less than once a month, and not at all.

As shown in the graph below, some level of exposure to ETS in indoor settings such as other people’s homes, restaurants or bars was reported by 54% of the non-smoking South Asian residents. Daily or nearly daily exposure in such settings was acknowledged by 3% of non-smoking residents which is lower than for the province (6%). Conversely, there are more South Asian non-smokers who report no ETS exposure in other indoor settings compared to non-smokers for the province as a whole (46% vs. 21%).

Exposure to ETS Every Day or Nearly Every Day among Non-Smokers, South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



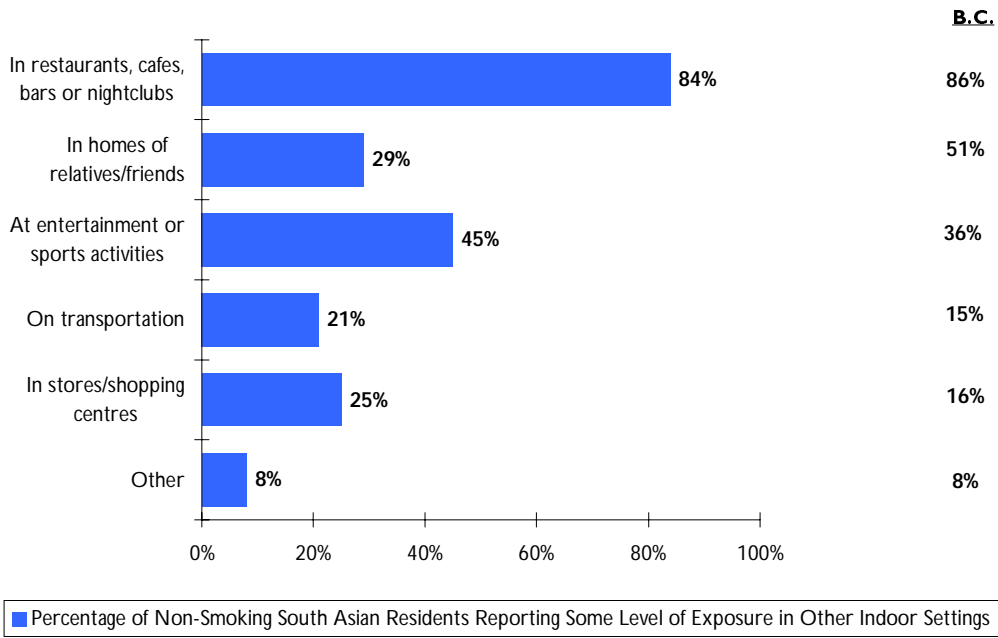
Non-smoking residents = those who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

Those non-smoking residents of the South Asian population who indicated some level of exposure to ETS in the other indoor settings, were also asked about being exposed to ETS in specific settings.

A considerably higher proportion of South Asians who do not smoke report exposure to ETS in restaurants, cafes, bars or nightclubs (84%), than they do for entertainment (45%), in the homes of relatives or friends (29%), in stores or shopping centres (25%) and on transportation (21%). These results are generally consistent with the provincial results except for the percentage in the homes of relatives/friends which is lower among

South Asians (29% vs. 51%), and the percentages for entertainment and in stores or shopping centres which are higher (45% vs. 36% and 25% vs. 16% respectively).

Exposure to ETS in Specific Indoor Settings among Non-Smokers, South Asian Residents, Aged 12+, British Columbia, 1997



Non-smoking residents = those who do not currently smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

6.7 Demographics of Survey Samples

The following table presents demographic information from the weighted samples. Therefore, age and gender proportions for provincial results will be representative of province (aged 12+).

	South Asian Sample	British Columbia Sample
Gender		
Male	54	49
Female	46	51
Age		
12-19	17	13
20-24	16	9
25-44	42	34
45-64	19	28
65+	6	17S
Average	34.2	42.8
Marital Status		
Single	33	35
Married/Common Law	61	49
Separated/Divorced	4	8
Widowed	2	7
Children		
None	52	76
One	20	12
Two or more	28	12
Education		
Less than High School	6	6
Some High School	21	16
Completed High School	19	23
Some or Completed Technical/Community College	23	21
Some University	6	10
Completed University	16	15
Graduate Degree	9	8
Income Adequacy		
Low	7	5
Lower-Middle	11	10
Medium	29	26
Upper-Middle	36	38
High	18	21

	South Asian Sample	British Columbia Sample
Labour Force Status		
Working full-time	49	41
Working part-time	9	9
Self-Employed	4	9
Looking for work or unable to work	13	6
Student	14	10
Retired	5	20
Keeping house	6	4
Place of Birth		
In Canada	30	79
Outside Canada	70	21

Demographically, the South Asian sample differs from the sample for all of British Columbians on the following:

Age - the South Asian sample is generally younger with an average age of 34.2 years compared to 42.8 years for the entire province;

Marital status - the South Asian sample has more residents who are married (61% vs. 49%) and fewer who are either separated, divorced or widowed (6% vs. 15%);

Children - the South Asian sample has more residents who have children aged 11 and under in their households (48% vs. 24%)

Place of Birth - the South Asian sample has far fewer residents born inside Canada (30% vs. 79%) and many more born outside Canada (70% vs. 21%);

Labour Force Status - the South Asian sample has more residents who are either working full-time (49% vs. 41%) or looking for/unable to work (13% vs. 6%), but has fewer retired residents (5% vs. 20%).