



# Patterns, beliefs, and sociodemographic factors associated with cigarette sharing and gifting in China

Wu, Dan; Jiao, Guihua; Hu, Huan; Zhang, Lu; Huang, Lixin; Jiang, Shuhan Jiang  
School of Psychology, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, 518060, China



## Introduction

- Smoking tobacco use accounted for 7.69 million deaths and 200 million disability-adjusted life-years in 2019, which was one of the leading risk factors for death, especially for males.
- Owing to, China emphasize social ties (guanxi), and valuing reciprocity via gift exchange to maintain harmonious social bonds in Chinese society. Cigarette sharing and gifting plays an important role in boosting the smoking epidemic in China.
- Understanding the determinants of cigarette sharing and gifting is an important issue for future tobacco control research. The mechanism how cigarette gifting beliefs influence gifting and sharing behavior, and whether these gifting behaviors in turn promote smoking behaviors is unknown.
- The purpose of this study is to portray the beliefs and patterns of cigarette sharing and gifting, and to identify their sociodemographic associations across different regions of China, and to explore the effect of these social practices on smoking.

## Methods

- A cross-sectional survey was conducted online using a multi-stage sampling design. A valid sample of 982 from Guangdong Province and 530 from Shaanxi province were involved in the data analysis. Sociodemographic characteristics, beliefs, and behaviors related to cigarette sharing and gifting were assessed.
- Chi-square analysis and multiple Logistic regression analysis were used to explore the key factors associated with cigarette sharing and gifting, and further to identify their relationship with smoking.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics

Forty-two per cent of participants (n=634) reported being current smokers, of which 33.1% were daily smokers and 8.8% were occasional smokers.

### The beliefs about cigarette gifting

The total score for the belief scale was 23.03 (SD=5.16). A considerable proportion of participants agreed that gifting cigarettes helps them maintain relationships (38.6%) and solve practical problems (23.9%).

### The patterns of sharing cigarette behavior and of gifting cigarette behavior

The shared and gift cigarettes were both mainly offered to friends and relatives, and receiving gift cigarettes mostly occurred during holidays such as Spring Festival, weddings or other important days.

### The correlates of cigarette sharing and gifting

Gender and province were associated with cigarette sharing, and marital status and social participation were correlated with cigarette gifting. Cigarette gifting beliefs and smoking status were prominent predictors for both sharing and gifting cigarettes. Cigarette gifting beliefs were significantly higher among smokers than in nonsmokers.

## The correlates of cigarette sharing and gifting

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Full model
<b>Cigarette sharing behaviors</b>					
Offering					
Yes	25.95(18.81-35.80)**				19.17(13.31-27.61)**
No	1.00				1.00
Receiving		4.98(3.82-6.49)**			1.50(1.08-2.09)*
Yes		1.00			1.00
No					
<b>Cigarette gifting behaviors</b>					
Offering					
Yes			3.64(2.74-4.84)**		0.78(0.52-1.19)
No			1.00		1.00
Receiving					
Yes				6.70(4.76-9.44)**	2.58(1.66-4.00)**
No				1.00	1.00
<b>Cigarette gifting beliefs</b>					
High score	1.76(1.30-2.38)**	1.84(1.43-2.38)**	1.85(1.44-2.38)**	1.83(1.41-2.36)**	1.63(1.20-2.22)**
Low score	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

# The significant sociodemographic characteristics were adjusted.  
\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

Table 1 Logistic regression analysis for current smoking status among all participants (N=1512)

## Discussion

- The results showed the friends were the first recipients of both sharing cigarettes and gifting cigarettes. Four fifths of respondents reported they had shared cigarette to show basic meeting etiquette and social intimacy.
- Smoking status was closely associated with cigarette sharing and gifting. The study demonstrated that cigarette sharing and gifting behaviors were the key contributors to smoking. Sharing and gifting cigarettes has been an indispensable way for smokers to gain social approbation and to build and maintain interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, smokers may be more receptive and enjoyable to the cigarette culture of courtesy reciprocity than nonsmokers.
- Another interesting finding in the current study disclosed that social participation was significantly associated with cigarette gifting, but not related with cigarette sharing. This finding implied that gift-giving behaviors may play a more important role in social relationship than sharing behaviors. Meanwhile, the results align with the findings of the dark side of social participation, indicating that social participation in collective activities may unintentionally facilitate at-risk behaviors such as cigarette gifting behavior.

## Conclusion

This study provides population-based estimates of the prevalence and correlates of cigarette gifting and sharing, with subdivisions of offering and receiving behaviors. Beliefs about cigarette gifting and its impact on sharing and gifting behaviors were also assessed. Cigarette sharing and gifting were especially pervasive among male smokers and married people in Shaanxi Province. This study provides evidenced-based data to support the design and implementation of tobacco control programs for denormalization of gifting and sharing cigarettes.

## Reference

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