

Evaluating The Role Of Thirdhand Smoke Policy Roundtables In Supporting Tobacco Prevention Efforts

A mixed-methods evaluation of policy roundtables supporting thirdhand smoke integration in tobacco prevention

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Our Goal

Evaluate whether policy roundtables increase Thirdhand Smoke awareness and support integration into tobacco prevention education, outreach, and policy-related efforts.

Specific Aims

1. Assess whether policy roundtables increase Thirdhand Smoke awareness among participants
2. Evaluate whether roundtables influence Thirdhand Smoke-related initiatives across tobacco prevention projects
3. Explore current Thirdhand Smoke knowledge and attitudes among professionals working in tobacco prevention

Background

- Thirdhand Smoke is residual tobacco contamination that persists after smoking ends
- Less consistently understood than firsthand and secondhand smoke
- Relevant to housing, healthcare, youth exposure, and environmental contexts
- **Virtual policy roundtables were created to: Increase Thirdhand Smoke awareness; Support practical communication strategies; Encourage peer learning and collaboration; Help integrate Thirdhand Smoke into existing tobacco prevention efforts**

Methods

Study Design

Mixed-methods evaluation combining quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews.

Survey Component

- Online survey of tobacco prevention professionals (**N = 51**)
- Participants represented diverse roles and organizational settings
- Measures: Thirdhand Smoke knowledge and attitude scores (validated scale)
- Comparison: attended ≥ 1 roundtable vs. none

Interview Component

- Semi-structured interviews conducted via **Zoom (n = 10)**
- Participants drawn from survey respondents who attended roundtables
- Topics included:
 - Thirdhand Smoke understanding
 - Roundtable experience and usefulness
 - Communication strategies
 - Policy and program influence

Policy Roundtables Strengthened Thirdhand Smoke Awareness And Communication, But Effects Were Indirect Findings Indicate Gradual Integration Into Practice Rather Than Immediate Policy Change

Where Thirdhand Smoke Contamination Matters In Real-world Settings?



RESULTS: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS (THEMES)

Core Thematic Findings

- Limited & Uneven Understanding**
 - Thirdhand Smoke is less familiar than secondhand smoke and often requires explanation across audiences
- Education & Outreach as Primary Strategy**
 - Thirdhand Smoke is most commonly addressed through education, presentations, and community outreach
- Communication Tools & Messaging**
 - Visual materials, examples, and practical tools improve understanding and engagement
- Barriers to Implementation**
 - Resistance linked to norms, personal freedom, and institutional constraints limits uptake
- Knowledge-Implementation Gap**
 - Awareness does not consistently translate into policy or program action
- Environmental & Health Framing**
 - Framing Thirdhand Smoke as both a health and environmental issue increases relevance and engagement
- Emerging Product Challenges**
 - Cannabis and newer nicotine products complicate communication and policy approaches

Roundtable Influence (Evaluation Themes)

- Roundtables support awareness, peer learning, communication strategies, and program thinking, with indirect and context-dependent effects
- Awareness Building**
 - Roundtables increased recognition of Thirdhand Smoke relevance across multiple settings
 - Communication Capacity**
 - Participants gained practical tools that improved Thirdhand Smoke messaging and outreach
 - Peer Learning & Exchange**
 - Roundtables facilitated sharing of strategies, experiences, and challenges across organizations
 - Program & Messaging Influence**
 - Roundtables influenced outreach approaches and message framing rather than direct policy change
 - Application Depends on Context**
 - Participants' ability to apply Thirdhand Smoke concepts varied across settings and depended on local priorities, resources, and policy conditions

Analysis

- **Independent-samples t-tests** (exploratory, non-causal) comparing participants who attended ≥ 1 policy roundtable vs. participants who attended none
- **Thematic analysis using qualitative coding**
 - Focused on patterns in:**
 - Awareness and understanding
 - Communication and outreach
 - Policy relevance
 - Barriers and facilitators

Results

Quantitative Findings:

Comparison: attended ≥ 1 roundtable vs. none

- Higher mean Thirdhand Smoke knowledge (39.2 vs. 37.6)
- Higher mean Thirdhand Smoke attitudes (36.8 vs. 34.5)
- Differences **not statistically significant**
- High **variability** and smaller attendee sample limited statistical power
- Indicates **positive directional trends**, not causal effects

Conclusion (Why It Matters?)

- Policy roundtables function as **capacity-building mechanisms** within tobacco prevention systems
- Policy roundtables support increased awareness, improved communication, and integration of Thirdhand Smoke into tobacco prevention practice
- The influence of policy roundtables is **indirect, incremental, and shaped by local context** rather than producing immediate policy change
- Policy roundtables are most effective when Thirdhand Smoke is **embedded within existing prevention priorities and programmatic efforts**



Scan the QR code to read or download the poster.



References

1. Matt, G. E., et al. (2020). Persistent tobacco smoke residue in multiunit housing. *Preventive Medicine Reports*.
2. Matt, G. E., et al. (2023). Policy-relevant differences between secondhand and thirdhand smoke. *Tobacco Control*.
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