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ABSTRACT BOOK

TID
Tobacco Induced Diseases

Aims and Scope

Tobacco Induced Diseases encompasses all aspects of research related to the prevention and control of tobacco use at a global level. Preventing diseases attributable to tobacco is only one aspect of the journal, whose overall scope is to provide a forum for the publication of research articles that can contribute to reducing the burden of tobacco induced diseases globally. To address this epidemic we believe that there must be an avenue for the publication of research/policy activities on tobacco control initiatives that may be very important at a regional and national level. This approach provides a very important "hands on" service to the tobacco control community at a global scale - as common problems have common solutions. Hence, we see ourselves as "connectors" within this global community.

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Oral

The status quo of tobacco industry interference in Jordan and governmental response

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco industry interference stymies the implementation of effective tobacco control policies. Jordan is among the countries with the highest tobacco use prevalence globally and in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Understanding the extent of tobacco industry interference index (TIII) and evaluating the Government's response to recommendations from civil society is essential for advancing tobacco control efforts.

METHODS: This study involved civil society organizations (CSOs) employing multiple data sources to report the frequency, types, and severity of tobacco industry interference in Jordan. Specifically, desk reviews of publicly disclosed documents (governmental or other), interviews with key stakeholders, and whistleblower testimonials were conducted. Findings were analyzed using the TIII criteria. A comparative analysis of Jordan's four TII reports from 2019 to 2023 was then conducted followed by an evaluation of the extent of implementation of recommendations in the reports (up to December 2024).

RESULTS: The TIII scores for Jordan consistently indicated high levels of interference, with scores of 79, 78, 78 and 82 out of 100 in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023 respectively. The deterioration in 2023 reflected increased industry participation in policy development, greater benefits to the industry, diminished transparency, and heightened conflict of interest, particularly involving former civil servants employed by the industry. Across the reports, 13 unique recommendations emerged. Of these, four were fully implemented, including integration of periodic TIII assessments in Jordan's National Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-2026. Two recommendations were partially implemented (capacity-building efforts on Article 5.3 and leveraging Access to Information law), while eight remained stagnant.

CONCLUSIONS: Jordan continues to experience high levels of tobacco industry interference, largely driven by strong lobbying efforts. Accelerating the full implementation of Article 5.3 of the FCTC and addressing the remaining CSO recommendations are essential to reducing interference and achieving progress in tobacco control.

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Design and evaluation of a personalized mHealth intervention system based on machine learning to promote smoking cessation in China

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BACKGROUND: In China, over 50 million smokers want to quit, yet most lack access to cessation services. This study aims to design a personalized smoking cessation mobile intervention system integrating professional perspectives and smokers' opinions using machine learning, and to evaluate its effectiveness.

METHODS: First, we developed a personalized mHealth intervention for smoking cessation. Based on Health Action Process Approach (HAPA), we identified the Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) required by users. For the system function, the BCTs guided the design of the interactions, like games helping users weigh pros and cons. For the cessation messages, we added the insights from peer quitters on the basis of traditional scientific guidance to form a comprehensive message database. For each message, we identified the corresponding quitting stage according to HAPA. Through machine learning, the system could recommend messages based on user's quitting stage and preferences.

We conducted a randomized controlled trial from September 2024 in China. Current smokers aged 18-65 were recruited online and randomized to intervention group (mHealth program) or to the control group (electronic cessation handbook) in a 1:1 ratio. After 3-month intervention, we conducted the follow-up survey, the primary outcome was 7-day point prevalence abstinence (PPA) biologically validated using saliva nicotine test strips.

RESULTS: The baseline characteristics of participants between the intervention group (n=136) and control group (n=136) were comparable. Follow-up was completed by 113 and 116 participants, respectively. By intention-to-treat analysis, the biologically validated 7-day PPA rate was 17.6% in the intervention group and 7.4% in the control group (OR=2.70, p=0.010). Compared with baseline, the average daily cigarette consumption of participants in intervention group decreased from 8.7 to 2.2 (P<0.001). Among intervention group users, 83.1% reported satisfaction with the intervention.

CONCLUSIONS: The personalized mHealth intervention system may help smokers to quit, which can therefore be considered for large-scale implementation in China.

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Understanding the drivers of smoking relapse among Indonesian youth: Insights from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (2006–2019)

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BACKGROUND: Smoking relapse refers to the resumption of smoking behavior after a quit attempt, often triggered by nicotine addiction and various enabling factors. In children, smoking relapse also can be influenced by cigarette prices, advertisements, and environmental factors. However, limited studies explore the causes of smoking relapse in Indonesian children, despite this being a failure to protect them from the adverse effects of smoking. Understanding the most significant risk factors is essential to inform future tobacco control interventions. This study aims to examine the incidence of smoking relapse in children and analyze the effects of cigarette prices and non-price factors.

METHODS: This study utilized data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) conducted in 2006, 2009, 2014, and 2019. The category of smoking relapse was identified based on the question about whether participants had ever tried to quit smoking in the past 12 months as recorded in the GYTS. A multivariate logistic regression model was applied to predict the likelihood of relapse, incorporating key determinants from both price and non-price factors.

RESULTS: The results show that smoking relapse rates among children remain high, exceeding 50% between 2009 and 2019. Low cigarette prices significantly increase the coefficient likelihood of smoking relapse: Rp 1.000/US$0.067–Rp 1.500/US$0.10 (-0.036; p<0.001) and Rp 1.600/US$0.11–Rp 2.000/US$–0.13 (-0.075; p<0.001). Purchasing cigarettes by the pack reduces relapse rates more steeply than buying single sticks. Non-price factors contributing to relapse include peer influence (0.110; p<0.001), e-cigarette use (0.129; p<0.001), and exposure to cigarette advertising across various media (0.079; p<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: The study concludes that both price and non-price factors drive smoking relapse in children. Policies to significantly increase cigarette prices and prohibit single-stick sales are crucial to preventing smoking relapse among Indonesian children.

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Multisectoral collaboration: A success story in sustaining tobacco control strategies in a highly urbanized city

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The success story of Baguio City, Philippines in localizing the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) stems from its deep history as the 'Health Resort of the Far East' and its deep culture on 'Binnadang', a local dialect which means 'communal unity, work, and cooperation'. This multisectoral collaborative approach including the local government, civil society organizations, health professionals, academe, businesses, youth, and community members that tobacco control strategies has been sustained despite the tobacco industry interference, resource limitations, and competing priorities in local health program implementation.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Baguio City implemented a comprehensive suite of interventions tailored to its unique urban and cultural context. These included the strict enforcement of smoke-free policies in public spaces, comprehensive ban on TAPS, access restrictions, extensive awareness campaigns on dangers of tobacco and vape use, support programs for cessation, and policy on tobacco industry interference.

A critical component of Baguio's success was its ability to build strong partnerships across sectors. Collaborative governance anchored on accountability, transparency, and trust enabled the city to integrate tobacco control initiatives beyond health, education, and environmental agendas, ensuring sustainability and widespread impact. Community engagement played a pivotal role, with residents actively participating in monitoring and reporting violations of tobacco regulations, further strengthening compliance.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The outcomes were significant: reduced prevalence of tobacco use from among adult 31.3% in 2014 to 8.9% in 2023 among adults, and 28% to 5% among youth and decrease exposure to second hand smoke in public places These achievements underscore the effectiveness of localized implementation of FCTC when supported by inclusive, multisectoral collaboration.

CONCLUSIONS: Baguio City's experience serves as an inspiring model for other cities aiming to combat the tobacco epidemic. By tailoring global health frameworks to local contexts and fostering collective action, cities can achieve meaningful, sustainable health outcomes for their populations.

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Effectiveness of mHealth intervention for smoking cessation in people with tuberculosis compared with usual care: A cluster randomised controlled trial

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BACKGROUND: Behavioural support is effective in smoking cessation in people with TB. However, its delivery, being reliant on the motivation and capability of health professionals, remains inconsistent. We evaluated the effectiveness of an mHealth behavioral support

intervention (mTB-Tobacco) in achieving six-month continuous abstinence in people with TB.

METHODS: A multi-center, open-label, cluster-randomized superiority trial was conducted in Bangladesh and Pakistan with 27 TB health facilities randomized (2:1) to mTB-Tobacco or usual care. The trial enrolled 1,080 adult pulmonary TB patients, daily smokers, willing to quit, with mobile phone access. The primary outcome was 6-month self-reported continuous abstinence, verified by carbon monoxide <10 ppm. Intervention consisted of motivational text messages in local languages sent throughout TB treatment. Analyses compared quit rates using univariate and generalized mixed models, accounting for intervention effects, cluster randomization, and covariates.

RESULTS: Between Feb–Dec 2024, 1.080 TB patients (600 Bangladesh; 480 Pakistan) were recruited from 27 clusters (15 Bangladesh; 12 Pakistan), randomized to mTB-Tobacco intervention (18 clusters, 720 participants) or usual care (9 clusters, 360 participants). Mean age was 48.3±15.9 years (range 15–91). The attrition rates at the primary end-point were 8.98% (7.5% mTB-Tobacco; 11.9% control). At 6 months, 310/666 (46.5%) in mTB-Tobacco and 57/317 (17.9%) in usual care achieved continuous abstinence (RR=2.60, 95% CI 1.96–3.45; RD=28.9%, 95% CI 23%–35%). Generalized Linear Mixed Model analysis showed significantly higher odds of six-month CO-verified abstinence in the mTB-Tobacco group (OR=4.11, 95% CI 1.99–8.48, p<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: The mTB-Tobacco intervention was found effective in promoting smoking cessation among TB patients compared with usual care. This approach offers a scalable, cheap and effective solution in helping people with TB to quit smoking. mTB-Tobacco should be offered to all smokers coming in contact with TB services.

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Evolution of nicotine product use and associations with quit intentions and attempts: An analysis of nationally representative repeated cross-sectional surveys

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine product use (NPU) is changing rapidly worldwide but relatively little is known about how this may be associated with intentions and attempts to quit tobacco use. This study addresses this gap.

METHODS: This study is a longitudinal analysis of seven waves of the nationally representative Healthy Ireland (HI) cross-sectional survey conducted between 2015 and 2023 (N=52,167). Survey-weighted prevalence of current tobacco use, e-cigarette use, and dual use of tobacco and e-cigarettes was estimated for each wave separately. Associations between sociodemographic factors and NPU, as well as between NPU and quit intentions and attempts, respectively, were examined using survey-weighted regression models in 2015 (N=7.502) and 2023 (N=7.356) waves.

RESULTS: Between 2015 and 2023, current tobacco use declined from 22.8% to 17.7% (p=0.012), e-cigarette use rose from 3.1% to 8.4% (p=0.001) and dual use from 1.3% to 3.1% (p=0.006), overall. The most pronounced increases were observed among those aged 15–24, where e-cigarette rose from 0.9% to 17.7% and dual use from 0.3% to 6.9%. In 2015, dual use was strongly associated with higher quit intentions, relative to tobacco-only users, but this was no longer the case in 2023. Similarly, in 2015 dual use was associated with past-year quit attempts relative to tobacco-only users (AOR 3.3, 95% CI 2.0–5.4) but by 2023, this association was no longer apparent (AOR 1.2, 95% CI 0.8–1.7).

CONCLUSIONS: Over the study period, e-cigarette and dual use more than doubled, while associations between dual use and quit intentions and attempts attenuated. These findings underscore the need for a robust regulatory framework for e-cigarettes and a renewed focus on advancing tobacco control.

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Use of cessation treatments among patients of smoking cessation clinics: Findings from 2019-2023, China

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BACKGROUND: Smoking cessation medication and behavioral counseling increase the likelihood of successful quitting. This study aimed to explore status about adoption of cessation treatment in smoking cessation clinics (SCCs), which may facilitate refinement cessation strategies in China.

METHODS: The data collected when patients visited the clinics and received follow-up. Cessation treatments consists of counseling, counseling with the first-line cessation medication (FLCM, including varenicline, bupropion, and nicotine replacement therapy), or with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM, including acupuncture and Chinese herbal). Counseling were delivered based on the 5As and 5Rs theory model, with recommended duration ⩾10 minutes for each session. The degree of nicotine dependence was measured by Fagerström test for cigarette dependence (FTCD) scores. We used pooled data from 2019 to 2023; only patients ⩾18 years old were included (N=102,997).

RESULTS: Of the 102.997 patients (Mage= 51.2±15.0 years old, Mean FTCD sore= 4.4±2.5, 96.5% male), the utilization rate of FLCM was only 12.8%. The rate was the highest in the high cigarette dependence group, followed by

moderate and low dependence group (19.3%, 13.0% and 8.0% respectively, p-value <0.01). The FLCM utilization were varenicline (5.8%), bupropion (5.1%), nicotine patch (1.5%), and nicotine gum (0.4%). Not covered by national medical insurance and high cost of the FLCM affects the patient's acceptance and the medication equipment in SCCs. SCCs tend to provide the FLCM to patients with high nicotine dependence, considering it is more necessary for them. Although evidence on the role of TCM in cessation is insufficient, some SCCs still use it for treatment for its accessibility. The utilization rate of TCM was 2.0%.

CONCLUSIONS: Counseling plays a major role in cessation treatment in SCCs, and the utilization rate of the FLCM is low in China. Insurance coverage of the FLCM is necessary to increases the availability and utilization for every smoker willing to quit.

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Smoking cessation and short- and longer-term mortality among 1.5 million adults followed for 15 years

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BACKGROUND: Smoking cessation reduces mortality and morbidity. However, the extent and rapidity at which cessation reduces contemporary death rates from smoking-related illnesses remains uncertain.

METHODS: We pooled current or former vs. never cigarette smoker hazard ratios (HRs) from four national cohorts with linkage to death registries in the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, and Canada among adults aged 20-79, conducted from 1974-2018. We calculated excess risk differences and survival comparing current or never smokers with age-specific cessation and cessation <3, 3-9, or ≥10 years earlier.

RESULTS: Among 1.48 million adults followed for 15 years, 122.697 deaths occurred. Adjusting for age, education, alcohol use, and obesity, current smokers had significantly higher HRs for death compared to never smokers (2.8 for women, 2.7 for men). Survival between ages 40-79 years were 12 and 13 years less in women and men, respectively who smoked compared with never smokers (about 24-26 years of life lost for smokers killed by smoking combined with zero loss for smokers who were not). Former smokers showed lower HRs (1.3 in both sexes). Short-term cessation <3 years reduced excess risk by 95% in women and 90% in men below age 40, with notable beneficial associations also in women and men aged 40-49 years (81% and 61%) and 50-59 years (63% and 54%). Cessation at every age raised survival, particularly cessation before age 40 years. Among all ages and compared to continued smoking, cessation of <3 years averted 5 years of life lost and cessation for ≥10 years averted about 10 years of life lost, yielding survival similar to never smokers.

CONCLUSIONS: Quitting smoking at any age, but particularly in younger years, was strongly associated with significantly lower excess mortality overall and from vascular, respiratory, and neoplastic diseases. Benefits were evident as early as 3 years after cessation.

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The effect of cigarette prices on smoking cessation in South Africa using duration analysis: 1970–2017

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BACKGROUND: South Africa is an interesting case to explore given its high smoking rates and quit intentions, its experience with periods of tax- and industry-initiated cigarette price increases, and the mixed evidence of the effect of prices on smoking cessation (particularly in low- and middle-income countries).

METHODS: We used data from five waves of the National Income Dynamics Study, a nationally-representative survey conducted between 2008 and 2017, and duration analysis techniques to examine whether cigarette prices were associated with South African smokers' decision to quit smoking. Smoking histories were constructed from self-reported age of onset and cessation and matched to monthly price data from 1970 to 2017.

RESULTS: We found that price was associated with smoking cessation: a 10% increase in the price of cigarettes was associated with an increase in smoking cessation of 5.8 to 7.9%, depending on model specification. We found that despite a large sex disparity in smoking cessation (in our sample, females quit at a rate that was about 1.8 times higher than that of males), both males and females in South Africa responded similarly to price changes. We also found a positive gradient between education and smoking cessation.

CONCLUSIONS: Our results indicate that increasing the excise tax on cigarettes above inflation would likely encourage smoking cessation in South Africa, provided measures to reduce illicit cigarette trade are concurrently implemented.

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Harnessing the law for noncommunicable disease prevention and tobacco control – evaluation of a global legal training programme 2014-2023

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are the world's leading cause of death and disease, with tobacco a shared risk factor for the five major NCDs. Laws for NCD prevention, including tobacco control laws, are cost-effective ways to prevent NCDs. Yet law remains an underused tool globally and legal expertise one of the key needs identified by WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) parties.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address this gap, in 2014, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer launched its International Legal Training Programme (ILTP), which aims to raise the capacity of government lawyers from low- and middle-income countries to use the law to address noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) including by implementing the WHO FCTC and countering legal challenges to tobacco control laws. The course consisted of in-person (2014-2019) / online (2020-2023) training followed by practical implementation by participants through a 'priority project'.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: From 2014-2023, the ILTP ran 13 times and trained 450 participants from 97 countries and territories. Participants rated the ILTP highly in evaluation surveys and reported large increases in confidence/knowledge in using law for NCD prevention and control. Follow up of participants' priority projects showed they contributed to NCD law and policy change in a documented 30 countries, the successful defence of legal challenges to tobacco control laws in five countries, and the initiation of a legal challenge against the tobacco industry to recover health care costs in one country.

CONCLUSIONS: Evaluation of the ILTP reveals that building the capacity of government lawyers can be effective in driving legal and policy change to better prevent and control NCDs globally, including by advancing tobacco control laws. Legal capacity building programs such as the ILTP are essential for addressing NCDs and reducing the burden of tobacco-related deaths.

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Industries' response to tobacco product endgame and nicotine product restrictions: The case of the UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill

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BACKGROUND: In 2023, the UK government proposed a landmark Bill introducing a generational ban on tobacco product sales and tackling nicotine product (NP) use among youth. The tobacco and nicotine industries' response to this Bill has not yet been examined.

METHODS: We collected 43 consultation and evidence submissions from tobacco and nicotine industry-linked actors and used an evidence-based taxonomy of Corporate Political Activity to identify framing strategies.

RESULTS: Submissions were from transnational tobacco companies (TTCs) and actors with current TTC connections (42%), Other Tobacco Product (OTP) and nicotine product (NP) specialists, and general retailers.

Many actors portrayed their industry as 'good', with TTCs presenting themselves as champions of public health whilst framing policymakers, public health advocates and researchers, and other irresponsible industry actors as 'bad'.

TTCs, linked actors and other OTP specialists opposed the generational sales ban, arguing it lacked supporting evidence, would harm the economy, and increase anti-social behaviours against retailers. Proposed alternatives included raising the age-of-sale to 21 and exempting heated tobacco products and OTPs.

Similarly, TTCs, and NP actors and their respective linked groups argued against restrictions on NP flavours, packaging, and display, framing such measures as threats to rights and innovation, and as drivers of illicit trade and smoking relapse. Proposed alternatives were education-focused approaches and self-regulation.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco and nicotine industries, particularly TTCs and TTC-linked actors, used strategic framing to undermine the UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill while portraying themselves as public health champions. Whilst companies continue to sell tobacco and NPs and to oppose related policy measures, policymakers, advocates, and researchers must remain vigilant to protect and advance public health.

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AI-powered innovation in tobacco control capacity building

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Global tobacco control education faces significant challenges in knowledge accessibility, learning engagement, and sustainable capacity building. Traditional approaches often struggle with scalability, personalization and interaction in delivering expert knowledge. Peking University pioneered an innovative approach by integrating AI technology into China's first professional tobacco control MOOC, establishing a smart health communication platform to enhance tobacco control education effectiveness and overcome these longstanding barriers.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The platform employs advanced cognitive AI model based on Xunfei Spark to create three innovative learning scenarios: synchronized classroom reproduction, evidence-based interactive tutoring, and professional knowledge application. Through sophisticated natural language processing technology, it transforms expert tobacco control MOOC content, including epidemiology, prevention strategies, and tobacco control policies, into personalized intelligent learning

experiences. The system integrates both web platform and WeChat mini-program interfaces, implementing AI-powered features including real-time intelligent tutoring, adaptive learning path recommendations, and automated learning effectiveness assessment to provide comprehensive tobacco control capacity building support.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: PKU's tobacco control MOOC has attracted over 3,000 registrants since November 2021, including students (60%), public health practitioners (30%), and media professionals (10%). The AI-enhanced platform, currently in trial phase, demonstrates preliminary improvements in learning engagement through innovative interaction methods. Initial user feedback and pilot testing among PKU students indicate enhanced accessibility and effectiveness of tobacco control knowledge dissemination. The platform's integration of AI technology with evidence-based tobacco control content shows promise in advancing professional capacity building.
CONCLUSIONS: This pioneering practice showcases AI technology's transformative potential in modernizing tobacco control education. By integrating established MOOC content with AI innovation, the platform creates a new paradigm for sustainable capacity building in tobacco control. The experience provides valuable insights for future global tobacco control education development and demonstrates a scalable model for enhancing public health education through technological innovation.
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Tobacco consumption, gender and caregiving: A simulation exercise for Argentina

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BACKGROUND: Smoking is related to direct medical costs and productivity losses, which may have a significant financial impact on households. Less known is the effect that smoking may have on labour market outcomes. As smoking may imply severe illnesses, intrahousehold caregiving may affect labour supply, especially in developing countries. In countries where caregiving is predominantly a female activity, the effect of smoking on caregiving can have substantial gender implications.
METHODS: The study simulates how rising tobacco prices affect female labour participation, incomes, and per capita household income (PCHI). Using a general equilibrium reduced-form model, the study quantifies the effects by household income quintiles using several data sources from Argentina (a country with relatively high smoking prevalence and low female labour participation).
RESULTS: The results reveal that a 25% increase in tobacco prices leads to a rise in the average female caregivers' monthly labour income of up to 12.3%. This effect is produced by the rise in the number of hours worked by women caregivers and the higher number of women employed in the labour market, a substantial effect considering that the number of tobacco-related care recipients is reduced by 5.2%. The effects are non-linear across the income distribution, with women in the lowest quintile experiencing an increase of 14.7% in their labour incomes versus a rise of 9.8% for those in the upper quintile. The increase in the PCHI produced by this is of 0.53%.
CONCLUSIONS: The results provide new evidence on the socioeconomic effects of tobacco taxes, especially their consequences on female labour participation and household income. The study's methodology can be used to evaluate similar effects in other developing countries, leading to a deeper understanding of the full social benefits of tobacco taxation.
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Mapping tobacco accessibility near Brazilian schools: Industry practices and regulatory gaps

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BACKGROUND: Noncommunicable diseases, like tobacco use, are spread via commercial practices by multinational corporations. The tobacco industry (TI) focuses on attracting young consumers to sustain its market, as tobacco-related deaths reach 174,000 annually in Brazil. Despite strict advertising regulations, TI uses flavoring products, attractive packaging, and point-of-sale (POS) displays near schools to target minors. Data from 2019 (National School Health Survey) revealed that 22.6% of students have tried smoking, and accessibility remains high, with seven in ten minors successfully purchasing cigarettes. This study aimed to map the density of tobacco product availability near public schools in five Brazilian cities and examine promotional and sales strategies used by TI and retailers.
METHODS: This observational study explored POS located within 300 meters of five public schools in urban centers of one capital in each Brazilian region. Researchers georeferenced retail locations, took photographic records, and completed questionnaires to catalog POS features, promotional practices, and compliance with regulations. POS included kiosks, convenience stores, bars, bakeries, and supermarkets. Data collection took place in 2023, and findings were uploaded to an online database for geospatial and qualitative analysis.
RESULTS: Out of 170 POS surveyed, nearly half (48.2%) sold tobacco products, with the highest rates observed in Belo Horizonte (29.2%) and Curitiba (26.8%). Newspaper stands were the most frequent retailers (35.4%), followed by bakeries (17.1%). Most POS (87%) engaged in illegal single-cigarette sales, while displays often used bright visuals and obscured health warnings. Price lists were widely used as advertising, featuring vibrant colors and prominent placement in the POS to attract attention. Illicit products, such as electronic cigarettes and contraband packs, were also found.
CONCLUSIONS: Widespread tobacco availability and noncompliance with regulations near schools highlight

serious public health local challenges. Stronger enforcement, engaging local consumer protection bodies, regulatory updates, and sensitizing retailers and students are urgently needed to protect students.

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Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC) 2.0: Navigating challenges to advance tobacco control in India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains a critical public health concern in India, with significant morbidity and mortality despite government interventions. Challenges include limited inter-state knowledge sharing, inconsistent policy enforcement, and a need for capacity building among implementers, program managers, academician and researchers, and policymakers which hampered the effective implementation of tobacco control programs. Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC) was established in 2018 to address these gaps.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To overcome these challenges, RCTC, provided centralized, organized resources tailored to diverse stakeholder needs. Key interventions included: formation of a national-level task force on tobacco control to strengthen collaboration, establishment of medical college consortiums for research and advocacy, capacity-building initiatives through over 75 workshops, webinars, and two online courses designed to upskill over 6.500 program managers and academicians, compilation of state-level circulars, policies, and legislation from 36 states to ensure uniform access to regulatory information and publication of four thematic books and 32 editions of Tobacco Free Times (bi-monthly newsletter), fostering regular dissemination of technical insights.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The RCTC portal had more than 900.000 visitors from 110+ countries, and Google Analytics showed that there was sustained engagement through repeat visitors (42%) and an average session duration of 4.2 minutes, which shows the utility for users. High traffic originated from India (68%), followed by the U.S. and Southeast Asia, which underscores its global reach. Training programs enhanced policy enforcement and knowledge application, while the centralized repository streamlined access to regulatory documents, include establishing a Tobacco Endgame Hub to strategize long-term interventions.

CONCLUSIONS: RCTC's innovative, multi-faceted approach highlights the potential of integrated platforms to navigate programmatic barriers and advance public health outcomes. The RCTC model offers valuable lessons for other nations aiming to strengthen their tobacco control frameworks and achieve WHO-FCTC goals.

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Tobacco industry's unlawful promotion of heated tobacco products and e-cigarettes among Georgian medical doctors

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BACKGROUND: Despite the Republic of Georgia implementing a comprehensive ban on Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) for all tobacco products in 2018, Philip Morris International (PMI) has continued to unlawfully promote heated tobacco products (HTPs) and e-cigarettes. This study explores how PMI targeted medical doctors through industry-funded events disguised as educational programs on 'tobacco harm reduction.'

METHODS: A qualitative study was conducted through in-depth interviews with eight Georgian medical doctors across various specialties (cardiology, oncology, pulmonology, dentistry, and family medicine) who attended PMI-funded events between 2021 and 2023. Event materials—including agendas, press releases, and presentation content—were also analyzed. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns related to motivations for attendance, awareness of industry tactics, and ethical concerns.

RESULTS: PMI, through the Georgian Institute for Social Research (ISR), organized multiple events marketed as smoking cessation and harm reduction trainings. Former Ministers of Health and prominent medical professionals led these events, using the U.S. FDA's Modified Risk Tobacco Product (MRTP) authorization of IQOS to promote it as a less harmful alternative to smoking. Many doctors reported being unaware of PMI's involvement until attending the events and expressed ethical concerns upon realizing the sponsorship. Participants highlighted a need for independent, evidence-based smoking cessation training and greater awareness of the tobacco industry's manipulative strategies.

CONCLUSIONS: The study reveals how PMI circumvented Georgia's TAPS laws by covertly engaging medical professionals in promotional activities for IQOS and e-cigarettes. This violates the FCTC Article 5.3. Strengthening tobacco control policies, enforcing transparency in medical education, and providing independent cessation training are essential to counter industry interference.

Implications for Tobacco Control and recommendations:

- Strengthen enforcement of TAPS regulations to prevent covert industry marketing.
- Implement strict policies according to the FCTC 5.3.
- Develop independent, evidence-based smoking cessation programs for healthcare professionals and provide funding for its implementation.

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Definitive findings from the BabyBreathe Trial - Preventing return to smoking postpartum

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BACKGROUND: The majority of people who quit smoking in pregnancy relapse postpartum, with most relapse occurring in the first six months after a baby is born. BabyBreatheTM is a complex intervention offering targeted one-to-one behavioural support in the community, alongside digital, remote and pharmacological support in the postpartum period. In this presentation we report, for the first time, definitive process outcomes from an NIHR funded randomised controlled trial evaluating the BabyBreatheTM intervention versus usual care.

METHODS: Multi-centre randomised controlled trial (RCT, ISRCTN70307341). The trial recruited people who quit smoking for or during pregnancy across the UK. The BabyBreathe intervention starts in late pregnancy and continues postpartum. The primary outcome is 12 month carbon monoxide (CO) verified sustained smoking abstinence. Process evaluation measures collected assessed engagement, fidelity, contamination, and user experiences of receiving the intervention.

RESULTS: 887 participants were randomised. Mean age was 29 years, and 91% were of white ethnic identity. 45% were co-habiting, with 29% married. 12 month follow up was completed by 751 (85%) people. Of those reporting abstinence, 87% completed biochemical verification. Across groups, biochemically validated smoking abstinence was 55%. 64% self-reported continuous abstinence. Process data demonstrated that face to face support with a community health visitor was delivered with fidelity to the protocol and was experienced by participants as supportive and helpful. Automated text message support was also valued, but other digital aspects of the intervention, including the BabyBreatheTM website and app, were engaged with relatively infrequently.

CONCLUSIONS: Continued support for smoking cessation during pregnancy is vital to ensure maximum long term health benefits to parents and infants. The BabyBreatheTM approach shows promise in supporting sustained smoking cessation at 12 months postpartum. Findings suggest implementation should provide targeted and tailored support by healthcare professionals routinely supporting people postpartum, supplemented by automated text message support as low cost long term support.

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The future of tobacco marketing: Virtual reality and the next generation of the internet

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BACKGROUND: We were behind the curve to address tobacco and electronic cigarette marketing on social media, but should have the foresight to get ahead of new technologies like the game-like metaverse environment. The Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM), a digital media monitoring and reporting system that tracks and analyzes tobacco marketing on India, Indonesia and Mexico social media, found references to tobacco marketing via new tools like the metaverse, advergaming and non-fungible tokens (NFT).

METHODS: Publicly available social media posts were collected by an AI-driven digital media analytics using Boolean keyword searches in Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, and online news from January-December 2023. These posts and images were content analyzed for account characteristics, tactics and framing using a theory-based codebook. In addition, marketing reports on digital trends were reviewed. We highlighted examples of social media posts and news articles that mention tobacco marketing in new digital platforms.

RESULTS: In 2023, TERM documented 41.598 instances of tobacco marketing, with indirect tactics dominating, such as community events, brand extension and corporate social responsibility activities. We highlight examples of innovative strategies observed in Indonesia such as branded immersive concerts and metaverse art on Instagram featuring avatars and virtual cigarette packaging. In India, a tobacco company sponsored cultural events and sold brand-extended products through virtual stores. Additionally, an NFT honoring company founders appeared in digital newspaper ads, showcasing the integration of emerging technologies into tobacco marketing.

CONCLUSIONS: The metaverse, a three-dimensional, game-like version of the internet built on augmented and virtual reality, will become a digital space targeting young people. These technologies will pose challenges for regulators due to their decentralized design, limiting control by media platforms or governments. Policymakers and stakeholders are urged to establish monitoring systems, identify relevant government agencies with jurisdiction, and determine appropriate mechanisms to regulate these emerging and evolving media platforms.

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Cross-price elasticity between licit and illicit cigarette consumption in Brazil

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BACKGROUND: There is a low number of cross-price elasticity estimates in the literature and no consensus on whether licit cigarette prices affect the consumption of illicit brands. The recent survey on the economics of tobacco regulation by DeCicca et al. (2022) excludes illicit cigarette studies entirely because the topic 'has received little attention in the literature'. The authors also cite only a handful of papers that estimate cross-price elasticities between licit and illicit cigarettes and other tobacco products.

METHODS: Using propensity score matching (PSM), we pair comparable licit- and illicit-cigarette consumers to assign hypothetical prices and address the challenge of exclusive consumption of just one type. The analysis focuses on Brazil, a developing country with a significant illicit cigarette market, and uses individual data from the 2013 and 2019 National Health Surveys (PNS). Illicit market identification relies on declared brands and sales below the official minimum prices.

RESULTS: Results show that cross-price elasticities indicate a switching demand effect following illicit cigarette price changes in 2013, but not in 2019. However, changes in licit cigarette prices do not significantly influence switching demand in either year or in the combined sample. Across all models, illicit cigarette consumers exhibit lower price sensitivity than their licit counterparts, highlighting distinct behaviors in response to market dynamics.

CONCLUSIONS: There is no significant evidence that an increase in legal cigarette prices, such as from tax hikes, would lead to an expansion of the illicit market. These results suggest that legal and illegal cigarettes are not close substitutes, as their demand is not directly influenced by their relative prices. The positive cross-price elasticity estimates from the illicit to the licit market also represent a desirable second-order effect of public policies aimed at combating cigarette smuggling.

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Linking women's experiences and perceptions of vaping during pregnancy/postpartum to inform stigma-reducing resources for healthcare providers (HCPs)

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BACKGROUND: In a growing body of research on vaping, there is a gap in research on women's experiences with vaping nicotine during pregnancy and postpartum. In countries where cannabis is legal, nicotine and cannabis are often both utilized so we recruited women in Canada who vape(d) nicotine and/or cannabis during pregnancy/ postpartum to better understand their experiences, patterns of use, and considerations regarding vaping in the perinatal period, to inform resources for women and best practices for HCPs.

METHODS: This was a mixed methods study. Women who had vaped during pregnancy/postpartum were recruited using social media outlets. 111 completed a survey, and 22 of those completed semi structured interviews. Data were analyzed using SPSS and NVivo.

RESULTS: 63% were pregnant and 37% postpartum, and over half vaped nicotine (51.4%), 20.7% used both nicotine and cannabis, and 27.9% vaped cannabis alone. Most vaped daily (68.5%). Reasons for vaping included quitting smoking, managing sleep issues, headaches, and appetite loss. Some women viewed vaping as less stigmatized than smoking, but reported feelings of shame, guilt, public judgment, in addition to a lack of consistency in conversations with their healthcare providers about vaping. Many consulted healthcare providers about potential risks, but 85.6% didn't report concerning side effects. Despite seeking information, women faced limited research on vaping during pregnancy, influencing their decision-making. Findings led to the creation of two support resources for women and healthcare providers.

CONCLUSIONS: Understanding women's experiences and perceptions of nicotine and cannabis vaping during pregnancy and postpartum is an under-researched area that has immediate implications for women's and fetal/infant health. Our resources recommend improvements in information, public health and health promotion approaches that centre women's decision-making processes and reasons for vaping, and provide appropriate, non-stigmatizing information and guidance to women and health care practitioners. We created two resources to fill this gap.

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Canada's disastrous vaccine collaboration with Philip Morris: A hard lesson for all governments

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In November 2020, the Canadian federal government announced a new COVID-19 vaccine collaboration with Mitsubishi Pharma and tobacco giant Philip Morris. The government approved US$230 million in funding for Medicago Inc.—a Quebec-based vaccine developer that the two corporations wholly owned.

Tobacco control stakeholders around the world reacted strongly to the news of the vaccine collaboration. Over 30 civil society organizations signed a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urging the government to end its partnership with Philip Morris and direct the funds to other vaccine producers without ties to the tobacco industry. The letter pointed to Canada's blatant violation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Despite the reaction from civil society and substantial negative global publicity, the government fast-tracked the regulatory review of the vaccine, which Health Canada approved for domestic distribution in February 2022. After receiving Canadian approval, Medicago applied to WHO to

seek approval for global distribution through COVAX.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Following a successful 16-month advocacy campaign led by ASH Canada and other NGOs, the WHO rejected Medicago's application in March 2022 on the grounds that the vaccine violated the WHO's policy to avoid tobacco industry collaborations.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Philip Morris was removed from the collaboration in December 2022, and Mitsubishi Pharma assumed its stake in the company. In May 2023, Mitsubishi Pharma announced that it was dissolving Medicago and washing its hands of the vaccine. Parliamentary hearings into the Medicago collaboration were convened in late 2023 after the government reported further related financial losses. In December 2024, the Canadian government released cross-government guidelines to comply with Article 5.3 of the FCTC.
CONCLUSIONS: Canada's controversial collaboration with Philip Morris is a hard lesson for all governments. Governments must strictly adhere to FCTC Article 5.3 to shield themselves from tobacco industry manipulation and collaborations.
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Promotion of heated tobacco products on social media: Findings from the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Germany

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BACKGROUND: Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) are marketed as less harmful alternatives to cigarettes but their long-term health effects remain unclear. In Europe, HTP marketing regulations vary widely, and it is unknown if marketing of HTPs on social media differs across countries with different regulatory frameworks. This study examines the extent, forms, and content of social media promotion of HTPs in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany.
METHODS: Meltwater, a media monitoring tool, was utilized to retrieve social media posts related to HTPs in the UK, Ireland, and Germany. Search queries, refined through pilot testing, incorporated relevant keywords and hashtags to identify posts across Instagram, Facebook, X, Pinterest, and TikTok. Only public posts in English and German were included. The identified posts promoting HTPs were then analyzed using content analysis.
RESULTS: No promotional posts were found in Ireland, where HTPs are regulated as tobacco products, unlike in the UK (47%) and Germany (49%), where they are treated as 'novel' tobacco products. Most promotions were from commercial social media accounts (96%), including online shops, physical shops and brands. Electronic heating devices were the most promoted HTP product subtype (UK: 39%; Germany: 52%), followed by heated tobacco sticks and other HTP accessories. IQOS was the leading HTP brand (UK: 63%; Germany: 61%). Promotions were generally neutral in appeal to age and gender, though Germany had a higher proportion of posts targeting youth (UK: 8%; Germany: 34%) and women (UK: 6%; Germany: 18%). Promotions in the UK mostly focused on 'offers and deals' (44%), while those in Germany emphasized more on 'design and technical features' (42%) of the product.
CONCLUSIONS: There is a substantial presence of promotional content in countries that classify HTPs as novel tobacco products rather than as conventional tobacco. Regulating HTPs in the same manner as conventional tobacco, as in Ireland, could significantly reduce HTP promotion and help curb their appeal.
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Inequities in support towards commercial tobacco endgame policies: Findings from 2022 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey

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BACKGROUND: Many countries have set targets to reduce tobacco use to <5%; thus, some are considering more aggressive measures to end tobacco use (known as 'endgame'). Understanding support across social groups is key for informing advocacy efforts concerning these policies. Our study examined population-level support among adults who smoke for banning smoked tobacco products (STP) in 10 years, restricting sales to anyone <18 for life (tobacco-free generation, TFG), and introducing a very low nicotine standard for cigarettes (VLNC) to make them less addictive.
METHODS: Data were from adults who smoked (≥ monthly) from the 2022 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey in Australia (n=1167), Canada (n=1578), England (n=1857) and the United States (US, n=1400). Weighted prevalence of support was estimated, and weighted logistic regression models assessed support (vs no support) overall and by gender, age group, income and education, controlling for country, smoking frequency, and nicotine dependence.
RESULTS: Across all countries, 51.9% of adults who smoked supported VLNC (95% CI: 49.3%-54.4%), 50.5% a TFG (47.9%-53.1%), and 26.2% a STP ban (24.0%-28.4%). Support differed significantly by country and gender; however, no differences were found by income

nor education. Support was lower in the US compared to Canada for VLNC (AOR: 0.59; 95% CI: 0.43-0.81), a TFG (0.54; 0.39-0.74) and a STP ban (0.39; 0.26-0.55). The odds of support were higher among women (1.44; 1.14-1.84) than men for VLNC, but significantly lower (0.73; 0.56-0.95) for a STP ban. There were no differences by gender for support towards a TFG.

CONCLUSIONS: Results identify significant levels of support towards endgame policies among people who smoke across social groups, which can help inform education and advocacy efforts for these initiatives. Additional research on what might make phasing out of STP sales more widely accepted, especially among women who smoke, may be beneficial.

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Unveiling the hidden marketing: A news narrative analysis of tobacco industry charitable donations in Chinese media coverage

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BACKGROUND: While tobacco industry's charitable donations have been widely recognized as a corporate social responsibility (CSR) tactic globally, the narrative mechanisms through which media coverage legitimizes these activities remain understudied, particularly in China's unique tobacco monopoly context. This study innovatively applies news narrative theory to examine how media coverage of tobacco industry donations potentially undermines tobacco control efforts.

METHODS: Using purposive sampling, we tracked and analyzed news coverage of tobacco industry donations documented in the 2021 China Tobacco Yearbook through comprehensive online searches. A total of 85 news reports were collected and analyzed using a novel coding framework based on news narrative theory. The framework examined ten dimensions including narrator type, character construction, narrative perspective, and framing strategies. Two trained coders independently coded all materials with high reliability (Cohen's Kappa > 0.8). Python was used for descriptive statistical analysis and text visualization.

RESULTS: The analysis revealed sophisticated narrative strategies: 82.35% of headlines explicitly featured tobacco companies; reporting frames predominantly emphasized national policy response (37.65%) and public health benefits (34.12%). The narrative approach balanced between promotional (43.79%) and journalistic (42.60%) modes. Notably, 100% of reports maintained positive stances, utilizing multi-modal storytelling with text-video combinations (43.27%) to enhance persuasiveness.

CONCLUSIONS: As a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), China is obligated to implement comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. This study demonstrates how news coverage of tobacco industry donations employs sophisticated narrative strategies that may constitute tobacco promotion. We recommend: 1) strengthening implementation of FCTC Article 13 by explicitly including media coverage of tobacco industry CSR activities within advertising restrictions; 2) developing guidelines for balanced news reporting of tobacco industry activities; and 3) enhancing media professionals' awareness of tobacco industry marketing strategies. These measures would contribute to more effective tobacco control policy implementation in China.

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Mixed methods evaluation of a community co-designed financial incentive for smoking cessation in Ireland

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BACKGROUND: Despite the overall decline in smoking prevalence, socioeconomic disparities in smoking quit rates are widening in Ireland. Financial incentives (FI) are effective tools to enhance smoking cessation. However, they are complex, context-dependent and often criticised for unclear rationale on approach and structure. Co-creation methods ensure local community views are integrated into intervention design, enhancing feasibility, but no such approach has been applied to FI for smoking cessation. Hence, we aimed to co-design a FI programme together with community stakeholders to answer the question: what is an acceptable and effective FI programme for local Stop Smoking Services?

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach was utilised to codesign the FI programme. A modified Nominal Group Technique, underpinned by Adams et al. (2014) 8-domain incentive framework, was employed over three one-day workshops in Limerick, Dublin and Longford, with 59 community stakeholders, to elicit ideas and reach consensus on FI. We summarised quantitative data and the most highly rated ideas and qualitatively analysed participants' perceptions on individual domains and perceived barriers and facilitators of implementation.

RESULTS: Results according to the eight domains were: 1) Total amount: €400 (Median, IQR: 200-500); 2) Form: Digital/Physical Voucher; 3) Certainty: Definite reward; 4) Target population: Eligible smokers in deprived areas; 5) Target behaviour: Validated quit; 6) Schedule/Frequency: Incremental increases aligned with current services; 7) Immediacy: On the day or as soon as possible; 8) Provider: Stop Smoking Advisors. Implementation issues included increased workload and time constraints

of service providers and possibility of 'gaming' the system. Establishing a standardised intervention protocol, adequate staff training and regular one-to-one consultations with clients presented as facilitators.

CONCLUSIONS: This is the first study to codesign a stakeholder-mediated, tailored and theoretically-sound incentive-based programme to support smoking cessation. These results will inform programme implementation and evaluation in local clinics.

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Tackling youth e-cigarette adoption in Singapore: A multi-prong preventive education approach

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite Singapore's total ban on e-cigarettes (vape), adoption among youth has risen, driven by emerging but incomplete evidence of harms, counter-narratives from the tobacco industry, and the pervasive influence of social media. These challenges underscore the urgent need for innovative and targeted strategies to reshape societal norms and behaviours.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Our approach prioritises protecting children and youth through creative, relatable content, curriculum enhancements in schools, and strategically embedding anti-vaping messages into their daily routines. These interventions amplify prevention efforts while offering support for those already engaged in vaping through youth-centric counselling services. For example, schools have introduced tailored anti-vaping programmes, during assembly, physical education sessions, and into project work. Key community spaces—such as sports centres, malls, transportation hubs, and youth hangouts—also prominently feature our vape-free campaigns.

In parallel, we have strengthened the capacity of our tobacco programme team through studies, behavioural surveys, and sense-making workshops. Insights gained have refined our campaigns, ensuring they remain relevant and responsive to emerging trends. Surveys reveal that while youth are generally aware of vaping's illegality, 55% still perceive it as socially acceptable—a key barrier to effective intervention.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: After 18 months, our efforts as part of the whole-of-government concerted approach including stepping up enforcement and amplifying public education, have led to a 25% reduction in e-cigarette use among school-aged youth. Public perception surveys also reported a 12% increase in awareness of vaping harms, demonstrating progress but underscoring the persistence of societal tolerance.

CONCLUSIONS: Building on this momentum, we are expanding efforts to engage the wider community in reshaping social norms. This includes reaching young adults beyond schools and mobilising the medical ecosystem to deliver tiered and tailored cessation support. These measures aim to strengthen Singapore's anti-vaping strategy, driving sustained reductions in youth adoption and a decisive shift in societal attitudes towards e-cigarettes

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Compliance monitoring and enforcement of graphic health warnings on tobacco products in Abuja, Nigeria

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Graphic health warnings (GHWs) on tobacco product packaging are a proven strategy to discourage tobacco use and inform the public of its health risks. Nigeria adopted mandatory GHWs as part of the National Tobacco Control Act of 2015, with implementation guidelines requiring regular compliance monitoring. In September 2023, a compliance monitoring and enforcement exercise was conducted in Abuja. Challenges included limited awareness among vendors and facility managers, resistance from retailers, and limited resources for comprehensive enforcement and follow-up.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A multi-agency team comprising representatives from law enforcement, public health agencies, Civil society organizations, and regulatory bodies carried out inspections of retail outlets, malls, and points of sale. The team assessed compliance with GHW requirements, such as size, placement, and accuracy including public display of products.Immediate enforcement actions included issuing warnings, confiscating non-compliant products, and sensitizing vendors on the importance of compliance.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A total of 104 tobacco products were inspected across Abuja. Compliance with GHW specifications was observed in 58% of the products. Non-compliance, accounting for 42%, was primarily due to missing warnings (22%), inadequate size (10%), and incorrect placement (10%). The exercise raised awareness among vendors and strengthened inter-agency collaboration. However, challenges such as limited funds for logistics, retailer resistance and lack of cooperation limited the scope of enforcement.

CONCLUSIONS: The compliance monitoring exercise revealed progress in implementing GHW regulations but also underscored significant gaps in adherence. Strengthened public awareness campaigns, capacity building for enforcement agencies, and consistent monitoring are critical to achieving near full compliance. Lessons learned from this exercise can inform future tobacco control activities including interagency cooperation in Nigeria and beyond.

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Trends in incidence and mortality in tobacco-related cancers in Ireland 1994 to 2022

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BACKGROUND: Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of cancer accounting for 25% of cancer deaths globally. In 2013, Ireland committed to a tobacco endgame goal that was due to be delivered by 2025. Using data from the National Cancer Registry of Ireland we aimed to examine trends in tobacco-related cancers between 1994-2022.

METHODS: National and sex-specific age-standardised incidence and mortality rates were calculated per 100,000 person years for 16 cancers designated tobacco-related by the International Association for Research on Cancer (oral cavity, pharynx, nasopharynx, oesophagus, stomach, colorectal, liver, pancreas, sino-nasal, larynx, lung, cervix, ovary, kidney, bladder, acute myeloid leukaemia). Joinpoint regression was used to assess trends, annual percentage change (APC) and average annual percentage change in incidence and mortality rates for each cancer.

RESULTS: Trends in age-standardised incidence and mortality for most tobacco-related cancers were declining or stable. Some disparities by gender were observed. For example, age-standardised lung cancer incidence rate in males decreased significantly at (APC) -0.6% per year during 1994-2017 subsequently declining at –4.9% per year during 2017-2022. Mortality rates in males declined at -1.5% per year 1994-2013 and at -3.6% per year during 2013-2022. By contrast, age-standardised lung cancer incidence in females increased at 2.3% per year during 1994-2015 then declined by -1.9% per year from 2015-2022. Mortality rates increased in females by 0.6% per year from 1994-2016 and only started to decline (-2.8% per year) since 2016.

CONCLUSIONS: Recent declining trends in incidence and mortality for tobacco-related cancers reflect successful public health efforts to reduce smoking prevalence in Ireland. Differing trends in incidence of lung cancer according to sex likely reflect a cohort effect in smoking patterns over time - emphasising the link between reducing rates of tobacco-smoking and future cancer prevention. These findings underline the importance of delivering the tobacco endgame goal to achieving cancer control in Ireland.

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FCTC Article 5.3 implementation: replicable model for LMICs to address industry interference, increasing transparency and accountability

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco industry's (TI) interference remains a significant obstacle to effective tobacco control, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) like Brazil. As cigarette's sales decline, companies shift focus to promote Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs), under a 'harm reduction' narrative. While this narrative gains traction in high-income countries, it is now being aggressively advanced in LMICs. In Brazil, lobbying efforts are targeting Resolution 855/2024, which bans ESDs. Despite overwhelming health evidence, TI employs misleading narratives to influence policymakers and public opinion, emphasizing economic benefits and the potential to curb illicit markets as justification for legalization.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Our monitoring focuses on documenting and exposing industry tactics across the legislative and executive branches. In Congress, we identified TI's efforts around Bill 5008/2024, by financing travel, organizing public hearings, and pushing pro-vaping rhetoric. Within the Executive branch, we uncovered meetings between PMI, BAT Brazil, JTI, and government agencies, such as the Federal Revenue Service, which presented industry-favorable data to pressure the Regulatory Agency. We analyze social media activities of executives, allied groups, and parliamentarians; industry narratives in media and hearings; and government documents revealing interactions with TI.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This work helps Brazil maintain its stance against ESDs and strengthens tobacco control by informing partners, preventing legislative setbacks, and exposing industry misinformation. In the executive branch, we alerted the government to TI interventions and exposed misleading health claims. These insights inform communication and mobilization strategies to block harmful policies while promoting initiatives. We alert the government to industry interference, debunk health claims, and support the media with monitoring findings.

CONCLUSIONS: This monitoring provides a replicable model for LMICs to address industry interference, increasing transparency and accountability in line with FCTC Article 5.3. By sharing strategies, we foster international cooperation and equip LMICs with tools to resist corporate influence, protecting global public health.

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Strengthening tobacco control laws and guidelines implementation in Bangladesh: A step towards a tobacco-free nation by 2040

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Bangladesh aspires to be tobacco-free by 2040. The enforcement of the Tobacco Control Act (TCA), including its provision banning Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS), remains weak due to inadequate strategies and industry interference. The industry often violates these provisions. NATAB's project 'Strengthening TC Law and LGI Guideline Implementation', supported by Vital Strategies, aims to address these gaps by strengthening monitoring and empowering local governments to implement TC policies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: NATAB implemented a multi-faceted intervention across six districts. The key initiative involved conducting digital monitoring to identify TAPS violations and providing the compliance report to authorities for targeted enforcement. The intervention conducted 60 targeted capacity-building initiatives. To enforce TCA provisions, 14 mobile courts are being facilitated to empower task-force committees and local government officials. Additionally, the proposal suggested Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL) in three city corporations and nine municipalities to regulate points-of-sales violations. Media and social platforms are utilized to raise awareness and accountability.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The project measurably progressed in reducing TAPS violations. According to a survey, TAPS breaches dropped from 69.4% in January 2024 to 42.12% in November 2024. Further, five municipalities issued 343 vendor licenses under the TVL initiative, reducing unregulated sales. 9 Task-force meetings and 14 mobile courts strengthened TC law enforcement, resulting in significant interventions against TAPS violations at points of sale.

CONCLUSIONS: The interventions have demonstrated the effectiveness of a comprehensive TC law enforcement and guidelines. By addressing TAPS violations, empowering local governments, and leveraging digital monitoring, the project has laid a robust foundation for achieving the nation's tobacco-free vision by 2040. This model can drive systemic change, safeguard health, and reduce tobacco industry interference in policy implementation.

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Support for endgame policies among Israelis: Findings from the 2024 ITC Israel Survey

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BACKGROUND: Bold 'endgame' strategies are increasingly being considered globally, as countries adopt innovative policies towards elimination of the tobacco pandemic. In August 2023, the Israel Ministry of Health proposed a plan that encompasses several endgame strategies. This study examined support for various endgame approaches among a representative sample of adult Israelis.

METHODS: Data for this cross-sectional study are from 1790 adults (aged 18+) who participated in the 2024 International Tobacco Control Israel Survey. The data were weighted for population characteristics, including (age, sex, population sector, and smoking status). Measures included: support for restrictions on sales and marketing, restrictions on nicotine content and additives, restrictions on disposable e-cigarettes, and requiring the tobacco industry to pay for smoking-related health costs. We examined support versus oppose/don't know by current smoking status.

RESULTS: Some measures received very high support: 91.9% supported a crackdown on smuggling, and 87.6% supported lower nicotine content in cigarettes. Strong support was observed for a ban on print press advertising (86.2%), reduction in number of shops selling smoking products (83.7%), requirement that tobacco companies pay for health-related costs (81.7%), increase in the age of sale of tobacco and nicotine products to age 21 (80.0%); ban on point of sale advertising (79.6%), requirement of health warning inserts on all smoking products (79.7%), adoption of graphic health warnings (78.3%), a ban on cigarette additives in (70.8%), warnings on individual cigarette sticks (70.7%), plain packaging (64.8%), and smoke-free generation (64.5%). On all outcomes, support was higher among people who do not smoke compared with those who smoke ($p<.0001$). Even among those who smoke, strong support (>70%) was observed for most policy approaches.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings demonstrate strong public support for far-reaching endgame policies. These findings can guide the selection of policies to end the tobacco epidemic in Israel, and globally.

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Modelling the health impact of achieving a tobacco endgame in Australia: Considering inequity

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BACKGROUND: Many governments have in recent years been setting targets to eradicate commercial tobacco supply/use, i.e., achieve a 'tobacco endgame', as part of their health agenda. While a target has recently been set in Australia's National Tobacco Strategy, of ⩽5% daily smoking prevalence by 2030, this fails to explicitly address the inequity in smoking rates across sociodemographic groups. We aimed to address the impact of excluding equity consideration in the target, by quantifying the future possible health impact of two hypothetical scenarios: 1. A 'modest' population-level endgame being achieved by 2030

(with remaining inequity), 2. An equitable endgame where all strata by geographic remoteness and socioeconomic status (SES) achieve the 2030 target.

METHODS: A Markov process was constructed to simulate future smoking behaviours in the Australian population, with a proportional multi-state life-table that quantifies the health impacts of 31 smoking-related diseases. This model is utilised to quantify the difference in deaths and health-adjusted life years (HALYs) for the Australian population under different hypothetical endgame scenarios in comparison to 'business-as-usual' (BAU), over 20 years, across sociodemographic groups.

RESULTS: In comparison to BAU, the modest scenario would result in 16,700 (95% uncertainty interval [UI] 13,200-21,800) deaths being averted, and 122,000 (95% UI 95,900-158,000) HALYs being gained, over the next 20 years. The equitable scenario resulted in a 1.3-fold increase in these health gains, with the greatest improvement being for more disadvantaged population groups.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings highlight the importance of future tobacco policies having an equity focus. The results also show the need for cessation-focused policies to achieve a rapid endgame. This analysis provides a comparative baseline for future modelling of specific tobacco control interventions in Australia, including population-level and targeted interventions. The model includes novel advancements, incorporating population heterogeneity and pack-year disease risk quantification, which can be applied to other contexts.

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Modelling the health, economic, and equity impacts of a tobacco-free generation policy in Australia

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BACKGROUND: The concept of a 'tobacco free generation' (TFG) emerged in 2010 as a way to phase out tobacco supply to future generations. Some states in Australia are currently considering implementing a TFG policy. However, there are likely greater benefits if a TFG policy were implemented at a country level, with reduced interstate supply to youth. This project aims to quantify the future health and economic impacts of a TFG policy, in comparison to both business-as-usual (BAU) and a less radical 'T21' policy in which the legal age of purchasing tobacco is increased to 21, in Australia.

METHODS: A Markov model calibrated to daily smoking forecasts reflecting historic trends across multiple sociodemographic strata (sex, age, remoteness, socioeconomic status [SES]), acts as the BAU scenario. A Proportional Multi-state Life-table is used to quantify the impacts of 31 smoking-related diseases, in health-adjusted life years (HALYs), mortality, and healthcare expenditure. The two interventions were parameterised based on existing policy analyses in the US and logical assumptions regarding illicit/social supply.

RESULTS: In comparison to BAU, the TFG policy is expected to result in an estimated 56.000 HALYs being gained (discounted 3%), and 210 deaths being averted, between 2025-2085, yielding approximately four times the health gains under the T21 policy. Across sociodemographic groups, the largest health gains under the TFG were for the remote and most disadvantaged populations. The TFG policy additionally resulted in $287 million in healthcare savings (discounted 3%) over 60-years, compared to $75 million under the T21 policy.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings show the potential population health gains under TFG policy in Australia and highlight the importance of having equity at the forefront of tobacco control policy. It is important that these occur in conjunction with efforts to reduce existing smoking rates (and produce more immediate health gains) through novel efforts targeting cessation.

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One-year implementation of an innovative smoke-free policy dashboard to monitor subnational policy implementation

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Indonesia has made significant progress in the adoption of smoke-free policies. By 2024, 481 out of 514 cities and districts had implemented subnational smoke-free regulations. However, challenges persist in the effective enforcement of these policies, partly due to the absence of measurable data and comprehensive monitoring tools.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address these challenges, the Ministry of Health and WHO Indonesia collaboratively developed an innovative tool known as the Smoke-Free Area Dashboard (Dashboard Kawasan Tanpa Rokok). This web-based platform was designed to monitor and visually represent the progress of smoke-free policy implementation across cities and districts. The dashboard incorporates four key assessment components: regulation, inspection, enforcement, and compliance. Data collected by subnational smoke-free taskforces include records of random inspections, enforcement actions, and compliance assessments. Each component contributes to a cumulative score that determines the overall implementation ranking for each city and district.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: By 2024, approximately 413 cities and districts had actively utilized the smoke-free dashboard. The platform recorded data for 21,814 venues subjected to random inspections, resulting in 942 sanctions issued to violators of subnational smoke-free policies.

CONCLUSIONS: The Smoke-Free Area Dashboard serves as a critical information system for monitoring and enhancing the enforcement of smoke-free regulations. It provides subnational smoke-free taskforces with the tools needed to more effectively implement and enforce these policies, thereby strengthening tobacco control efforts at

the local level.

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Stability of cigarette price elasticity and implications for taxation policy: Evidence from Mexico (2008–2022)

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BACKGROUND: Understanding the price elasticity of demand is critical for assessing the impact of tobacco taxation on consumption. While price elasticity is often assumed to be stable, evidence of its variability in response to tax reforms and price adjustments remains limited. This study evaluates the stability of cigarette price elasticity in Mexico, a country that implemented significant tax reforms and experienced real price declines over the 2008–2022 period.

METHODS: This study analyzes the price elasticity of cigarette demand in Mexico from 2008 to 2022, a period marked by significant tax reforms, price adjustments, and a decline in real cigarette prices. Using nationally representative data, the Deaton model was applied to estimate the elasticity of demand over this period and analyze the potential variations as result of changes in prices and fiscal reforms.

RESULTS: Since 2014, the cigarette price elasticity in Mexico has remained stable despite changes in taxation and real prices. This stability suggests a consistent consumer sensitivity to price changes, with no clear effects before 2014 or across population subgroups, including low-income smokers.

CONCLUSIONS: The stability of price elasticity highlights the potential for tobacco tax policies to maintain their effectiveness in reducing consumption over time. Our findings show that since 2014, the price elasticity of cigarette demand in Mexico has remained stable, with no significant changes despite variations in taxation levels and real prices. These results suggest that consumers consistently respond to price changes, even as market structure and tax reforms fluctuate. This stability allows policymakers, advocates, and researchers to evaluate the impact of tax policies and design more effective interventions. We recommend further research to explore elasticity dynamics in other contexts.

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Pre- and post-implementation analysis of the FCTC e-cigarette ban: Insights from Google Trends in India

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarettes are often marketed as harm reduction devices; meanwhile, they have generated many public health concerns around the world concerning their addictive properties and appeal to the young. In September 2019, India completely banned e-cigarettes. This analysis assesses the effect of this ban on the public's interest in e-cigarettes using Google Trends data.

METHODS: An ecological analysis was conducted using Google Trends data from January 2015 to December 2024. Keywords for e-cigarettes were analyzed to identify the timing and geographical changes in public interest. Changepoint analysis and ARIMA modeling are applied to determine changes and predict trajectories of change over time. Spatial patterns of search activity are also mapped out to explore regional disparities before and after the ban was enforced.

RESULTS: The relative interest of the public, measured as the Relative Search Volume (RSV) of e-cigarettes, peaked at 78 in August 2019 before the enforcement of the ban, and has trended downward since then to average 21 points during the post-ban period. By modeling with ARIMA (1,1,0), the interest over the long-term stabilized to a mean of RSV = 18, and the variability of such interest would range from ±5 over the next two years. Spatial analysis showed a shift in search interest from the southern states, which accounted for 45% of pre-ban searches, to the northeastern states, which accounted for 38% of searches after the ban. Although the numbers declined, persistent interest in vaping-related terms indicates continued interest and potential illegal market activity.

CONCLUSIONS: The e-cigarette ban has had a deep impact on public interest, thus showing its effectiveness in raising awareness and changing behavior. However, the persistent interest in certain areas shows the need for targeted interventions and constant monitoring to address emerging trends and potential illicit markets.

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Comprehensive tobacco control program for Tribal students residing in Ashram schools of Nagpur division - population-based cross-sectional study

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BACKGROUND: The burden of tobacco use in India extends across its diverse demographic landscape, with tribal populations experiencing disproportionate vulnerability. In Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, systemic poverty, cultural practices, and limited healthcare access exacerbate tobacco use among tribal students, presenting a pressing public health concern. Government ashram schools, established to support tribal children, are inadvertently becoming hubs for tobacco use. This research was conducted to develop and implement comprehensive tobacco control program for tribal children residing in Ashram Schools and Hostels, under Additional Tribal Commissionerate (ATC), Nagpur Division.

METHODS: An Observational, Analytical, cross sectional study was conducted among all students residing in 197 tribal Ashram Schools and Hostels, under ATC Nagpur Division. Universal sampling method was employed. Each

team consisted of faculty, a postgraduate students and interns. The dental faculty and the PG students carried out the screening for oral pre cancer and cancer. After screening, medication were distributed to patients having for oral precancer or cancer. Patients requiring surgical treatment were referred to Government Dental College and Hospital Nagpur. Tobacco cessation counselling was carried out for students with tobacco habit.

RESULTS: A total of 23.080 students were screened, among which 12.104 (52.44%) students had habit of tobacco or related products and 3487 (15.10%) were found to have precancerous lesions or conditions. All diagnosed students were provided medicinal treatment whereas 812 undergone laser surgery at Government dental college and hospital Nagpur.

CONCLUSIONS: This is one of the biggest study ever done about the prevalence of tobacco habits, oral precancer-cancer among marginalized populations like tribal school students. The outcome of this novel project has opened newer dimensions for strategic planning of comprehensive national oral health policy to meet the oral health requirements of this indigenous population. Also, innovative methods used in current research to curb tobacco burden in tribal areas will set a benchmark at global level.

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Effective communication messaging on risks of electronic cigarettes: Findings from message testing studies in Brazil, India, Mexico, Ukraine and Vietnam

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BACKGROUND: Despite a global decline in smoking rates, the use of newer nicotine products, such as electronic cigarettes, has risen significantly, especially among youth. Governments are increasingly interested in developing mass media campaigns to raise awareness about the harms of electronic cigarettes and regulate or prevent their market entry, aiming to protect future generations from nicotine addiction. However, effective messaging strategies to increase public understanding of harms of these products and build support for policy measures remain underexplored.

METHODS: Between 2020 and 2023, Vital Strategies conducted concept testing in Brazil, India, Mexico, Ukraine, and Vietnam to support governments interested in developing electronic cigarette prevention campaigns. This study examines perceived personal effectiveness ratings of various communication concepts tested across these five countries. A combination of quantitative (concept ratings) and qualitative (focus group discussions) methods was employed to evaluate the concepts. The groups were segmented by tobacco use status (users and non-users), gender, age, and socio-economic status (middle and high).

RESULTS: Results indicated that messages highlighting the negative health threats of electronic cigarette use, presented with a serious tone and graphic imagery depicting harm, were consistently rated as personally effective in discouraging use. Simple language was essential to address significant knowledge gaps, and comparing chemicals in electronic cigarettes to common toxins, like car exhaust or pesticides, proved effective. Statistical health risk information was impactful but required credible sourcing for message believability. The study also emphasized the importance of communicating that both electronic and traditional cigarettes are harmful to health. In Ukraine, an anti-industry approach resonated strongly, highlighting the need for tailored messaging strategies based on local contexts.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings provide valuable insights to help develop evidence-based, culturally relevant messaging for future electronic cigarette prevention campaigns, aimed at reducing use and building support for relevant policy measures.

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Busting Big Tobacco's bulls*#t: A case study of political advocacy and Australian vaping legislation

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BACKGROUND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Vaping prevalence in Australia has increased significantly over recent years. In June 2024, federal politicians voted on the Vaping Reforms Bill, which proposed to close a legal loophole in the regulatory framework; ensuring vapes can only be purchased legally with a medical prescription from a General Practitioner, thereby ending the retail market. In anticipation of this, the tobacco industry bankrolled a campaign which spread misinformation around the implications of the proposed laws to sway public perceptions. The Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) developed a campaign to counter industry narrative and encourage politicians to support the Bill.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In the lead up to the Vaping Reforms Bill, ACOSH developed a multimedia campaign targeted specifically at politicians from parties that were either ambivalent towards, or against the Bill. ACOSH developed campaign materials with input from clinicians, policymakers, tobacco control experts, and public health organisations. The campaign aimed to highlight the way in which the reforms would safeguard young people and was delivered via social media, newspaper, and television.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This presentation will describe key learnings and outcomes from the campaign, including evaluation details of campaign efforts. The intervention findings can be used to guide recommendations for how to deliver tobacco and vape-related political campaigns to advocate for evidence-based reforms in tobacco control.

CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco industry's age-old tactics of interfering with public health policy are alive and well. It is crucial that advocates remain vigilant in their attempts to

react to counter industry narrative at critical time points in the development of evidence-based tobacco control policy. There is relatively little evidence about political campaigns that specifically target anti-tobacco and anti-vape legislation. This presentation will provide guidance for tobacco control and public health organisations that wish to engage in tobacco and vape-related political advocacy.

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Feasibility of e-cigarette cessation intervention in schools for adolescents from the urban slums of Mumbai

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Evidence has shown that e-cigarettes are unsafe for adolescents. However, the use of e-cigarettes has gained worldwide popularity among adolescents including Indians and it is important to address their cessation requirements. There are very limited cessation programs designed to address and support the increasing number of adolescent E-cigarette users.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: LifeFirst, a school-based cessation programme was implemented in 2023-2024 in 100 municipal and Government-aided schools in Mumbai. An orientation session was conducted for all the students of 7th to 9th standards to create awareness about ill-effects of e-cigarettes and to encourage the current users to voluntary register for cessation services. Three theme-based group counselling sessions were conducted with the voluntarily registered students and at each session e-cigarette status was monitored and recorded. The sessions covered topics like harmful impact of e-cigarette and nicotine and refusal skills.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: 8124 students attended the sensitization sessions. The prevalence of E-cigarette users among boys was 9% (394) and girls was 2% (63). All 457 (6% prevalence overall) users voluntarily registered for the LifeFirst programme. At the end of program, 287 (63%) stopping using e-cigarettes. 38 (60%) of the registered girls and 249 (63%) of the registered boys self-reported stopping e-cigarette use. 61% of the registered users from 7th std, 62% from 8th and 65% from 9th std stopped using e-cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: Creating awareness about the harmful effects of e-cigarettes among adolescents is required and this can promote cessation. Targeted specific behavioral interventions are required to support the current e-cigarette users. School based e-cigarette cessation interventions for adolescents are feasible and impactful.

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Tobacco industry's political contributions in conflict with FCTC Article 5.3 – A decadal analysis of publicly available documents from India

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BACKGROUND: Tactics that have worked well for the tobacco industry in the past, such as making corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions to access senior officials have been researched in India. An area that needs vigilant watch and transparency is reporting financial contributions to political parties by tobacco companies.

METHODS: Document analysis was carried out for 'recognized' national and state political parties in India (w.e.f 15 May 2023; Election Commission of India and Electoral Trusts via the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Annual contributions were analyzed for the top four listed companies (BSE's 'Top 2000 Companies 2023' list) and one non-listed (major smokeless tobacco company) tobacco company, as well as their subsidiaries, associates, and joint ventures. These contributions could be direct or indirect - i.e., via Electoral Trusts and Electoral Bonds for 2013-2014 to 2021-2022.

RESULTS: We analyzed 746 contribution reports from 78 political parties (06 national and 72 state-level) and 26 electoral trusts for 103 tobacco companies. Fourteen parties were found to receive approximately INR 130.00.00.000 (USD 15.636.530) for the analyzed period of 2013 to 2022.

CONCLUSIONS: This study documents an unexplored area, thereby highlighting the need to monitor the tobacco industry effectively and underscoring the need to expand the scope of WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 policy to all actors and not merely restricted to government stakeholders.

The policy should be comprehensive and applicable to all stakeholders, including political parties, corporations, and non-governmental organizations who may be contributing to, benefiting from, and influencing tobacco control and public health policy at the national and sub-national levels. Foundational changes that prevent political contributions from 'demerit goods' corporations or at least make them publicly accountable and transparent will help safeguard and demonstrate sound public policy-making for the public good, in the public interest, to advance public health.

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A multi-pronged, multi-agency approach towards lowering smoking prevalence to less than 10%

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Singapore's smoking prevalence had increased from 12.6% in 2004 to 14.3% in 2010, reversing a previous long-term decline.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since then, Singapore redoubled its multi-pronged, multi-sectoral tobacco control efforts, including MPOWER and FCTC-recommended measures.

Bans on smoking in public places were expanded to include outdoor areas in parks, beaches, universities and a central business precinct. In 2016, display of tobacco products, including at the Point-Of-Sale, was banned. The Minimum Legal Age was raised from 18 to 21 in 2021, with implementation supported in schools and uniformed services by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Defence. In 2020, standardised packaging was implemented and graphic health warnings size increased to 75%. Tobacco taxes were increased in 2014, 2018, and 2023.

Concurrently, a harm elimination approach was adopted to reduce the range of legal tobacco products. Import, distribution and sale of shisha and emerging tobacco products, including smokeless cigarettes and e-vaporisers, were banned. In 2018, the ban was expanded to include purchase, use and possession. The Health Sciences Authority works closely with the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority and Customs on enforcement.

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) has been running campaigns to educate on the harms of smoking. In 2013, the I Quit smoking cessation programme was launched and subsequently refined, to better support smokers to quit. HPB works with MOE on efforts targeted at youths, such as incorporating anti-smoking messages into the school curriculum and having on-site counsellors in schools to support smoking cessation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Singapore's efforts have resulted in an all-time-low smoking prevalence of 8.8% in 2023.

CONCLUSIONS: Singapore's experience highlights these lessons:

1. A multi-pronged tobacco control strategy that maintains a strong harm elimination stance against new and emerging products can effectively reduce smoking prevalence.
2. Effective tobacco control requires coordinated efforts across agencies, beyond health ministries.

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Price sensitivity and stability of cigarette demand amidst economic crisis: Evidence from Lebanon

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BACKGROUND: Lebanon has experienced a severe economic crisis since 2019, characterized by significant currency devaluation and widespread impoverishment. This study evaluates the impact of this crisis on cigarette demand elasticities in 2024 compared to 2019, focusing on local ('discount') and foreign ('premium') cigarette brands. Tobacco taxation remains a critical policy tool to reduce prevalence, especially among low-income and youth populations, yet the crisis's effects on price sensitivity remain underexplored.

METHODS: Data were collected through a nationally representative survey (n=2500) employing a volumetric choice experiment (VCE) to gauge stated purchase behavior under hypothetical price scenarios. Censored Poisson models were used to estimate own- and cross-price elasticities for and between local and foreign cigarette brands, accounting for a substantial proportion of non-smokers and zero purchases. Comparisons were made with 2019 elasticity estimates in Lebanon.

RESULTS: Contrary to expectations, overall own-price elasticities for both local and foreign cigarettes remained relatively stable despite the economic downturn. In 2024, demand for local cigarettes was inelastic (-0.770), while demand for foreign cigarettes was elastic (-1.356). In comparison, elasticities in 2019 were found to be slightly but insignificantly smaller in magnitude at -1.157 and -0.639, respectively. Substitution effects were modest but significant, with cross-price elasticities indicating a stronger substitution response when foreign cigarette prices rose. Notably, the overall relative stability of cigarette price elasticities suggests resilience of demand for foreign and local cigarette brands.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings challenge conventional assumptions that economic crises substantially amplify price sensitivity, underscoring the importance of tailored tax policies. While higher taxes on both cigarette categories could effectively reduce consumption, the resilience of cigarette demand highlights the need for complementary measures, such as targeted awareness campaigns and youth-focused interventions. These results provide critical insights for modeling the potential outcomes of future tax policies in Lebanon and similar low- and middle-income settings.

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Capacity building and sustainability: How to empower youth to sustain and propel the tobacco control movement

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Institute for Global Tobacco Control has conducted several leadership programs aimed at developing the skills and networks needed to support tobacco control policy change and implementation in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The audience of these programs were mostly mid-career and established professionals. With tobacco control sustainability in mind, 'Ascend: Leadership Development for the Future of Tobacco Control' was designed to build leadership capacity among those in LMICs early in their career (age: 18-30) and connect them with tobacco control leaders.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Ascend provided a comprehensive, structured program: online meetings to discuss technical tobacco control topics and leadership development; an immersive workshop utilizing systems thinking tools for collaborative problem-solving; mentorship from tobacco control leaders that allowed participants to enhance leadership skills while expanding their network; and internship opportunities with tobacco control organizations for selected participants.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The 2024 Ascend Program included 65 participants from 15 LMICs, 6 mentorship sessions for each participant, and 22 internships across 18 organizations. Evaluation highlighted improvements in participants' strategic thinking, leadership confidence, and understanding of systems thinking approaches to public health. Almost all (92%) agreed that the Program 'helped to improve collaboration between national and international colleagues across various entities involved in tobacco control.' This collaboration is reflected in several participants emphasizing the bonds made in their final reports. Almost all (93%) also agreed that the Program 'will greatly benefit my work/studies in advancing tobacco control policies.'

CONCLUSIONS: By combining training, mentorship, and practical experience, Ascend has instilled a skillset with the intent to create a strong foundation for future leaders to sustain and propel the tobacco control movement. Future Ascend programs will continue refining these elements including smaller cohorts to foster higher engagement and a longer program to include more sessions and opportunities to network.

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Unraveling the relationship between e-cigarette use (vaping) and eating disorders: Insights on youth and young adults

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BACKGROUND: The use of e-cigarettes/vaping, has surged among adolescents and young adults, raising concerns about its association with nicotine addiction. Simultaneously, eating disorders (EDs) remain a significant public health issue in this population, with high morbidity and mortality. Despite emerging evidence suggesting an overlap between vaping and EDs, limited research has systematically quantified this association. This systematic review and meta-analysis aim to evaluate the relationship between vaping and EDs and the behavioral and societal factors driving this relationship.

METHODS: This review was conducted in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. A systematic search of MEDLINE, EMBASE, and Web of Science was performed for articles published up to December 2023, with no language restrictions. Eligible studies included primary research on individuals aged 14 years or older with data on vaping and EDs. Two authors independently performed data extraction and bias assessment using the JBI Critical Appraisal Tools. Meta-analysis was conducted using a random-effects model, with heterogeneity assessed through the I^2 statistic.

RESULTS: Out of 2.517 records, seven studies with a total of 467.316 participants were included. The pooled prevalence of EDs among vapers was 33%, compared to 5% among non-vapers. Adolescents and young adults aged 18–24 years exhibited the highest prevalence, with females and transgender individuals reporting disproportionately higher rates compared to males. Meta-analysis revealed that vapers had 1.31 times higher odds (95% CI: 1.12–1.53) of having an ED compared to non-vapers. Weight control and appetite suppression were key motivations for vaping, with sweet-flavored e-liquids commonly used to curb cravings. Vapers using e-cigarettes for weight management exhibited higher levels of pathological eating behaviors and body dissatisfaction, particularly among dual users (vaping and smoking).

CONCLUSIONS: This review highlights a significant association between vaping and EDs, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted prevention and intervention strategies. Further research is required across diverse cultural and geographic contexts.

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Tobacco-attributable productivity loss in Mexico: evidence from the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)

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BACKGROUND: The global economic burden of the tobacco epidemic is significant, reaching 1.8% of Gross Domestic Product (Goodchild et al. 2018). In Mexico, simulation models following hypothetical population cohorts indicate that tobacco-attributable social costs (direct and indirect) reach MX$194.6 billion (US$8.5) annually (Saenz-de-Miera et al. 2024). Drawing on temporary sick leave (TSL) certificates, this study aims to provide further evidence on tobacco-attributable indirect costs from the perspective of the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), which covers formal sector workers.

METHODS: Anonymized administrative records from IMSS (2010-2022) on non-occupational TSL for the main diseases associated with tobacco use —acute myocardial infarction (AMI), cerebrovascular disease (CVD), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, lung cancer, and mental illnesses— were analyzed. Productivity loss was calculated using the human capital approach and population attributable fractions. In addition, financial costs for IMSS were estimated based on subsidies granted

(60% of salaries after the third day of TSL). Monetary figures are in 2023 Mexican pesos (2023MX$).

RESULTS: Between 2010 and 2022, TSL due to the diseases of interest averaged 32.546 per year, with 29.5% attributable to tobacco. The annual average tobacco-attributable productivity loss was 2023MX$146.0 million. In 2022, this figure reached 2023MX$196.9 million (95% CI: 190.7-203.1), distributed as follows: 124.4 (95% CI: 119.2-129.6) for CVD, 20.0 (95% CI: 17.8-22.5) for diabetes, 17.6 (95% CI: 16.2-18.8) for AMI, 14.6 (95% CI: 13.5-15.6) for COPD, 11.0 (95% CI: 9.6-12.3) for lung cancer, and 9.3 (95% CI: 7.8-10.8) for mental illnesses. The average annual tobacco-attributable financial cost for IMSS was 2023MX$84.2 million; 2023MX$113.1 million (95% CI: 108.8-117.3) in 2022.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use imposes a notable economic burden through productivity loss and financial costs for IMSS. These expenses could be significantly reduced with effective prevention and cessation interventions specially designed for workers affiliated with IMSS.

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Trends and correlates of smoking-induced deprivation: Findings from the 2016-2022 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys

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BACKGROUND: In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have heightened financial challenges, potentially motivating some individuals who smoke, especially those on lower incomes, to quit smoking to reduce expenditure. However, financial stress may hinder quit attempts, and people with nicotine-dependence may prioritise cigarettes over essentials like food. This study analysed trends in smoking-induced deprivation (SID) and its association with participant characteristics in England, Canada, Australia, and the US from 2016 to 2022.

METHODS: We analysed individuals who smoked cigarettes (≥monthly) from the 2016-2022 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys in four countries (N=27.248; observations=35.251). Logistic regression, fitted using generalised estimating equations, was used to estimate the association between participant characteristics and SID (defined as reporting that, in the past six months, spending money on cigarettes resulted in not having enough money for household essentials such as food).

RESULTS: Across countries, SID prevalence increased from 9.5% in 2016 to 15.0% in 2022 (p<0.001), with year-country interactions (p<0.001), but non-significant year-income interactions (p=0.833). Australia had the highest SID in 2022 at 22.8%, while the US had the lowest at 10.8%. Young adults aged 18-24 years (AOR=3.86; 95% CI=2.94-5.07, vs. 55+), males (AOR=1.21, 95% CI=1.03-1.43, vs. females), those with low income (AOR=2.45; 95% CI=1.97-3.05, vs. high), higher nicotine dependence (AOR=1.31; 95% CI=1.24-1.38), an intention to quit (AOR=1.76, 95% CI=1.49-2.07, vs. no), recent illicit tobacco use (AOR=2.63; 95% CI=2.13-3.24, vs. no), higher perceived stress (AOR=1.74; 95% CI=1.62-1.87), and lower smoking cessation self-efficacy (AOR=1.11; 95% CI=1.04-1.18) were associated with SID.

CONCLUSIONS: Individuals prioritising purchasing cigarettes over essentials have increased in recent years, with those with socioeconomically disadvantaged, higher nicotine dependence and lower self-efficacy being the most affected. Providing tailored smoking cessation support to these groups could enhance quit rates, improve living standards, and alleviate deprivation.

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A randomized controlled trial of very low nicotine cigarettes plus electronic cigarettes in people with psychiatric disorders

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BACKGROUND: A national product standard restricting the nicotine content of smoked tobacco products to minimally addictive levels has been proposed in New Zealand and USA. This study aimed to assess the effect of switching to very low nicotine cigarettes (VLNCs) with access to electronic cigarettes (ecigs) with and without nicotine, in people with psychiatric disorders.

METHODS: 80 daily cigarette smokers were recruited at an academic medical center in USA. Participants were randomized, double-blind, to smoke either VLNCs or Normal Nicotine Cigarettes (NNCs), and to have access to either 5% or 0% nicotine ecigs for 16 weeks. Participants were followed for 16 weeks, and then again 4 weeks after the randomized phase. Cigarette consumption, adverse events and biomarkers of exposure (e.g. exhaled CO) were recorded. The hypothesis was that smokers randomized to VLNCs would reduce cigarette consumption, and this effect would be greater in those provided with 5% nicotine ecigs.

RESULTS: Sixty (75%) participants were women, the mean age was 47.71 (89%) were white and their mean baseline

cigarette consumption was 20 per day. Participants had an average of 2 current psychiatric disorders. At week 16, participants randomized to VLNCs had a lower cigarette consumption than those given NNCs (10 v 19 per day, p<0.05), even after controlling for baseline variables. At week 16, significantly more of the VLNC group had quit smoking for at least the past week, validated by exhaled carbon-monoxide, (15% v 0%), and this was maintained at week 20. There were no significant effects of ecig randomization on cigarette consumption. Those randomized to VLNCs had fewer serious adverse events than those smoking NNCs.

CONCLUSIONS: A low nicotine standard for cigarettes may help smokers with psychiatric disorders to reduce and quit smoking without worsening mental health, regardless of access to nicotine ecigs.

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Public responses to arguments for phasing out the retail sale of tobacco products

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BACKGROUND: Australia's relatively low smoking prevalence (11.1%) makes once unthinkable goals potentially achievable, including phasing out the retail sale of tobacco products. To advance such an innovative policy, research is required to identify the most effective communication approaches for ensuring policy support and to prepare for industry counterarguments. This study explored perceptions about regulation of retail sales of tobacco in Australia, including responses to possible arguments for a phase-out.

METHODS: Eight online discussion groups were conducted in December 2024 with n=46 Australian adults. Groups were segmented by age (26-44, 45-69) and smoking status (smoker, non-smoker). Discussions explored participants' perspectives on how tobacco products are sold in Australia and perceptions about phasing out retail sales. Participants then assessed nine arguments for a phase-out.

RESULTS: Participants generally accepted the need for some restrictions on tobacco sales, especially age-related restrictions. Attitudes to phasing out retail sales varied widely, with support greatest amongst those who smoked who believed it would help them to quit. Those less supportive, especially non-smokers, expressed concerns about individual freedoms, the illicit tobacco market, and supporting long-term smokers. In addition to helping smokers to quit, perceived key benefits of a phase-out were to children and future generations by reducing smoking uptake and smoking-related harms, and reducing the burden on the health system. The most persuasive arguments highlighted the harmful effects of smoking, focused on protecting children, or highlighted environmental impacts of tobacco products. Arguments focused on industry conduct (e.g., highlighting profits and product manipulations) were less persuasive.

CONCLUSIONS: While there is some support for phasing out tobacco retail sales, communications about any phase-out will need to address concerns about personal freedoms, the illegal tobacco market, and support for long-term smokers. Testimonials from people who smoke that explain how a phase-out will help them to quit may help to mitigate concerns, especially among non-smokers.

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The rise and fall of vape stores: An Australian perspective

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BACKGROUND: The global proliferation of 'brick-and-mortar' vape stores not only fuels easy availability, but also normalises vapes and their perception as a safe consumer product. In Australia, vape retailers increased rapidly from 2017. However, in mid-2023, the Australian government announced legislative reforms to curtail retail sale of vapes. This legislation and its enforcement rolled out nationally during 2024, with vape sales confined to pharmacies with a prescription from 1-July-2024. Our research in Western Australia (WA) tracked the rise and fall in the number and geographic density of vape stores before and after these reforms.

METHODS: We examined physical stores where vapes and/or tobacco were a main source of business, plus convenience stores visibly stocking vapes. Vape stores' existence and operating status was ascertained via online desktop audits in January-2023 (baseline) and three subsequent time points. In-person observational store audits were undertaken in inner-city areas with a concentration of vape/tobacco/ convenience stores. Descriptive statistics summarised store numbers and location over time and examined socio-economic variations and proximity to schools.

RESULTS: The baseline audit identified 194 vape stores, with a 120% increase in the WA capital city since a previous 2019 audit. New vape stores were opening even after legislation prohibited importation and sale of disposable vapes. However, as further restrictions took effect, store closures were observed. By September-2024, 79% of the 194 baseline stores had ceased selling vapes, including permanent closure of all 33 dedicated vape stores. By contrast, vape availability through convenience stores remained high in the first two post-baseline audits, though with decreased in-store product visibility, shifting more to 'under-the-counter'.

CONCLUSIONS: This massive reduction in physical vape stores powerfully suggests the Australian legislative reforms have been effective in curbing the availability of vapes and their retail normalisation. However, 'under-the-counter' vape sales in convenience stores remain a challenge, requiring ongoing monitoring and enforcement.

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Trend or trap: The influence of social media advertising of e-cigarettes on young adults of Dhaka City, Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: With social media dominating Bangladesh's youth landscape, a worrying trend has emerged: unregulated e-cigarette promotion. E-cigarettes entered Bangladesh after tobacco control laws were established, leaving no specific regulations for them. Retailers exploit this loophole, using social media as a platform for advertisements.
OBJECTIVE: This study seeks to explore how leading e-cigarette brands leverage social media to market their products and assess the influence of this strategy on Bangladeshi youth.
METHODS: Conducted between March and November 2023, the study involved two phases. Phase one entailed a content analysis of 150 posts from five major e-cigarette-related Facebook pages, examining promotional trends using an observation checklist. Sample posts were selected starting from the most recent. Phase two comprised eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with participants aged 18–30 years, including users, non-users, students, and jobholders in Dhaka City, to understand perceptions and the influence of e-cigarettes. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis.
RESULTS: Social media e-cigarette promotions emphasized captivating visuals, often neglecting health and age warnings (missing in 84% of posts). A significant 85% portrayed vaping as a healthier alternative to traditional smoking without scientific backing. Additionally, 80% directly promoted vaping products, bypassing legal advertising restrictions. FGD participants described these trends as 'appealing,' 'stylish,' and 'convenient,' reflecting their positive perceptions. Male smokers viewed e-cigarettes as convenient and stylish, female non-smokers perceived them as healthier, and female smokers considered them a potential alternative to traditional cigarettes. Curiosity, peer influence, and flavor appeal strongly shaped these views.
CONCLUSIONS: Continuous exposure to e-cigarette promotions on social media has led the youth, a high-risk demographic, to embrace it as a trend, succumbing to its pitfalls. To curb this trend before it spirals out of control, the government must take decisive action and formulate policies to safeguard the health of the younger generation and the future of society.

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Morbidity and mortality attributable to tobacco exposure: An analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco exposure, via smoking, chewing, or secondhand smoke, is one of the strongest contributors to mortality and morbidity globally. Timely estimates of burden are essential to inform national tobacco control policies in accordance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We present updated estimates of the health burden attributable to tobacco exposure in 2023.
METHODS: In the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023, the prevalence and burden of disease attributable to tobacco exposure were estimated for males and females across 204 countries and territories, from 1990 to 2023. Exposure prevalence was based on 3.901 nationally or sub-nationally representative surveys. Burden of disease was derived using estimated population attributable fractions.
RESULTS: Globally, in 2023, we estimated 7.36 million (6.37, 8.30) deaths were attributable to tobacco: 5.59 million (4.85, 6.30) among men and 1.77 million (1.47, 2.04) among women. We estimated 203.5 million (175.0, 231.7) disability-adjusted life-years lost (DALYs) due to tobacco exposure: 155.7 million (134.5, 177.4) among men and 47.8 million (40.5, 54.9) among women. These represent increases of 24.4% (11.7, 38.2) deaths and 8.3% (-0.5, 17.8) DALYs over 1990. For males, tobacco exposure was the leading risk factor for death in 2023, attributable for 17.3% (15.2,19.5) of all-cause mortality; among females, it ranked 7th (6.4% [5.3, 7.4]). Of countries with over 50 thousand tobacco-attributable deaths, the United Kingdom experienced the largest proportional decrease (-45.0% [-40.6, -49.2), while Egypt experienced the steepest increase (124.3% [80.3, 172.0]) since 1990.
CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco exposure remains one of the single largest contributors to all-cause mortality around the globe, with deaths increasing by approximately one quarter since 1990. To reap the benefits of a healthier populace, it is essential that governments and global health organizations redouble their efforts to protect citizens and mitigate the preventable loss of lives and healthy and productive years due to tobacco.

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Closing loopholes: Real-time digital media monitoring using AI-tools to counter digital tobacco marketing

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Digital tobacco marketing undermines public health policies, exploiting platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. To circumvent regulatory restrictions on tobacco marketing, digital marketing tactics have evolved. Limited monitoring and enforcement leave significant gaps in addressing these covert strategies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) is a real-time monitoring and reporting service that identifies trends and threats in digital media marketing in India, Indonesia and Mexico. Using AI tools and expert insights, TERM scans thousands of digital media posts, identifying instances of tobacco marketing. Findings are summarized in clear reports for policy-makers, the media, and public health advocates, offering a robust evidence base for intervention.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: In 2023, TERM documented 41.598 marketing instances from 308 accounts: 60% in Indonesia, 36% in India, and 4% in Mexico. Indirect marketing tactics dominated, including community groups, events, advergaming, and corporate social responsibility activities. In Indonesia, 85% of marketing involved community-based kretek cigarette promotions. In India, 97% of marketing focused on brand extensions and surrogate advertising, with many cross-promoting ultra-processed foods and beverages. Mexico's e-cigarette marketing was driven by third-party retailers and front groups, including PMI's smoke-free future; cross-promotions between cigars and alcohol were also observed. TERM data has generated hundreds of media stories, shaped regulatory discussions, and supported advocacy for stricter online advertising bans.

CONCLUSIONS: TERM's data reveal the benefits of regulation: lower marketing volumes in Mexico and India compared to Indonesia suggest the value of effective regulatory frameworks. However, the data also show how tobacco companies use covert methods to evade restrictions. Additionally, TERM has identified a troubling convergence in the marketing of unhealthy commodities—tobacco, alcohol, and ultra-processed foods—posing a combined threat to health. TERM's evidence-based approach provides the necessary proof to act. It demonstrates how continuous monitoring is essential to counter tobacco marketing practices.

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Low-priced cigarettes and bidis: Examining price sensitivity, substitution effects, and improved warning labels in Bangladesh using volumetric choice experiment

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BACKGROUND: Despite efforts to curb tobacco use, the Bangladeshi government hesitates to increase taxes on cheaper cigarettes due to concerns that smokers may switch to bidis, potentially undermining tax revenues and public health goals. However, limited research exists to assess whether such substitution occurs.

This study aimed to estimate the price elasticity of demand for low- and medium-tier cigarettes in Bangladesh and to evaluate the impact of modified (more legible and clearer) warning labels on bidi consumption.

METHODS: A Volumetric Choice Experiment (VCE) was conducted with a representative sample of 791 adult smokers from four districts in Bangladesh. The experiment elicited participants' stated purchase intentions for low- and medium-tier cigarettes and bidis under hypothetical variations in prices and warning labels (current low-quality vs. high-quality pictorial warnings). Regression models were used to estimate price and income elasticities as well as cross-price elasticities.

RESULTS: Both low- and medium-tier cigarettes were found to be price inelastic. Bidi consumption was not price elastic, and the negative income elasticity confirmed that bidis are an inferior good. There was no evidence of substitution to bidis when the price of low- or medium-tier cigarettes increased, as cross-price elasticities were statistically insignificant. The modified warning labels on bidis had no statistically significant effect on bidi consumption.

CONCLUSIONS: The results suggest that raising the price of low-tier cigarettes is unlikely to incentivize smokers to switch to bidis, alleviating concerns about substitution effects. Merely improving warning label, unless coupled with increased price, will have limited impact. These findings support the policy recommendation for increasing tobacco taxes in Bangladesh to reduce cigarette consumption without compromising tax revenues.

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Tobacco industry exposed: Monitoring and denormalizing the tobacco industry in ASEAN

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry continues to employ deceptive tactics across Southeast Asia, including disseminating misinformation, targeting youth, and disguising lobbying as corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, governments and the public often lack timely access to data to counter these activities. Limited resources, fragmented networks, and insufficient buy-in from policymakers have hampered monitoring and denormalization efforts. In response, SEATCA launched an integrated approach combining monitoring, reporting, and targeted social media campaigns to expose and counter industry influence.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Key components:

- Monitoring Activities: Tobacco industry activities were monitored in ten ASEAN countries. Data sources included government disclosures, advertisements, civil society reports, and mass media.
- Denormalization Reports: regularly published reports exposed trends in CSR initiatives, youth marketing, and lobbying, and highlighted interference in areas such as tobacco taxation and regulation of electronic smoking devices.
- Social Media Campaigns: Campaigns under the hashtag #NoMoreTobacco and #MakeTobaccoHistory highlighted industry tactics, including youth marketing and misleading CSR initiatives.
- Engagement with Policymakers: High-level briefings presented findings to policymakers, emphasizing the

adoption of WHO FCTC Article 5.3.

RESULTS AND IMPACT:

• In Cambodia, actions resulted in litigation against tobacco companies, holding them accountable for violations of the law. In Lao PDR, advocacy contributed to the government's decision to not renew its Investment License Agreement with the industry. In Vietnam, persistent efforts resulted in a ban on electronic smoking devices.

• Social media campaigns boosted public awareness, with significant impressions and engagement in social media platforms.

• The initiative strengthened partnerships within civil society organizations ensuring widespread dissemination of findings.

CONCLUSIONS: Integrated campaigns are essential to counter tobacco industry tactics. By combining data-driven reporting, targeted social media strategies, and direct engagement with policymakers, this initiative effectively exposed and disrupted industry influence in the ASEAN region. Future efforts should expand monitoring, build civil society capacity, and leverage regional partnerships to sustain denormalization initiatives.

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Expanding smoke-free tourism in Vietnam: Experience and lessons learnt

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Vietnam Tobacco Control Law requires indoor public places, including hotels and tourism sites, to be smoke-free. From 2015-2020 prevalence of secondhand smoke exposure reduced in almost settings but remains high in workplace (30.9%), restaurants (78.1%), bar/coffee shops (86.2%). The outdoor of public places, including tourism places, are not compulsory non-smoking areas, making smoking to remain common. Promoting smoke-free tourism helps to protect visitors, tourism place's workers, and the local environment from the harm of smoke.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2019, HealthBridge has supported the implementation of smoke-free tourism model in Ha Noi, Bac Ninh, Hue city and is continuing to expand the model nationwide.

Main approaches:

• Advocating to improve the commitment of the national and local government in implementing smoke-free tourism.

• Capacity building to local authorities, tourism companies, restaurants' owners and staff in tourism sites.

• Sharing best practices to motivate the others.

• Mass communication to raise public support and compliance.

• Strengthening the enforcement through monitoring visits.

RESULTS AND IMPACT:

• Smoke-free tourism implementation was put into the action plan of Ministry of Cultural Sport and Tourism (MOCST).

• The guideline on implementing smoke-free tourism model was developed by the MOCST and distributed to all Provincial Tourism Departments.

• About 150 inspectors of 63 Provincial Tourism Departments, 100 representatives of tourism companies, hundreds of management board and staffs of tourist sites were trained.

• Smoke-free tourism places have been expanded in Hanoi (40 attracted tourist sites at Hoan Kiem district, the Museum of Ethnography, the President Ho Chi Minh's Vestige), Bac Ninh (Do Template), Hue (Imperial city Hue).

CONCLUSIONS: The model of smoke-free tourism is deployed to contribute to build a smoke-free, spiritual cultural environment in community. These efforts promote effective smoke-free policy implementation and protect people from the harmful effects of smoke.

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Exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosol in indoor and outdoor public spaces in the European Union

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BACKGROUND: In December 2024, the Council of the European Union (EU) adopted a recommendation to expand regulations on the use of nicotine-containing products both in indoor and specific outdoor settings. This policy reflects growing concerns about the health implications of secondhand exposure to smoke and aerosols. This study aimed to examine sociodemographic factors associated with exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosols across the EU and support for relevant regulations.

METHODS: We performed a secondary analysis of cross-sectional data from the Special Eurobarometer 99.3 (n=26.358, May-June 2023) across 27 EU Member States (MS). We estimated the weighted prevalence of secondhand exposure to smoke and aerosols as well as support for bans on smoking, e-cigarettes, and heated tobacco products in public settings. We employed multi-level Poisson regression models to examine associations between sociodemographic characteristics and outcomes related to exposure and regulatory support.

RESULTS: Exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosols varied across EU MS. Younger individuals, those with higher education, living with children, and current and

former tobacco and nicotine users were more likely to report exposure to both secondhand smoke and aerosols. Support for regulatory bans was consistent across two policies: restrictions on smoking in outdoor areas with limited social distancing and bans on emerging nicotine products where smoking is prohibited. Women, those living with children, and those with higher education were more likely to support the bans, while support was lower among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and current or former tobacco and nicotine users.

CONCLUSIONS: These findings revealed significant disparities in exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosol, as well as support for tobacco-related regulations, both across EU MS and within population subgroups. By identifying key demographic patterns, our findings would support EU MS in implementing targeted interventions to increase population support for and implement the recent EU Council recommendations.

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Global Resource Database: Gaps in requiring information from the tobacco industry

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BACKGROUND: Requiring information from the tobacco industry (TI) is fundamental in regulating the TI and holding it accountable and liable for its actions. It is also essential in tracking TI tactics, especially the pattern of misconduct in particular misinformation shared with governments.

METHODS: To find out what the TI has been submitting to governments, a Global Resource Database was developed by GGTC in coordination with the FCTC Secretariat and maintained by the Secretariats Knowledge Hub for 5.3. This scoured data from government websites and transparency registers across 182 countries, keyword search is used to seek documents related to major TI, and lobbying groups.

RESULTS: As of 2023, over 200 tobacco-funded entities and allies, submitted over 900 documents, primarily policy submissions, lobbying records, and marketing efforts. Product Regulation submission documents were available in 39 countries and position papers were available in 12. Data availability on government websites varied, with more comprehensive coverage in high-income countries and very limited access elsewhere. Countries publicizing minutes of meetings with TI published a wider range of information submitted by TI. Policy positions submitted reveal tactics to weaken regulations, oppose plain packaging, and use corporate social responsibility as a lobbying tool. The type of information found are reports, submissions/position papers, etc., and there is very little on marketing expenses. A few countries demonstrate good practice by publicizing regulatory submissions.

CONCLUSIONS: The global database is a treasure trove of TI's admissions and positions; this needs to be harnessed to study and expose TI tactics. Only a handful of countries require sufficient info from TI and make them publicly accessible in line with Art 5.3 guidelines. As an indicator of the level of transparency, it can be used to urge Parties to require further information from the TI and to make it public.

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Institutional system development to facilitate enforcement of tobacco control laws

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use caused nearly 126.000 deaths accounting for 13.5 percent of deaths from any cause in Bangladesh in 2018. Tobacco-induced deaths and diseases alone cost the economy of Bangladesh around BDT 305.6 billion ($3.61 billion) a year, which was equivalent to 1.4 percent of its national GDP in the year 2017-2018. The loopholes in the tobacco regulations and weak enforcement of tobacco control laws in Bangladesh have left majority of the population exposed to tobacco related harms.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Grambangla Unnayan Committee (GUC), a Bangladeshi NGO with the support from Vital Strategies working for tobacco control in Bangladesh since 2018. To strengthen institutional capacity of enforcing agencies of tobacco control laws GUC organized 18 institutional system development workshops with 18 municipalities of coastal areas of Bangladesh. Through those workshops a total of 359 participants (17 Mayors, 216 councilors, 36 TFC members etc.) gained required knowledge and skills in implementing tobacco control laws. Moreover, a total of 18 Joint meetings of municipalities and Task Force Committees for tobacco control were organized to promote joint actions for enforcement of `Tobacco control implementation guidelines for local government institutions (LGI)' and Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As an effect of the institutional development efforts of GUC, a total of 36 mobile courts were conducted during May 2023 to December 2024 for tobacco control and the mobile courts fined a total of BDT 301.300 for finding advertisement material on tobacco products at point of sales and not finding any trade license to sell tobacco products to be issued by local municipality.

CONCLUSIONS: The proper implementation of this law is extremely important to protect the people from the dangers of tobacco use. Executive magistrates and municipalities require more capacities in enforcing tobacco control laws for better results.

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Quit attempt motivation trajectories predict smoking cessation: Results from 6 community-

based randomized controlled trials

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BACKGROUND: Motivation is the key variable during quit attempts to smoking abstinence, however, trajectories over time and its impact on quitting remain unclear.
METHODS: This secondary analysis utilized data from six community-based smoking cessation trials in Hong Kong from 2015 to 2021 (excluding 2019). Two or three brief interventions were independently implemented annually, including very brief advice, brief advice, text messages, chat-based support, and active referral to services, with follow-ups at 1, 2, 3, and 6 months. A total of 3561 adult daily cigarette smokers at baseline who attempted to quit at follow-ups were included. Sociodemographic and smoking characteristics were surveyed at baseline. Motivation for quit attempts was assessed at 4 follow-ups, categorized into intrinsic motivations (commitment to quitting, health considerations or family considerations) and extrinsic motivations (financial savings, public regulations or external advice). Motivation trajectories were identified by Group-based multi-trajectory modeling. The association between these trajectories and smoking cessation outcomes, including self-reported and biochemically validated (primary outcome) 7-day point prevalence abstinence, smoking reduction, and utilization of smoking cessation services at 6 months, were assessed by Robust Poisson regression models adjusted covariates.
RESULTS: Three motivation trajectories emerged: increasing motivation group (17.9%), decreasing motivation group (55%), and stable motivation group (27.1%). The 6-month validated abstinence was significantly higher in the stable motivations group (33.5% vs 4.0, adjusted incidence risk ratio [IRR] 8.04; 95% confidence interval [CI] 6.32-10.24) and the increasing motivation group (16.1% vs 4.0%, adjusted IRR 4.95; 95% CI 3.73-6.55) than the decreasing motivation group. Similar associations were observed for the self-reported abstinence and smoking reduction (P<0.05). Utilization of cessation services was significantly higher in the stable motivation group than in the decreasing motivation group (adjusted IRR 1.34; 95% CI 1.16-1.54).
CONCLUSIONS: Half of smokers experienced decreasing motivation over time. Stable and increasing motivation were associated with higher smoking abstinence.

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Hashtags, images, and promotions: E-cigarette messaging on social media associated with teenager smoking and e-cigarette use in Ireland

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BACKGROUND: Teenage e-cigarette use in Ireland is now more prevalent than smoking. Young people remain key targets of tobacco and nicotine advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, which are strongly linked to both smoking and e-cigarette use. Despite regulations, the tobacco industry continues to target young people, with social media predominating for e-cigarette promotion. Research on e-cigarette promotion remains limited. This study examines Irish teenagers' exposure to e-cigarette messaging on social media and its association with smoking and e-cigarette use.
METHODS: Our total valid sample comprised a nationally representative, stratified random sample of 5.587 15- to 18-year-olds from 268 classes (Years 3, 4, 5), with data collected online in 2024. Current smoking and e-cigarette use were assessed using past 30-day use. Social media exposure was measured by how often, on an average day, respondents reported seeing e-cigarette messaging.
RESULTS: In our study, the prevalence of current smoking and e-cigarette use was 14.2% (n=758) and 20.6% (n=1.083), respectively. Overall, 52.7% (n=2.944) of respondents reported seeing social media e-cigarette posts on an average day. Exposure to various posts was as follows: posts with hashtags about e-cigarettes (e.g., #vapes) 45.9% (n=2.130); information about how to buy or get e-cigarettes 25.7% (n=1.181); positive images of people using e-cigarettes 33.8% (n=1.554); negative images of people using e-cigarettes 44.4% (n=2.038); e-cigarette 'challenges' (e.g., competitions) 19% (n=870); posts about possible harm from e-cigarettes 44% (n=2.017); and promotions of e-cigarettes as a smoking alternative 29.9% (n=1.372). Exposure to each type of message, whether positive or negative, was significantly associated with both current smoking and e-cigarette use.
CONCLUSIONS: Over 50% of teenagers in our study encountered various e-cigarette messages on social media daily, with some reporting exposure 20+ times per day. Even minimal exposure significantly correlates with smoking and e-cigarette use, emphasising the need for stricter regulation of e-cigarette advertising on social media.

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Understanding regulatory compliance: Graphic health warnings on vapor products, heated tobacco products, and novel tobacco products in the Philippines

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BACKGROUND: The Philippines is undergoing an e-cigarette epidemic, especially among the youth. Companies market e-cigarettes, along with heated tobacco products (HTPs) and novel tobacco products, as alternatives to tobacco smoking, but the attractive packaging increases their appeal to non-smokers. The Philippines Department of Health issued Administrative Order No. 2021-0051 requiring graphic health warnings on these products. Shortly after, the government enacted

the Vape Law to formally regulate e-cigarettes, HTPs, and novel tobacco products in the country. This paper aims to assess the compliance of e-cigarettes, HTPs, and novel tobacco products in the market to the requirements of these policies.

METHODS: We adapted the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System protocol to purchase e-cigarettes, HTPs, and novel tobacco products nationwide. We coded and assessed the packs' compliance using their codebook and the compliance checklist annexed in Department of Health Administrative Order No. 2021-0051.

RESULTS: We collected 313 products, including vapor products, heated tobacco products, and nicotine pouches. One hundred fourteen products did not have graphic health warnings on any display surface. Among those with graphic health warnings, three products were fully compliant with the requirements of the compliance checklist.

CONCLUSIONS: Graphic health warning requirement compliance is low among e-cigarette products available in the Philippines, complicated by the swift passage of the Vape Law. Even though these complications will be addressed by the new guidelines issued by the Department of Health, the Vape Law still has its weaknesses. We recommend amendments establishing an unambiguous and transparent monitoring and surveillance system for e-cigarette, HTP, and novel tobacco product regulation. Legislators should also explore the plain packaging of these products.

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Marketing of vaginal tobacco through social media: An overlooked tobacco control challenge

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BACKGROUND: There is local evidence of use of vaginal tobacco in several African countries. Although prevalence is unknown, as it is not being assessed through standard tobacco surveillance, there are reports of use in Nigeria, Gambia, Chad, Senegal and Zambia, for example. The health impact of vaginal tobacco has not been systematically researched, but case studies and anedoctal reports point to a high risk of damage to the vaginal mucosa, increasing risks of cervical cancer. The goals of this study was to assess how are vaginal tobacco products portrayed, marketed, and discussed on social media?

METHODS: We conducted a qualitative content analysis, using a grounded theory approach. We searched public posts on Facebook and Instagram (dated from 2021-2024) using key words, starting with 'vaginal tobacco' and using a snowballing sampling to identify additional key words. We identified over 6000 posts on both platforms from approximately 100 public pages. We did content analysis of 206 posts that most directly discussed vaginal tobacco use, including marketing themes and user testimonials.

RESULTS: We identified 3 major themes in the postings about vaginal tobacco: 1) Improving sex quality; 2) Therapeutic effects; 3) Improving relationships. We created an 4th, 'Other' category for topics that were less frequently discussed. Vaginal tightening associated with increased pleasured, a 'libido booster', a cure for vaginal discharge and other gynecological ailments, and increasing partner's pleasures were some of the claims we identified. We identified one posting only where a self-identified health professional cautioned users on potential side effects of these products.

CONCLUSIONS: There is an urgent need to understand the impact and extent of vaginal tobacco use in several African countries. Marketing restriction policies have not included, to date, marketing of tobacco products and unsubstantiated claims being made. Partnering with groups working to eliminate cervical cancer could provide additional resources to address this growing harm.

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Developing and sustaining tobacco control leadership and research capacity – Lessons learned over two decades

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: A cadre of health professionals and advocates with technical knowledge and leadership skills to affect policy change is critical to eliminating tobacco use. A major focus of Institute for Global Tobacco Control programs is leadership and research capacity building in low- and middle-income countries. Implementation challenges include engaging participants throughout the program, imparting skills that benefit tobacco control policy and research for years to come, and keeping participants engaged in tobacco control for the long run.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Institute interventions: Tobacco Control Leadership Programs (2007-ongoing, 2500+ participants, 115 countries); Global Certificate Program (2008-2022, 213 participants, 39 countries); Tobacco Control Scholars Program (2017-2023, 49 participants, 10 countries); Bangladesh and Indonesia Tobacco Control Research Network (Bangladesh, since 2013, 131 grants, 30 publications; Indonesia, since 2017, 97 grants, 29 publications); and Ascend - Leadership Development for the Future of Tobacco Control (since 2024, 65 young adult participants, 15 countries). Leadership and Scholars programs emphasize systems thinking and leadership skills; Certificate and Network programs focus on research skills.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Participant evaluations suggest broad program satisfaction; enhanced abilities to apply leadership and systems thinking skills; and greater confidence in broadening partner networks using stakeholder analysis and strategic messaging. Accomplishments influenced, in part, by participation

include the introduction of tobacco control legislation by a State-level India parliamentarian ('... inspired to introduce... legislation.'); incorporating tobacco control in city planning by the mayor of Balanga City, Philippines, making tobacco control an integral part of the city's 'Smart University Town' vision; and policy-relevant evidence and publications in Bangladesh and Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS: Our programs confirm the importance of strategic leadership and systems thinking skills, creating program environments (physical and instructional) that promote learning and relationship building, utilizing follow-up communications platforms (e.g., WhatsApp); and the benefits of focusing at regional/country levels and including participants who are not fluent in English using simultaneous translation.

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Reducing youth tobacco use: Association between smoke-free school hours and tobacco use in high-risk youth educational settings

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BACKGROUND: Structural anti-smoking measures, such as age limits for tobacco sale, restricted smoking in public areas, increased tobacco prices, and advertising regulations, have significantly contributed to the decline in smoking rates. In 2021, Denmark mandated smoke-free school hours for all youth education institutions, prohibiting use of tobacco and nicotine products during school hours. This study examines the association of this policy with tobacco and nicotine product use among students in a youth educational setting with high prevalence of tobacco use.

METHODS: The study utilized data from two nationwide surveys conducted in Danish preparatory basic education schools in 2023. A student survey (n=3.588) assessed use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco (e.g., snus and nicotine pouches) during school hours. A school manager survey (n= 34) assessed the implementation degree of smoke-free school hours. We used multilevel logistic regression models, adjusting for sex, age and school as random effect. Additionally, we performed stratified analyses by students' sex.

RESULTS: Compared to schools with low implementation of smoke-free school hours, schools with high implementation had lower odds of students using e-cigarettes (adjusted OR = 0.38, 95% CI: 0.17, 0.85). Moreover, schools with high implementation had lower odds of cigarette use among female students (adjusted OR = 0.33, 95% CI: 0.1, 0.90) but not among male students (adjusted OR = 0.57, 95% CI: 0.27, 1.23). No statistically significant association was found with the use of smokeless tobacco (adjusted OR = 0.67, 95% CI: 0.36, 1.24).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings suggest that comprehensive implementation of smoke-free school hours can reduce tobacco and nicotine product use among youth. While high implementation degree of smoke-free school hours was associated with reduced use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes during school hours, it was not associated with use of smokeless tobacco. These results underscore the importance of targeted interventions and robust enforcement of tobacco control policies.

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Gen Z vs big tobacco: Modernizing MPOWER measures for the digital age

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The World Health Organization's MPOWER policy package which consists of six-evidence based tobacco control measures and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control are measures that assist countries to implement effective tobacco control interventions. These approaches have an emphasis on social mobilization and public education strategies. This analysis examines innovative implementations of these frameworks, focusing on their adaptation to contemporary challenges in tobacco control efforts.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Social mobilization efforts under MPOWER and FCTC have evolved to incorporate digital engagement strategies, leveraging social media platforms and mobile technologies to amplify tobacco control messages. These approaches have demonstrated significant success in reaching youth demographics through peer-to-peer networks. Of particular note are initiatives that utilize user-generated content and interactive digital campaigns to foster community-driven advocacy.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Contemporary youth engagement in tobacco control has undergone a transformation through culturally responsive frameworks that ensure messages connect with diverse audiences. Success has been achieved through programs that seamlessly blend cultural nuances, generational communication preferences and grassroots leadership models. Innovative approaches such as youth-driven digital narratives, peer-led educational initiatives and dynamic advocacy networks have emerged as powerful tools enabling young voices to shape and influence tobacco control policies. These initiatives foster ownership and leadership among youth while leveraging their unique perspectives and digital fluency to create more impactful and sustainable tobacco control interventions.

CONCLUSIONS: Evaluation methodologies have expanded beyond traditional metrics to include digital engagement analytics and real-time behavioral tracking. These innovative tools provide deeper insights into the impact of tobacco control initiatives on youth behavior and community mobilization. Particularly effective are mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative data with qualitative feedback. The integration of traditional and new media channels has proven essential in creating comprehensive communication strategies that counter the tobacco industry. This analysis highlights the importance

of adapting MPOWER and FCTC policies to local contexts while maintaining their core principles.

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Harnessing transcendental power of music, paired with digital media advocacy to build youth-led momentum for tobacco control and policy support

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Music, a universal way of expression, has the unparalleled ability to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers to foster perceptional and attitudinal shifts. Leveraging music, along with digital media advocacy and influencer marketing in tobacco control represents a bold and innovative approach to catalyze change—especially among youth. In India, more than 54% of tobacco users started before the age of 10 (GYTS, 2019) making them highly vulnerable to tobacco initiation and addiction due to industry's targeted marketing. Traditional tobacco control efforts often rely on public health campaigns using direct warnings and educational materials, there is an urgent need to reimagine anti-tobacco messaging to resonate more broadly and inspire change.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The musical anthem campaign Zindagi Jeete Hain (meaning, Let's Truly Live Today), part of Vital Strategies' India Vs Tobacco campaign, exemplified this innovation, celebrating the essence of living a healthier and tobacco-free life. The campaign leveraged multiple-stakeholders' collaboration between India's Tata Memorial Centre, Delhi Police, and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, along with Bollywood's music composers Salim-Sulaiman.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign garnered approximately 359 media stories across print, online, TV and electronic media with total PR value of USD 43946. The press conference of Mumbai was also covered by leading Indian TV news channel. The campaign video, broadcasted on the YouTube channel of Salim-Sulaiman's Merchant Records having over 2.5 million subscribers, achieved more than 1 million views.

CONCLUSIONS: By combining music and digital media advocacy, the India vs Tobacco campaign serves as an innovative and replicable tool to amplify anti-tobacco health messages and encourage behaviour change. Music, with its unique capacity to engage diverse audiences and enhance message retention is a powerful tool for public health campaigns and can shape youth attitudes in anti-tobacco efforts.

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How to talk about tobacco endgame improving endgame narratives for industry elimination

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The term 'tobacco endgame' has gained traction in global tobacco control, but inconsistent definitions and competing interpretations can weaken advocacy, hinder public engagement, and dilute impact. This project redefines endgame narratives by creating a strategic communications framework that can mobilize policymakers, public health organizations, and society at large – targeting the systematic dismantling of the tobacco industry's influence.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Through a comprehensive analysis of existing tobacco endgame definitions and stakeholder interviews, critical gaps in narratives and definitions were identified. Nine key challenges in current endgame narratives and barriers were uncovered. These challenges range from the inconsistency in definitions (which vary from measures to targets and lead to a fragmented view), lack of awareness of the range of endgame policies and strategies and lack of attention on supply-oriented policies, which might be most effective as they target the industry at its core.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Based on these nine challenges, strategies and guiding principles for terminology and framing were developed. These entail a simple and engaging narrative to talk about endgame, the recommendation to highlight the central role of the industry (even stronger) in every policy proposal, the need to leverage tobacco industry denormalization strategies, and the opportunity to address the nicotine versus tobacco debate in commercial sales phase-out by using an industry framing. These strategies offer a proposed blueprint for overcoming the challenges in defining endgame and specific endgame policies, and will align fragmented efforts into a unified vision that can accelerate progress towards industry elimination.

CONCLUSIONS: The key challenges and recommended strategies for better endgame advocacy will improve policy conversations and campaigning. They will help communicate about endgame more effectively, increasing policy maker awareness (by realizing tobacco industry elimination is an actual possibility) and communicating the wide range of potential endgame policies in a compelling way.

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Impact of tobacco control measures on disease burden and costs: Insights from Bolivia, Honduras, Nigeria, Paraguay, and Uruguay

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use imposes a significant health burden and costs globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This study assesses the disease burden, direct medical and societal costs associated with tobacco use, and the potential effects of fully implementing key tobacco control measures in Bolivia, Honduras, Nigeria, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

METHODS: A Markov probabilistic microsimulation model was developed to project the natural history, associated costs, and quality-of-life impacts of major tobacco-related diseases. The model was parameterized using epidemiological and economic data from 2023, derived from systematic reviews, national surveys, civil registries, and hospital databases. The effectiveness of the interventions was estimated based on evidence from global and regional evidence synthesis considering the results accumulated over 10 years.

RESULTS: In 2023, smoking in these five countries accounts for approximately 41.000 deaths, 360.000 disease events, 1.3 million years of healthy life lost, US$2.8 billion in direct medical costs, US$933 million in lost productivity, and US$590 million in informal caregiver costs—representing a total of 0.7% of their aggregated GDP. The full implementation and enforcement of the four strategies (50% increase in tobacco prices through taxation, plain packaging, advertising bans, and smoke-free environments) would avert 53.000, 77.000, 95.000, and 8.700 deaths over the next decade, respectively. These measures are projected to save between US$1.3 and US$2 billion and an increase in tax collection of US$1.502 billion.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the significant potential of targeted tobacco control interventions to reduce the disease burden and associated healthcare costs in diverse populations. Policymakers and stakeholders must leverage data-driven insights to refine existing programs and allocate resources efficiently, ultimately advancing global efforts to mitigate the health and economic consequences of tobacco use.

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Estimating the health and economic benefits of raising taxes to counter the dual combustible and smokeless tobacco epidemics in India

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BACKGROUND: India faces a dual tobacco epidemic, with 28.6% of its adult population using tobacco in either combustible or smokeless forms. Tobacco consumption significantly contributes to morbidity, mortality, and economic losses, exacerbating public health challenges. This study evaluates the health and economic burden of tobacco use and estimates the benefits of tax-based control measures.

METHODS: A Markov probabilistic microsimulation model was employed to estimate tobacco-attributable disease burden, mortality, and economic costs-treatment, productivity and informal care-stratified by mode of tobacco use-combustible or smokeless-and sex, and health and economic impacts of a 50% increase in price due to tobacco taxes. The model incorporated data from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey, the Global Burden of Disease study, and economic parameters identified through a comprehensive literature review. These inputs were rigorously calibrated to ensure alignment with demographic and epidemiological characteristics.

RESULTS: Combustible tobacco is responsible for approximately 922000 deaths and 8.9 million disease events annually, while smokeless tobacco contributes to 165.000 deaths and 400000 disease events. The economic burden amounts INR 3.56 trillion for combustible tobacco and INR 358 billion for smokeless tobacco which represents 1.21% and 0.14% of the gross domestic product. Results indicate that a 50% tax increase could avert 1.8 million deaths, save 66.8 million healthy life-years, and yield economic benefits exceeding INR 11.9 trillion over a decade.

CONCLUSIONS: This research highlights the urgent need for stronger tobacco control policies to address the persistent burden of tobacco use in India. These findings demonstrate that taxation is a powerful strategy to combat the dual epidemic of combustible and smokeless tobacco in India, reducing mortality, morbidity, and economic losses while supporting public health and economic resilience.

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The Canadian experience with nicotine pouches: A reminder of the need a national comprehensive nicotine framework

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In the summer of 2023, Canada's antiquated tobacco and nicotine framework allowed for the approval as a NRT of Zonnic, a nicotine pouch distributed by BAT's Canadian subsidiary. The widespread promotion which ensued included online lifestyle advertising and point-of sale ads focused on playful messaging, packaging and flavours. No regulation banned sale to minors and the manufacturer chose to sell it through convenience stores in the provinces where NRT sales are not restricted to pharmacies. Within weeks, credible reports of the product's appeal and uptake by youth surfaced.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Health groups united in a call for a national response. Following observed unhindered purchases by young people, Quebec's Order of Pharmacists called on its members to place the product

behind the counter. The province of British Columbia adopted similar regulations.
The Federal Government used a budget bill to gain new regulatory powers. By August 2024, a ministerial order restricted the sale of all NRTs to pharmacies and required that pouches and any new NRTs be kept behind the pharmacists' counter. Flavours other than mint/menthol and advertising directed at youth or not clearly directed at cessation were prohibited and packaging now requires a warning.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Nationally, swift interventions to address the sale and marketing of a new nicotine product to the market required the use of unusual and arbitrary legislative levers. Canada's national regulatory oversight over new nicotine products remains unclear, and ill-suited to manage the tobacco industry's evolving product.
CONCLUSIONS: Canada's nicotine pouch saga serves as a reminder of how unmodernized tobacco and vaping product laws are not robust enough to tackle the rapidly evolving products marketed by the tobacco industry. A national nicotine framework would provide the policies and roadmap to improved oversight and responses to products that can sustain or fuel nicotine addiction.
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Exposing the tobacco industry's exploitation of disadvantaged communities: A campaign to address inequity in tobacco control

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry deliberately targets communities already facing systemic inequities based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, and economic status. These issues are often treated as isolated concerns rather than part of a larger pattern of exploitation. Reframing tobacco industry activities through an Inequity lens helps expose the industry's role in perpetuating systemic inequities and draws supporters from adjacent movements.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address this, STOP undertook a methodical and consultative process to define inequity in the tobacco control context and develop a clear framework for identifying industry practices that exacerbate inequity. Using this framework, we analyzed various industry activities, like the mistreatment of tobacco farmers, the sale of single cigarettes in low-income countries, and the marketing of flavored products to racial and ethnic communities and determined their relationship to inequity. This process guided the development of core campaign messaging and objectives.
The campaign employed targeted content and visuals that included an infographic, a factsheet and blog on single-stick sales in Bangladesh, and more notably, the Tobacco Slave film, which exposes Imperial Brands' predatory contract systems that exploit Malawian farmers.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Launched in 2023, the campaign has gained traction. The blog received nearly 56.000 views, and social media content achieved 3 million impressions, reaching over 950000 people on X and Facebook during the promotion period. The Tobacco Slave film and shorts have garnered over 236000 views to date across YouTube and live screenings in the United States, United Kingdom, Jordan, Brazil, and Kenya—engaging audiences in human rights, labor, and development circles.
CONCLUSIONS: The Campaign applies a novel inequity lens to illustrate how the industry exploits communities facing systemic challenges. While more research is needed to document the industry's role in perpetuating inequities, this reframing has the potential to enhance advocacy and drive meaningful policy change by aligning tobacco control with broader social justice efforts.
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How research institutions are protecting themselves from the tobacco industry's fake science

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry (TI) has a well-documented history of undermining scientific integrity by funding research supporting its interests, often published in reputable journals, and has recently been targeting medical education sector to promote accredited medical courses on cessation, e.g. Medscape. This study investigates how scientific or medical journals and institutions implement conflict-of-interest (COI) policies to prohibit TI funding or publications and evaluates how these measures counteract scientific misconduct by the TI.
METHODS: A systematic review of publicly available COI policies from academic journals and research institutions was conducted. An extensive Google search used keywords such as 'conflict of interest'. Official websites of reputed journals and universities were reviewed to identify specific COI policies. Case studies were used to illustrate the COI policies, the lack thereof, and how institutions are implementing the same, responding to the TI approaches in the absence of specific policies.
RESULTS: The analysis identified 44 journals and universities with relevant COI policies. Some explicitly prohibit TI-funded publications, while others mandate disclosure of both direct and indirect TI funding. Of the 23 universities identified, 18 strictly prohibit TI funding, while others permit exceptions for other disciplines. Additionally, some funding agencies for health programs have implemented policies to prevent their grants from being associated with TI interests. Some institutions have effectively rejected TI funding on an ad hoc basis.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight efforts by journals, universities, and funding organizations to mitigate the TI influence on research. While many institutions have

effective COI policies, inconsistencies and exceptions in their application underscore the need for universal standards. Building on the study and database produced in this research, tools could be developed to improve and harmonize COI policies across scientific and related institutions.

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The impact of tobacco product plain packaging on consumer responses in Ireland: A real-world policy evaluation stratified by socioeconomic groups

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BACKGROUND: Smoking prevalence remains high in Europe and widening socioeconomic group differences are driving health inequalities. While plain packaging policies disrupt tobacco industry tactics that sustain smoking, evidence of their equity impact is sparse. This study evaluated the implementation of plain packaging in Ireland in 2018 on consumer responses, overall and by the socioeconomic group.

METHODS: Consecutive nationally representative cross-sectional surveys (2018, n = 7701 and 2019, n = 7382) measured changes in 13 consumer responses among respondents who smoked across three domains: product appeal, health warnings effectiveness, and perceived harmfulness of smoking. Multiple logistic regression-derived adjusted odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals to compare responses post- versus pre-implementation adjusting for age, gender, educational level, and heaviness of smoking. A stratified analysis examined changes by socioeconomic group indexed using educational level.

RESULTS: There were statistically significant changes in consumer responses to plain packaging policy implementation across 7/13 outcomes studied. Five changes were aligned with expected policy impacts (2/6 product appeal outcomes and 3/4 health warning effectiveness outcomes). Two responses were also observed which were not expected policy impacts (1 appeal-related and 1 perceived harm-related outcome). There was no change in five outcomes. Differences in consumer responses between educational groups were generally small, mixed in nature, and indistinguishable when interval estimates of effect were compared.

CONCLUSIONS: Implementation of plain packaging in Ireland had intended impacts on consumer responses. Including plain packaging requirements in revising the European Union's legislative frameworks for tobacco control will help build progress towards a Tobacco-Free Europe without exacerbating smoking inequalities.

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Moderated E-Poster

Transforming tobacco control advocacy in Indonesia through the SOS framework as a model for multi-sectoral engagement and sustainable change

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry uses sophisticated tactics to whitewash its image, including hijacking the 'Smoke-Free' narrative to promote products like vapes and sponsoring youth events. They also engage in 'greenwashing' by funding environmental projects, such as mangrove planting, while their products contribute to environmental pollution. These strategies target youth and obscure the harmful effects of tobacco, highlighting the urgent need for innovative and multi-sectoral responses.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Save Our Surroundings (SOS) initiative presents a transformative communication model addressing these challenges through three components: (S)haping the Conversation, (O)wning the Target, and (S)tepping into Action. By integrating eight pillars: Health, education, economy, human rights, public policy, child protection, environmental sustainability, and social culture, SOS elevates tobacco control advocacy across sectors. Combining grassroots mobilization, digital campaigns, and policy advocacy, SOS creates systemic change and amplifies public discourse.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Since its launch, SOS has generated 1.79 million impressions in 8 days, supported by 6 macro-influencers and over 9.000 nano-influencers, resulting in 252.000 interactions and more than 50 media coverages. In its first year, SOS mobilized more than 10.000 participants across Indonesia through marches, petitions, and lobbying efforts. By framing tobacco control as a multi-issue agenda, SOS gained support from 8 government institutions, 13 political parties, 5 House representatives, 3 local councils, and over 68 CSOs. These efforts contributed to the integration of tobacco control measures into the Omnibus Health Law, and advocated for increased tobacco taxation to curb affordability and protect public health.

CONCLUSIONS: This paper critically evaluates SOS as an innovative communication framework, emphasizing its alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3 and 13, and its scalability in other high-burden contexts. The findings demonstrate how integrated advocacy strategies can counter TI narratives, foster global collaboration, and drive a paradigm shift in tobacco control. SOS exemplifies the transformative potential of strategic communication in achieving healthier, more equitable societies.

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Missed school days attributable to childhood secondhand smoke exposure in the US

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure negatively impacts children's health, often leading to school absenteeism. School absenteeism may affect academic performance and lead to funding losses for schools relying on attendance-based funding. However, limited research has quantified missed school days due to the SHS exposure. This study aims to estimate the annual school absenteeism attributable to SHS exposure at home among children aged 6 to 11.

METHODS: We analyzed the 2016–2022 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data. SHS exposure was defined as living with someone smoking cigarettes, cigars, or pipes at home. The outcome was the number of school days missed due to illness or injury. Using propensity score weights to adjust for observed differences in covariates, including child age, sex, race/ethnicity, parental education, child health, family federal poverty level, and year and state fixed effects, we estimated a two-part model to assess missed school days as a function of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure and these covariates. To calculate the excess missed school days attributable to SHS exposure, we used an 'excess utilization' approach by multiplying the SHS-attributable fraction derived from the model by the total number of missed school days among children aged 6–11 in 2022.

RESULTS: Between 2016 and 2022, among 79641 children aged 6-11 years old who enrolled in school in the US, 1.9% were exposed to SHS at home. This exposure was associated with an increased likelihood of missing school and more missed school days than unexposed children. The estimated annual excess missed school days attributable to SHS exposure was 371.159 days among students aged 6-11, equivalent to 2 days per 100 students in 2022.

CONCLUSIONS: These findings highlight the need for targeted public health interventions and policies to reduce SHS exposure at home, which could mitigate its impact on children's health, academic performance, and school funding.

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Targeting teenage smoking: Historical insights from Australian anti-cancer advocacy and public health strategies

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BACKGROUND: In Australia the proportion of teenagers smoking has increased for the first time in 25 years whilst vaping is now a significant public health concern for governments around the world. The Australian national and state governments were active from the early 1960s in attempting to reduce smoking rates in teenagers. Less attention has been given to non-government cancer organisations who utilised the behavioural sciences, publicity and political lobbying to both educate the public on the dangers of smoking and push for legislative action. This presentation will focus on the inner workings of these organisations and how they specifically targeted cancer prevention in Australian teenagers from the early 1960s.

METHODS: This research uses the archive of Australian anti-cancer advocacy organisations, Truth Tobacco industry documents, Australian government records, and newspaper archives. It applies the methodology of public health humanities to an historical case study. Public health humanities is an innovative interdisciplinary framework that merges historical studies with health promotion disciplines to tackle complex health challenges, such as tobacco control (Kehoe, Holbrook et al., 2023). This approach acknowledges that contemporary health issues are influenced by historical policies and socio-cultural contexts, leveraging insights from past successes and failures in health promotion to guide the development of more effective future initiatives

RESULTS: This case study shows how, and why, advocacy organisations targeted teenagers with both educational information on the dangers of smoking through official channels such as school curriculums, and with film and promotional materials.

CONCLUSIONS: The paper informs current strategy on rising teenage smoking and vaping rates by identifying how advocacy organisations instigated flexible, persistent and innovative campaigns in the past to reduce youth smoking, and how they embraced advancements in technology and behavioural science to inform their strategies.

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Compliance with the cigarette advertising ban at points of sale across seven Mexican cities

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BACKGROUND: In 2022, Mexico passed a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, including product display at points of sale (POS). Marketing is limited to plain, text-only price lists without logos or branding. In response, tobacco companies have filed thousands of legal challenges. This study assessed compliance with the tobacco advertising ban at POS across seven Mexican cities.

METHODS: Data collection through observation occurred April 3–17, 2024. A probabilistic two-stage sampling design selected 84 basic geostatistical areas (AGEB) in seven diverse Mexican cities, stratified by socioeconomic level. Within AGEBs, 553 POS were sampled to represent various

types (grocery stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, pharmacies, department stores, liquor stores, tobacco or vape shops). Survey weights were applied to adjust for the sampling design.

RESULTS: Cigarettes were displayed at 42% of POS, with the highest prevalence in La Paz (69%) and Monterey (66%), and the lowest in Guadalajara (26%). Price lists were most common in Mexico City (28%) and Guadalajara (15%), with 6% or less in the other cities; however, the vast majority were non-compliant: 91% included logos, typically accompanying product displays. Overall advertising was low (2.7%) but concentrated in Cancun (25%) and La Paz (25%), primarily in printed forms integrated into product displays (e.g., backdrops, shelf liners). Despite being prohibited, loose cigarettes were commonly available in Guadalajara (58%), Monterey (54%), and Tuxtla Gutiérrez (48%).

CONCLUSIONS: Non-compliance with Mexico's tobacco advertising ban, particularly the display ban, was prevalent at POS, with variation across cities. The widespread presence of cigarette displays, illegal loose cigarette sales, and non-compliant branded price lists—likely functioning as advertising—indicate efforts by the tobacco industry and retailers to circumvent the law. Strengthening enforcement at national and subnational levels and addressing regional disparities in compliance are crucial to improving the effectiveness of the ban.

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Cost-utility analysis of implementing a comprehensive community-based smoking cessation intervention in five Chinese cities

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BACKGROUND: The provision of cessation services remains uneven globally. Improvements in global cessation require sustained efforts and investments. Few studies have been conducted in China to evaluate the economics of comprehensive community-based smoking cessation interventions. Based on a multicenter study in five Chinese cities, this study analyzes the costs and benefits of community-based cessation interventions from a healthcare perspective to provide an evidence-based basis for decision-making in the health sector.

METHODS: Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Changsha, Xuchang, and Yinchuan cities were selected. In each city, community-level tobacco control publicity and intensive cessation services were used in the 10 intervention groups, while self-help cessation materials were distributed in the 10 control groups. The effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated, per capita intervention costs and smoking-related health status indicators were also collected through qualitative interviews and literature review. A multi-state Markov model was constructed to analyze Incremental Cost-Utility Ratio (ICUR).

RESULTS: A total of 2778 smokers were included, 1382 in the intervention group and 1396 in the control group, with a 6-month sustained quit rate of 14.91% and 1.79% respectively. There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($p<0.05$). The total cost of implementing the smoking cessation intervention was ¥688.165.388 with a total utility of 27.051 QALYs, and ¥690.270.387 with a total utility of 27.014 QALYs respectively. Compared with the control group, the implementation of the smoking cessation intervention saved cost of ¥2.104.999, with an incremental utility of 0.037 QALYs. The ICUR was -56806.618, which was less than 1x GDP per capita in 5 cities, indicating that the implementation of smoking cessation intervention was very economical.

CONCLUSIONS: The implementation of a comprehensive community-based smoking cessation intervention is highly cost-effective and can significantly reduce the economic and social burden of smoking-related diseases and deaths, which should be popularized and widely implemented nationwide.

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Pesticide and polychlorinated biphenyls residues in waterpipe tobacco waste: Implications for health and environment

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BACKGROUND: The use of waterpipes for smoking flavored and traditional tobacco products, which causes hazardous chemicals to be released, is raising ecological and health concerns. The study aims to evaluate comprehensively the level of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organochlorine pesticides (OCPs) contained within the wastewater produced during smoke waterpipe tobacco.

METHODS: The concentration of 11 compounds of (PCBs) and 12 different (OCPs) were determined in wastewater of smoked waterpipe. Wastewater from burning two types of flavored and traditional tobacco was investigated. Among the flavored tobacco, 4 brands of the most famous and widely used tobacco were selected. After regular smokers use waterpipes, wastewater from the waterpipe machine and the remaining tobacco residues wastewater in the head are collected. From each brand, 10 samples were obtained. The collected samples were placed in opaque glass containers, wrapped in foil, transported to the lab with a cold box, and kept in a dark environment at – 4°C until analysis.

RESULTS: PCB concentrations in flavored tobacco samples were found to range from 10.36 to 11.94 µg/l, which is higher than in traditional tobacco at 10.26 µg/l. According to the OCP analysis, the most prevalent congener was ß-HCH, with levels up to 51% and 45% in both flavored and traditional tobacco, respectively. The most abundant PCB in all analyzed samples was PCB194 which consistently accounted for 24-25% of the total PCBs followed by PCB77 as the second most dominant component in all brands except Al tawareg.

CONCLUSIONS: It's worth noting that flavored tobacco samples had negligible levels of DDT. The results may indicate that waterpipe wastewater could lead to

environmental contamination and consequently have adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems and public health. This study underlines the need for strict regulations and sustainable practices in waste management to lower the environmental and health impacts of waterpipe tobacco wastes.

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Single-stick cigarettes: A tool of industry tactic to evade taxes and undermine higher taxation policies in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Despite taxation policies targeting full cigarette packs, the sale of single-stick cigarettes in Bangladesh remains unregulated and widespread. Retailers sell single sticks at disproportionately higher prices than their per-stick cost in a 10/20-stick pack. This pricing manipulation undermines taxation policies and facilitates tax evasion. For example, the cost of 20 single sticks is approximately 3.4%–7% higher than the price of a full 20-stick pack, which itself is often priced above the Maximum Retail Price (MRP). Tobacco companies supply cigarettes to retailers at pack rates, forcing them to charge more to cover costs. Additionally, companies advertise single-stick pricing in retail shops, deliberately setting it higher. Exploiting this practice and maintaining consumer affordability, they evade taxes. The absence of standardized pricing mechanisms further exacerbates the issue.

METHODS: Quantitative data were collected from 48 retail outlets across 12 cities in Bangladesh, including divisional cities and district towns. Four outlets were selected from public places such as hospitals, courts, bus stands, and markets. The study analyzed 31 cigarette brands across premium, high, medium, and low tiers. Revenue loss was estimated by comparing MRP on full-pack sales with inflated single-stick prices.

RESULTS: The study estimates that revenue evasion from 20-stick packs, sold above the MRP, amounts to 3.783.683 crore BDT in FY 2024-2025. Including inflated single-stick pricing, the loss increased to 6.317.486 crore BDT, with an additional 2.533.803 crore BDT (approx. $220 million) lost annually. Single-stick sales, therefore, significantly contribute to tax revenue losses, undermining the effectiveness of existing taxation policies.

CONCLUSIONS: The widespread sale of single-stick cigarettes undermines taxation policies and public health objectives in Bangladesh, resulting in substantial revenue losses. Effective regulatory measures, including a ban on loose selling cigarettes, enforcing standardized pricing, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms, are crucial. These interventions can reduce revenue losses, enhance tobacco control policies, and ultimately improve public health outcomes.

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Changes in electronic cigarette use among young adults in the Philippines: Results from Global Adult Tobacco Survey, 2015-2021

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine in electronic cigarettes can harm brain development up to the age of 25 years. Little is known about electronic cigarette use among young adults aged 15-24 (YA) in the Philippines in recent years. This study describes changes in current electronic cigarette use (CECU) between 2015 and 2021 among YA in the Philippines.

METHODS: The Global Adult Tobacco Survey provides nationally representative estimates of tobacco use and related indicators for adults aged ⩾15 years. The YA analytic sample was 2.338 in 2015 and 3.759 in 2021. Adjusted prevalence (AP) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) were calculated for CECU. Significant AP point differences (APPD) ($p<0.05$) between 2015 and 2021 were determined for marginal effect contrasts in multivariable logistic regression models adjusting for multiple factors.

RESULTS: AP of CECU among YA increased from 0.5% (95% CI: 0.3-1.0) in 2015 to 4.6% (95% CI: 3.5-6.0) in 2021 (APPD=4.1; $p<0.05$). CECU among YA who currently used tobacco significantly increased from 3.0% (95% CI: 1.5-6.0) to 16.4% (95% CI: 11.1-23.7) (APPD=13.4; $p<0.05$). Significant increases were noted among men (1.0% to 8.3% [APPD=7.3]), YA aged 21-24 years (0.9% to 8.2% [APPD=7.3]), urban residents (0.8% to 6.4% [APPD=5.6]), YA with secondary education (0.4% to 5.5% [APPD=5.1]), low wealth index (0.8% to 2.7% [APPD=1.9]) and high wealth index (1.0% to 7.5% [APPD=6.5]), YA who believe smoking causes serious diseases (0.6% to 4.3% [APPD=3.8]), YA who were exposed (0.7% to 4.2% [APPD=3.4]) and not exposed (0.4% to 5.1% [APPD=4.8]) to tobacco advertisement, promotions, and sponsorship, and YA who noticed (0.6% to 4.6% [APPD=4.0]) and did not notice (0.3% to 4.6% [APPD=4.4]) any anti-tobacco information.

CONCLUSIONS: Prevalence of CECU has increased from 2015 to 2021 overall and in certain population subgroups of YA. Understanding the changes in CECU may inform tailored tobacco control strategies and policies for reducing use among YA.

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Taxation as a tool to reduce e-cigarette use among youth: Evidence from South Korea

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: E-cigarette use among youth is a significant public health

concern globally. In South Korea, e-cigarettes are the most popular tobacco product among adolescents. In 2024, the prevalence of e-cigarette use among boys and girls was 3.7% and 2.2%, respectively—a slight increase from 2023 but a sharp decline from 2014, when the prevalence among high school boys reached 12.3%.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: This reduction is closely tied to South Korea's regulatory measures, particularly taxation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: E-cigarettes entered the Korean market in 2007 and were marketed as safer alternatives to cigarettes and smoking cessation aids. Their popularity surged, with youth prevalence rising ninefold between 2008 and 2011, reaching 4.5%. During this period, e-cigarettes were largely unregulated, contributing to the rapid increase in use. In 2011, the government implemented a tax of 400 KRW (USD 0.30) per millilitre of nicotine liquid, equivalent to the tax on 12.5 conventional cigarette sticks. A Health Promotion Contribution was also introduced, aligning e-cigarette taxation with conventional cigarettes. These measures led to a sharp decline in youth e-cigarette use, dropping from 7.3% in 2011 to 4.7% in 2013. In 2015, further tax increases on e-cigarettes, tied to broader cigarette excise tax hikes, continued to reduce youth prevalence, which fell to 3.7% by 2016. However, the e-cigarette industry adapted by separating nicotine and flavoured liquids to reduce the effective tax, temporarily increasing use.

CONCLUSIONS: Korea's experience highlights the critical role of taxation in curbing youth e-cigarette use. By aligning e-cigarette taxes with those on conventional cigarettes, South Korea provides a model for countries aiming to address the rise in youth e-cigarette prevalence through evidence-based policies.

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Policy development towards the Philippines' first integrated cancer control ordinance: Setting new directions for tobacco control advocacy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite the dual passage of the Philippines' National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA) and Universal Health Care Act six years ago, sizable gains have yet to be achieved in several key pillars, especially health promotion. COVID-19 pandemic focal shifts further receded cancer control progress. With its decentralized, semi-federal governmental structure of over 1.600 local government units (LGUs), accelerating and mainstreaming cancer control policy requires localized implementation. This is especially true for highly-dense and -urbanized LGUs like Quezon City, the country's most populous city (3.1 million), where the dynamic complex of demographics and social determinants complicate health policy regimes.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Local legislators, with the technical assistance of the Department of Health, City Health Department, and CSOs like Philippine Cancer Society and Cancer Coalition Philippines, developed a model local integrated cancer control ordinance, patterned after the whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach of NICCA. Passed as Quezon City Ordinance No. SP-3285, the ordinance consolidated policy support for interventions across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of healthcare, as well as population-level interventions.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Since its passage, the ordinance fast-tracked Quezon City's cancer control efforts, including advocacies specific to tobacco control. This included concretizing a partnership between the city and the Lung Center of the Philippines on lung cancer screening. It created policy reform momentum, leading to ordinances establishing a Cervical Cancer Elimination Program and prohibiting smoking/e-cigarette use in parks. While tailor-fitted to local cancer epidemiology, the ordinance allowed flexibility and comprehensiveness for adoption and iteration by other LGUs; thereby, soliciting support for adoption in eight provinces and three cities as of December 2024.

CONCLUSIONS: Positive early results demonstrate that multi-stakeholder, interdisciplinary policy engagement promises to further optimize the impact of Quezon City's cancer control ordinance. As legal basis for institutional mandate and fiscal support, the ordinance promises to catalyze local tobacco control efforts towards significant tobacco burden reduction.

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Strengthening tobacco control in Jordan: Insights from the United Against Tobacco and COVID-19 Campaign

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BACKGROUND: The United Against Tobacco and COVID (UATC) campaign leveraged the increased health awareness during the pandemic to tackle the alarming prevalence of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) in Jordan. Phase I (2022) focused on adult smokers, highlighting the benefits of quitting. In Phase II (2023), UATC aimed to empower parents to create smoke-free environments for their children. This study assessed the campaign's impact on public knowledge and behaviors, offering insights into its strategies, reach, and effectiveness.

METHODS: This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to monitor and evaluate the campaign. Media metrics measured audience reach and engagement, while Quitline data tracked the usage of smoking cessation services. Campaign records were used for process evaluations. Cross-sectional household surveys surveyed 1.013 individuals from six governorates after Phase I and 728 individuals from three governorates after Phase II, utilizing

multistage sampling. Comparisons between campaign-exposed and unexposed groups provided insights into the effectiveness of the messaging and behavioral changes.
RESULTS: Phase I reached over 2.4 million people through social media and 2.8 million via television. Reach on social media increased to 2.9 million individuals in Phase II. There was a significant increase in demand for cessation services, with 60.9% increase in clinic visits during Phase I and 38.4% during Phase II. Data show that awareness of the campaign was associated with improved knowledge of smoking-related health risks, greater support for tobacco control policies, and increased motivation to quit smoking (47.9% of participants who smoked reported an intention to quit during Phase I, rising to 61.0% in Phase II).
CONCLUSIONS: UATC successfully raised awareness and influenced attitudes and behaviors regarding the harms of tobacco use and SHS exposure. It showcased the potential of well-monitored health communication campaigns to garner public and governmental support for tobacco control in countries with high smoking rates.
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A multicenter randomized controlled study of a comprehensive community-based smoking cessation intervention model

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BACKGROUND: The smoking prevalence rate of people aged 15 and above in China is 26.6%, and the number of current smokers exceeds 300 million. The current smoking cessation services, such as smoking cessation clinics and hotlines, are not able to meet the potentially huge demand for smoking cessation. In order to explore a intervention model that integrates multiple resources in the community and to validate its effectiveness, a multicenter randomized controlled trial in four cities in China was conducted.
METHODS: We selected 20 communities in each of the four cities of Xuchang, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao and Changsha as pilots and randomly assigned them into 10 intervention groups and 10 control groups. Each community recruited at least 25 current smokers aged 18 and above who intend to quit within one month through multiple approaches. Study participant completed a baseline questionnaire and three follow-up questionnaire assessments at months 1, 3, and 6 after enrollment. After data collection was completed, the data was analyzed using SAS 9.4 to assess the indicators of smoking cessation among study participants.
RESULTS: According to the results of Intention to treat analysis, the smoking cessation-related indicators of the study participants in the intervention group were significantly higher than the results of the control group at the sixth month follow-up. The continuous abstinence rate(CAR), true CAR verified by carbon monoxide testing, 7-day point abstinence rate, self-reported quit attempt rate, and smoking reduction rate among study participants in the intervention group (12.35%, 12.06%, 16.93%, 37.55%, and 43.87%, respectively) were significantly higher than those in the control group (2.49%, 1.24%, 5.64%, 17.59%, and 28.78%, respectively) (x2 values 73.894, 98.377, 66.217, 103.618, 51.117, respectively, p-value <0.001).
CONCLUSIONS: This study found that a comprehensive community-based smoking cessation intervention model implemented by trained community workers and primary care providers was feasible and effective in helping smokers quit.
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Tobacco industry influence in Swiss academia: A systematic analysis

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BACKGROUND: The case of the University of Zurich, where a contract granted Philip Morris full control to research on plain packaging effectiveness, highlights the vulnerability of Swiss academic institutions to tobacco industry (TI) influence. This study examines the extent and nature of collaborations between tobacco companies and Swiss academia. Historically, the TI, secretly or under the guise of scientific engagement, has sought to leverage scientific partnerships to corrupt science, creating 'safe research', enhance its credibility, bolster its image, and support its commercial interests.
METHODS: Using Swiss cantonal and federal transparency laws, requests for information were sent to 12 universities, 10 universities of applied sciences and 5 university hospitals to identify contracts concluded with tobacco or nicotine companies over the last five years. In cases of non-disclosure, legal action was taken to obtain the requested data. Further research (documentation, internet, etc.) identified other types of collaboration that were not mentioned in the institutions' responses.
RESULTS: The study reveals significant TI involvement in Swiss academic institutions. More than half of the institutions surveyed have collaborations with tobacco companies (or their representatives), including research mandates, participation in joint research projects, project or event funding, staff working in parallel at academic institutions and tobacco companies and participation in joint research/platforms/events. The collaborations encompass a wide range of themes, including tobacco economics, illegal trading, biometrics, plant physiology, work psychology, continuing education, management, and gender equality. Many institutions failed to comply with transparency laws, prioritizing private corporate interests over legal obligations.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings indicate a pervasive and concerning relationship between the TI and Swiss academia. These collaborations enable the industry to legitimize its operations, enhance its public image, and secure scientific credibility. The study underscores the need for stricter enforcement of transparency laws, institutional accountability, and robust guidelines to safeguard academic integrity and independence from TI influence.

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Building strong coalitions and policy champions to successfully advocate for the ban of new tobacco products in Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: There was a decline in cigarette smoking rates among both adults and adolescents over the last decades. However, a growing concern over the rapid rise in the use of e-cigarettes (ENDS), heated tobacco products (HTPs). The current Tobacco Control Law lacks a clear definition for these new tobacco products, especially ENDS and HTPs, leaving a gap that tobacco companies have exploited by lobbying the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) to allow the legal circulation of these products in the market.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2019, MOIT proposed [LT1] for revisions to Decree 67 in order to introduce a legal framework regulating ENDS and HTPs. This draft decree has gone through multiple versions, with extensive debates involving the Ministry of Health (MOH). To counteract this lobbying effort and secure support for a ban, a strong partnership was formed, led by the Ministry of Health and other partners. MOH identified key allies and opponents and developed strategic advocacy plans. They worked closely to unify the voices of various ministries and influencing policy makers, child right associations. MOH consistently advocated for a ban at every policy roundtable and workshops. Additionally, a network of journalists was created to dispel myths and raise public awareness in support of the ban. A school tour for raising the support of parents and students held critically before, during the policy campaigns.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: On November 30, 2024, Vietnam National Assembly passed a Resolution to comprehensively ban the production, trade, import, storage, transportation, and use of ENDS and HTPs, effective from 2025
CONCLUSIONS: Strengthening the capacity of the leading Ministry and other stakeholders, policy champions, to garner support is essential. Key non health sector partnerships, collaborative actions, evidence-based advocacy, resilience are all critical components of success. Cultivating policy champions and ensuring the issue is prioritized on policy agenda are equally important for driving policy change.

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Sub-national smoke-free regulations adoption and changes in cardiovascular disease burden in Indonesia: Evidence from national health insurance registry

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BACKGROUND: The adoption of smoke-free policies (SFPs) in public spaces, workplaces, and other settings has the potential to mitigate the prevalence of chronic smoking-related conditions, including cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and respiratory illnesses. However, there is a limited body of evidence on the impact of SFPs derived from cohort data in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This study evaluates the relationship between sub-national adoption of SFPs in Indonesia and the burden of CVD.
METHODS: This study analyzed data from 244.602 adults obtained from the claims database of Indonesia's national health insurance program (Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional or JKN) covering the period 2019–2021. Local smoke-free policies (SFPs) were compiled via official policy documents available in the Jaringan Dokumentasi Informasi dan Hukum (JDIH) database, a government-operated repository managed at the district and provincial levels. The impacts of district- and province-level SFPs on CVD morbidity and mortality were examined using multilevel poisson regression models, with results expressed as relative risks (RR). The analyses accounted for socio-demographic factors and district-level characteristics to ensure robustness.
RESULTS: The risk of CVD-related mortality was lower in provinces with strong SFP (RR: 0.83; 95% CI: 0.70-0.98) and in districts adopting moderate-strength SFP (RR: 0.89; 95% CI: 0.81-0.98), both compared to jurisdictions without SFPs. Lower risk of CVD-related morbidity was observed in provinces with strong SFP compared to those without SFP (RR: 0.88; 95% CI: 0.79-0.98). Both moderate-strength and strong SFPs at district level were not significantly associated with CVD morbidity risk.
CONCLUSIONS: The SFP adoption at both the provincial and district levels was associated with a reduction in the CVD burden. However, variations in the observed associations, particularly at the district level, highlight potential challenges related to the implementation and enforcement of these policies. Nevertheless, these findings highlight the potential of sub-national tobacco control strategies to mitigate population-level health burdens, especially in the context of decentralized health systems.

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Corporate social responsibility strategies by the tobacco industry: Analyzing their impact on public health policies in Brazil

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BACKGROUND: This study conducted by the Center for Tobacco and Health Studies (CETAB) at Fiocruz, in collaboration with the Stopping Tobacco Organization

(STOP), examines the strategic use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by the tobacco industry in Brazil. The focus is on how CSR activities influence public health policies and obscure the harmful impacts of tobacco products. Key themes include Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), Illicit Trade, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Child Labor.

METHODS: A document analysis was conducted, reviewing hundreds of industry documents, reports, and CSR campaigns to identify strategies aimed at influencing public health policies. The study focused on four central themes: ENDS, Illicit Trade, the 2030 Agenda, and Child Labor. Stakeholder engagement involved collaboration with global organizations such as STOP to assess the scope and impact of CSR activities on public health.

RESULTS: The analysis identified numerous instances where the tobacco industry leveraged CSR to counteract regulations and influence policy decisions. Notably, CSR campaigns related to ENDS and illicit trade were found to divert attention from the industry's role in exacerbating public health issues. The study also documented efforts by the tobacco industry to align its activities with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while undermining its core goals.

CONCLUSIONS: The use of CSR by the tobacco industry is a sophisticated strategy to portray itself as a responsible corporate actor while undermining public health initiatives. This research highlights the need for stronger policies and monitoring systems to counteract these tactics, especially in middle-income countries like Brazil. The findings contribute to global tobacco control efforts by providing evidence of the industry's attempts to manipulate public health narratives and delay effective regulation.

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Intimate partner violence and smoked and smokeless tobacco use in Asia - Demographic and health survey, seven countries, 2015-2022

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BACKGROUND: There is limited research on the association between intimate partner violence (IPV) and tobacco use from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This study investigates the relationship between current smoked and smokeless tobacco (SST) use and current and past IPV victimization, categorized by type, among women in seven Asian LMICs.

METHODS: We conducted secondary analyses of Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) women's data during 2015-2022 collected in Afghanistan, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Timor-Leste. IPV and type (control, physical, emotional, and sexual) were assessed using the optional domestic violence module and categorized as 'current', 'ever' or 'never' experiencing IPV. SST use was defined as using at least one tobacco product. Multinomial logistic regressions were conducted to estimate the crude odds ratio (OR) and adjusted odds ratio (AOR) for the association between IPV with current SST use, while controlling for selected sociodemographic factors.

RESULTS: Current SST use ranged from 2.9% (Cambodia) to 8.2% (Nepal); ever experienced IPV ranged from 33.2% (Cambodia) to 80.2% (Afghanistan). The association between SST use and IPV differed by country and type of IPV. In Afghanistan and the Philippines, SST use was associated with all IPV types, both current and ever. In Nepal, Pakistan, and Timor-Leste, SST use was associated with only one type of IPV: ever experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual IPV, respectively. Further, the strength of the relationship varied. For example, women who experienced any form of IPV had 3.2 times higher odds of using SST products in Afghanistan, 1.8 times in Cambodia, and 1.5 times in the Philippines, compared with women who did not experience IPV.

CONCLUSIONS: Current SST use among women varied across different IPV types and countries in our study. Addressing tobacco use within IPV interventions could help reduce SST use and improve the health of women experiencing IPV.

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Investigating attitudes and framing moral responsibility in health care professionals for smoking cessation interventions

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BACKGROUND: General practice clinicians (GPs) in the UK are incentivised to record patients' smoking status, particularly those with conditions like coronary heart disease and serious mental illnesses. While evidence-based support from healthcare professionals significantly increases smoking cessation rates, intervention rates by GPs are low. Smoking is a dependency requiring treatment, but perceptions of it as a personal choice and concerns about patient motivation can deter clinicians from offering support. This study explores the attitudes of GPs and medical students towards smoking and the impact of morally framed messages on the likelihood of their providing smoking cessation support.

METHODS: A between-subjects online experimental study was conducted in May 2023 with 300 UK-based GPs and medical students. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three message-framing conditions: professional obligation; shared responsibility; or a neutral control. They rated their desire, sense of duty, and intention to provide smoking cessation support in hypothetical scenarios, as

well as their agreement with health-related statements on smoking attitudes.

RESULTS: Sixty-four percent of participants were female, 91% had never smoked, and 7% lived with someone who currently smoked. Professional obligation framing elicited the highest intention to provide smoking cessation support. While 70% viewed smoking as a lifestyle choice, 88% agreed that addiction is a disease requiring treatment. Seventy-two percent believed individuals with unhealthy lifestyles should make greater efforts to change, and 81% agreed doctors have a duty to help regardless of patient motivation.

CONCLUSIONS: Responsibility-framed messages, particularly those emphasising professional obligation, may strengthen healthcare professionals' intentions to deliver smoking cessation support. However, the attitudinal divide between perceiving smoking as a lifestyle choice and as an addiction underscores the need for targeted education. Policies addressing misconceptions and fostering adherence to evidence-based guidelines could bridge this gap, ultimately enhancing intervention rates and patient outcomes.

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Smoking-attributable diseases among lower education groups account for much of the recent stagnation in survival among US whites

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BACKGROUND: To assess trends in adult mortality among the US White population by education level, and to examine the major causes that account for the differential rates between less and more educated, with an emphasis on smoking-attributable diseases, opioids, and other causes contributing to what have been termed 'deaths of despair.'

METHODS: Using national mortality and population data from 1989 to 2019, we quantified mortality among White individuals aged 15-79, by education level: 0-11 years (low), 12 years (middle), and 13+ years (high). We estimated smoking-attributable mortality by linking lung cancer mortality rates with relative risks for other smoking-related diseases. We analyzed deaths from opioids, cirrhosis, and other causes separately.

RESULTS: Between 1989 and 2019, absolute mortality rates widened sharply between low- and middle-education versus high-education groups. By 2019, the probability of death between ages 15-79 was 30% for high-education Whites, compared to 74% for low-education Whites. Smoking-attributable mortality rose substantially in low-education Whites but declined in middle- and high-education groups. Opioid mortality rose across all education levels, especially after 2010. Among 5.3 million excess premature deaths in the two lower education groups, 58% were due to smoking, while 9% were due to opioids, cirrhosis, and other external causes (accidents and violence) combined.

CONCLUSIONS: Although deaths from opioids and external causes rose throughout the decade ending in 2019, smoking remains the primary driver of stagnating survival rates among White US adults, causing nearly six times the percentage of deaths as opioids and other causes. All of these causes require public health attention, but the focus on reducing 'deaths of despair' must retain a heavy emphasis on smoking-related deaths.

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Tobacco products definitions: Insights from national laws

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BACKGROUND: The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) defines tobacco products as 'products entirely or partly made of the leaf tobacco as raw material which are manufactured to be used for smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing'. However, the emergence of nicotine and alternative tobacco products has challenged existing tobacco products' definitions in some jurisdictions. Narrow definitions limited to conventional tobacco products may have restricted public health efforts to protect youth from nicotine addiction. This study examines how Signatories and Parties to the WHO FCTC define tobacco products in light of these challenges.

METHODS: We reviewed the definitions of 'tobacco products' as specified in the laws of the 189 Signatories and Parties to the WHO FCTC. Data were collected using online search engines and publicly available documents, with tobaccocontrollaws.org serving as our primary source. We analyzed definitions available in or translated into English up to the end of 2024.

RESULTS: Of the 189 Signatories and Parties, 47 provided definitions of tobacco products aligned with the WHO FCTC, while 28 lacked explicit definitions. Thirty-one countries incorporated genetically modified tobacco into their definitions, and 19 included e-cigarettes or electronic nicotine delivery systems. Eleven countries defined nicotine-containing products, five recognized electronic non-nicotine delivery systems, and 28 addressed consumption-related items (e.g., filters, papers, devices) as tobacco products. Four countries included products resembling tobacco and its products in shape, branding, or function, and two included herbal products. However,

13 explicitly excluded medicinal products, such as nicotine replacement therapies.

CONCLUSIONS: Although the WHO FCTC's definition, established in 2003, provides a baseline, the proliferation of nicotine and tobacco products might have prompted many countries to expand their legal definitions. The emergence of addictive products highlights the need for updated, harmonized definitions. Strengthening these definitions could enhance global tobacco control efforts and mitigate nicotine addiction.

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Childhood exposure to second-hand smoke and risk of breast cancer: The multiethnic cohort study

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BACKGROUND: Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women worldwide. The accumulated evidence on second-hand smoke (SHS) and risk of breast cancer will be re-evaluated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer during the 2025-2029 period. The purpose of this study was to examine prospectively, among never smokers, the association between daily SHS exposure at home during childhood, and the risk of breast cancer in the Multiethnic Cohort (MEC) Study.

METHODS: We analyzed data from 25.248 never-smoking, female participants, aged 56-95 years when they provided SHS information in a third follow-up survey (2008-2012). We identified invasive breast cancer cases via linkage to the Hawaii and California Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program cancer registries through December 2019. We used Cox proportional hazards models to estimate age-adjusted hazard ratios (HRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs), adjusting for race and ethnicity.

RESULTS: During a mean follow-up of 7.8 years, we identified 731 incident, invasive breast cancer cases. Women who reported SHS exposure daily during childhood had a borderline statistically significant 15% increased risk (HR = 1.15, 95% CI: 0.99–1.33) of breast cancer compared with those unexposed. A trend test indicated a dose response relationship of borderline statistical significance between duration of childhood SHS exposure and breast cancer risk (Ptrend =0.052). The SHS exposure and breast cancer risk association did not differ when we stratified on breast cancer risk factors (birth cohort, education, age at menarche, parity, body mass index, physical activity, alcohol consumption, menopausal status), nor on race and ethnicity (all Pheterogeneity > 0.05).

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings support the notion that SHS exposure during childhood increases the risk of breast cancer. The results provide additional arguments for banning smoking in public and private places, including vehicles and homes when children are present.

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The influence of flavored tobacco products on youth smoking initiation in South Korea

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BACKGROUND: The emergence of novel tobacco products, such as electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), heated tobacco products (HTPs), and nicotine pouches, presents significant challenges to tobacco control policies worldwide, including in South Korea. While attention has largely focused on these new products, conventional cigarettes have also evolved, incorporating flavor capsules and sweet tipping techniques to enhance taste and smell. These changes may contribute to increasing youth smoking rates and shifting perceptions of tobacco harm.

METHODS: From July 9 to 30, 2024, an online survey was conducted with 2.581 South Korean adolescents aged 13-18.

RESULTS: Among the respondents, 8.0% (206 participants) reported current use of at least one tobacco product, including conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or HTPs. Notably, 96.5% (2,421 participants) reported exposure to tobacco advertisements in convenience stores, the primary retail outlets for tobacco in South Korea. Among those who had seen these advertisements, 41.2% identified flavor-related promotions as the most common ad content.

Among current youth smokers, 43.6% (134 participants) stated that flavor-related advertisements triggered their urge to smoke, followed by capsule-related features (17.9%, 55 participants). Additionally, 78.4% of all respondents reported direct or indirect experiences with flavored conventional cigarettes, and 73.7% believed that flavors in cigarettes could encourage youth smoking initiation. Alarmingly, approximately 28% perceived flavored cigarettes as less harmful to health compared to non-flavored ones.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights that not only novel tobacco products but also flavored conventional cigarettes contribute to youth smoking initiation. The widespread promotion of flavors creates misconceptions about tobacco harm and facilitates smoking uptake. These findings underscore the urgent need to implement and strengthen regulations banning flavor additives in all tobacco products to protect public health effectively.

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New nicotine products - A major illicit advertising phenomenon on digital channels in France

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BACKGROUND: France enforces strict laws prohibiting tobacco and vaping product advertisements online. Unlike tobacco products, the sale of vaping products is authorised on the Internet. The French National Committee for Tobacco Control (an NGO) monitors marketing strategies for tobacco and nicotine products including digital platforms, focusing on regulation compliance.
METHODS: This empirical study monitored the online marketing activities of 15 prominent vaping and nicotine brands operating in France in 2023. Data were collected from 25 accounts from three key social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, X), manufacturers' websites, and newsletters. The study categorised advertisements based on product type, marketing strategy, platform, and examined compliance with legal obligations, including age verification and the presence of health warnings. The methodology employed systematic data collection and analysis, though it does not claim to be exhaustive or fully representative, due to the evolving nature of digital advertising.
RESULTS: Online sales of vaping devices in France lead to a significant advertising phenomenon, as 72.8% of the 1.066 identified advertisements promoted vaping products, especially disposable e-cigarettes and pod systems. Social media emerged as the dominant advertising channel, accounting for 74.1% of the advertisements, with Instagram leading. The marketing strategies primarily highlighted flavour diversity (41%), product features (27%), and promotional offers (17%). These illicit advertising practices are concerning as no age verification or restriction measures are implemented on the websites/social media selling these devices. The absence of health warnings on advertisements adds to the concern, as it fails to inform consumers of the potential risks associated with nicotine consumption.
CONCLUSIONS: Illicit advertising for nicotine products in France remains significant, with strategies targeting youth through price incentives and appealing flavours. Non-compliance with legal requirements exacerbates minors' access to the products. These tactics aim to counteract declining tobacco and nicotine markets, posing serious public health concerns and highlighting the need for stricter regulatory enforcement.
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E-cigarettes in disguise: From toys to treats

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarettes are sometimes designed to resemble other objects, such as USBs. Most of this research focuses on high-income countries. This study examined products resembling other objects in Vietnam, a lower middle-income country where e-cigarette marketing and packaging were unregulated at the time of data collection.
METHODS: E-cigarette brands available in Vietnam were identified through searches on Google and e-commerce platforms, and visits to local retailers. 186 social media posts dated between August 2022–January 2023 from 13 corresponding e-cigarette brand social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube were captured. In addition, the top 30 most visited retailer websites targeting Vietnamese consumers, determined by web domain and content referencing Vietnam (e.g., language, currency, country drop-down list), were identified in April 2023. Screen captures of 497 webpages within one click from the homepage on these sites were collected. All posts and webpages were coded and categorized for the presence of products resembling other objects.
RESULTS: Twenty-nine (17%) social media posts displayed e-cigarettes resembling other objects, and 141 (83%) products on retailer sites resembled other objects. Product types included disposable (90%, n=153) and reusable (9%, n=16) e-cigarettes, and an e-cigarette case (1%, n=1). E-cigarettes resembled cartoon/fictional character figurines (29%, n=50), drinks (24%, n=41), electronics (e.g., phones) (24%, n=40), space-themed items (e.g., astronauts) (9%, n=16), animals (7%, n=12), and food (4%, n=7). Several products in these categories resembled toys. Other notable objects included a gun and nitrous oxide bottle.
CONCLUSIONS: E-cigarette products resembling other objects were found online in Vietnam, with some disguised as toys or everyday objects, perhaps taking advantage of the previous lack of regulations. Since the study, Vietnam approved a ban on e-cigarettes, effective January 2025. The use of such designs underscores the need for continued monitoring both online and in retail settings to support policy implementation and enforcement.
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Gender differences in cigarette smoking intensity among people who currently smoke: An analysis of survey data from 172 countries

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BACKGROUND: Despite meaningful progress in global tobacco control, significant gender differences in cigarette smoking persist globally. International survey data on cigarette smoking is routinely collected, but there is a notable gap in understanding how cigarette smoking intensity (SI) – the average number of cigarettes smoked per day among current smokers – differs between men and women.
METHODS: We systematically collected nationally representative survey data from 2000–2022 covering over 97% of the global population. Gender differences in smoking intensity were compared across countries and

regions using a ratio of SI among men to SI among women. Ordinary least squares regression models were employed to assess the association between SI ratio and factors such as GDP per capita, religion, and gender inequity, as well as 24 sensitivity analyses and robustness checks to validate the results.

RESULTS: Globally, men smoked 58% more cigarettes than women, equivalent to an SI ratio of 1.58, with wide regional and country-level variations. The largest SI ratio was observed in South Asia (SI ratio = 2.78), while the smallest differences were found in North America (SI ratio = 1.14) and Latin America & the Caribbean (SI ratio = 1.18). Gendered differences in SI were significantly associated with regional and cultural factors, as proxied by religion, but not with economic prosperity or gender inequity measures.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings reveal substantial variation in gender differences in smoking intensity across 172 countries, primarily associated by regional and cultural factors rather than gender equity or economic wellbeing. Countries and regions with the largest gender differences require context-specific tobacco control policies that are sensitive to the unique social and cultural drivers of smoking behaviour for men and women.

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The impact of tobacco excise tax increase on cigarette consumption, mortality, medical treatment cost, and government revenue in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: The study aimed to examine the impact of tobacco excise tax increase on cigarette consumption, mortality, medical treatment cost, and government revenue in Indonesia

METHODS: The study consisted of two phases. First, the demand for cigarettes was analyzed using the two-part econometrics model. Data were retrieved from the National Socioeconomic Survey (SUSENAS) 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2020. The smoking participation was examined using logit specification, while the second part (smoking intensity) used the Generalized Linear Model (GLMs). Second, a compartmental model involving 65 million smokers was employed to assess the impact of different tobacco excise tax increased scenarios on cigarette consumption, tobacco-attributed mortality, tobacco-attributed medical treatment cost, and government revenue in Indonesia

RESULTS: Price was negatively associated with the decision to smoke and smoking intensity. The estimated overall cigarettes price elasticity was approximately between -0.4933 to -0.4277. Subgroups analysis found that youth were more sensitive to price change than adults. Furthermore, The results revealed that a 12.5-200% increase in tobacco excise taxes would reduce the number of smokers by 0.5 to 8.0 million smokers, decrease cigarette consumption by 5.7 to 90.4 billion sticks, avert tobacco attributed mortalities by 0.2 to 3.3 million, reduce tobacco-attributed medical treatment costs by 1.4 to 22.7 trillion rupiahs, and generate additional government revenue by 16.7 to 176.6 trillion rupiahs.

CONCLUSIONS: Raising the tobacco taxes has significant benefits to public health and economics. Therefore, It is necessary to significantly increase the cigarette taxes annually by at least 25% and simplify the taxes structure to prevent smokers from switching to the cheaper brand.

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Tobacco industry influence on policy development: A case study of Ghana's Excise Duty Amendment Act 2023

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BACKGROUND: While smoking prevalence is decreasing in developed regions, the African region faces an anticipated increase due to weak enforcement, industry interference, and inadequate regulatory measures. Ghana has taken steps toward addressing this public health challenge by ratifying the WHO FCTC in 2004, enacting the Public Health Act of 2012, and the Tobacco Control Regulations of 2016 resulting in a prevalence of less than 5% of tobacco use. Historically, Ghana relied on a unitary ad valorem tax system for tobacco products. To align with WHO-FCTC recommendations and the ECOWAS directive, Ghana introduced a mixed excise tax system, that's Excise Duty (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act 1108). This study examines the tobacco industry and its allied organizations' influence in the passage and implementation of this legislation.

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach combined desk reviews and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Secondary data, reports, and policy documents from government, academic, and CSOs sources were analyzed alongside media content to assess the industry's influence on public perception. Qualitative content analysis was utilized to identify patterns and themes related to tobacco industry interference in policy discourse.

RESULTS: The study revealed that the tobacco industry allied organizations like the Institute of Liberty, Policy, and Innovation, and the Harm Reduction Alliance of Ghana, influenced public opinion and policymakers by exaggerating economic hardships and promoting e-cigarettes under the guise of harm reduction. Some organizations like the American Chamber of Commerce Ghana delved into the economic argument to call for a downward revision of the tax. BAT Ghana played a significant role, presenting unsubstantiated research to delay tax reforms while emphasizing e-cigarettes as safer alternatives. CSOs countered these narratives by emphasizing public health benefits and debunking industry misinformation

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights the industry's tactics

to manipulate legislative processes and divert attention from evidence-based policies, threatening Ghana's progress in tobacco control.

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Driving environmental action: Tobacco waste pollution and advocacy for policy change at the global level

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The FCTC Article 18 has seen limited implementation across countries, despite its crucial role. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the 2022 World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) focused on the environmental impact of tobacco. Brazil further advanced the agenda during COP10, leading to a pivotal decision aimed at boosting Article 18's enforcement. Annually, more than 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded, polluting soil, harming wildlife, and damaging marine ecosystems. Many people remain unaware of the severe toxicity of cigarette litter, which contains over 7.000 harmful compounds and can contaminate up to 1.000 liters of water per butt.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since WNTD 2022, ACT has spearheaded awareness initiatives on tobacco-related environmental risks. These efforts included the 'Cigarette Butts Are Plastic' photo contest for adults and children, followed by a 2023 partnership with Johns Hopkins University and UNIFESP to conduct research on cigarette butt toxicity. The findings were summarized in a fact sheet on plastic pollution and NCDs.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The photo contest attracted over 150 submissions, with five winners receiving awards. Selected photographs were featured in an exhibition of 24 images on plastic pollution and harmful products, displayed for a week at the National Congress and later presented online. The research culminated in a technical report, opinion articles, and informed debates in the National Congress. Inspired by the research, ACT organized an ocean crossing event in collaboration with a sea swimming team and a sustainability organization, which included a symbolic cigarette butt cleanup at Arpoador Beach. Over 6.000 cigarette butts were collected in one hour. To promote sustainable practices, ACT distributed seed paper fact sheets, designed to be shredded and planted after reading.

CONCLUSIONS: Raising public and policymaker awareness of tobacco waste's environmental toll is essential. Holding tobacco companies accountable and implementing policies like the Plastic Treaty are critical steps in mitigating this impact.

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Spatial distribution and the determinants of smoking prevalence in Indonesia: A 2018 Indonesian basic health research analysis

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia, home to the world's third-largest smoking population as reported by the WHO, faces a significant public health challenge requiring robust tobacco control strategies. Despite extensive research on smoking behavior, the spatial analysis of smoking prevalence across Indonesia's 514 districts/cities remains underexplored. This study aimed to examine spatial distribution of smoking prevalence and its relationship with education, marital status, smoke-free area policy, and elevation at 514 district/city in Indonesia.

METHODS: This ecological study analyzed aggregate data from the 2018 National Basic Health Research and Information Report provided by Statistics Indonesia, encompassing 514 districts/cities across 34 provinces on seven major islands in Indonesia. Spatial weights were calculated using the distance method. Spatial autocorrelation was assessed with Moran's Index, and the determinants were examined using the Spatial Error Model (SEM).

RESULTS: This study indicated 231 districts/cities with smoking prevalence exceeding the national average. This study identified a positive spatial autocorrelation of smoking prevalence across five major islands in Indonesia, Sumatra (Global Moran's I = 0.548, p = 0.001), Java (Global Moran's I = 0.628, p = 0.001), Kalimantan (Global Moran's I = 0.3525, p = 0.001), Bali and Nusa Tenggara (Global Moran's I = 0.5939, p = 0.001), and Sulawesi (Global Moran's I = 0.647, p = 0.001). Statistically significant high-high clusters ($p < 0.05$) identified across the five islands encompassed a total of 55 districts/cities in Indonesia. The result of the SEM analysis identified the percentage of marital status and elevation of regencies/cities with SEM modelling estimation results ($R^2 = 9\%$)

CONCLUSIONS: This study identified significant positive spatial autocorrelation of smoking prevalence across five major islands in Indonesia, with 231 districts/cities exceeding the national average and 55 identified as hotspots. Spatial Error Model (SEM) analysis revealed marital status and regional elevation as significant factors, explaining 9% of the variance.

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What undermines health warnings on capsule cigarettes package: Visual attention and perceptions among Chinese people who smoke and don't smoke

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BACKGROUND: Capsule cigarettes have become popular among Chinese smokers. While appealing packaging elements like colorful capsule are widespread, the health warnings remain text-only. This study aims to assess visual attention of capsule cigarette package elements, and its associations with package attraction, purchase intention and risk perception.
METHODS: We recruited 20 smokers and 20 non-smokers for an eye-tracking experiment. Each participant viewed 12 capsule cigarette packages randomly selected from a pool of 42 currently available in the Chinese market, all of which contained four elements: brand, capsule, graphic and health warning label (HWL). Participants viewed each package for 15 seconds, during which two eye-tracking variables were recorded: the fixation counts and fixation durations on pre-defined areas of interest (AOI). Fixation density was calculated by dividing the fixation count by the relative area of the AOI. After viewing each package, participants answered three questions to evaluate their perceived package attraction, purchase intention and risk perception.
RESULTS: For all participants, the brand and graphic received significantly higher fixation counts and longer fixation durations than HWLs (P<0.001). Although the fixation counts and duration on capsule were lower than HWLs, its fixation density (2.92±2.89) was much higher than HWLs (1.00±0.76, P<0.001). Especially for smokers, the fixation counts, durations and density on HWLs were significantly lower than those of non-smokers (P<0.001). For smokers, when placing more fixation on capsule, they were more likely to perceive higher package attraction (OR=1.13, 95% CI: 1.04–1.22), but also more likely to perceive higher health risks (OR=1.12, 95% CI: 1.01–1.22). For non-smokers, their fixation on the graphic was positively associated with attraction (OR=1.07, 95% CI: 1.04–1.22).
CONCLUSIONS: The text-only HWLs fail to compete with brands, graphics and capsules in capturing people's attention, especially for the smokers, ultimately rendering the HWLs on tobacco packaging ineffective.
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Digital solutions for smoke-free law enforcement: The Complaint Map

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2014, Beijing People's Congress adopted the Beijing Tobacco Control Regulation which bans smoking in all indoor public places, workplaces and on public transportations, in order to protect 21 million residents away from second-hand smoke and smoking-related diseases. However, with only 1100 enforcement officers in Beijing, how to ensure effective implementation of the regulation is key challenge. Additionally, the regulation stated 'tobacco control work in Beijing is based on social co-governance model' and called on whole society to take part in its implementation. Therefore, digital information system enabled comprehensive tobacco control violations information collection, handling, data visualization and mapping was needed.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Beijing Tobacco Control Association developed a digital system 'Complaint Map', in which every resident can report violations of the smoke-free provisions through social media platform at any time and any place, and the Complaint Map visually displays all reported violations in real time. It is further used by tobacco control volunteers, who are recruited and trained to address complaints and promote compliance. The government's enforcement team also used it for targeted inspections.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: From Jan 2016 to Oct 2024, the Complaint Map received 108,772 reported violations from all 16 districts in Beijing. The most frequently reported places were restaurants(33.5%), office buildings(22.2%) and working offices(14.7%). 61% of reports were due to smoking in indoor places. 47.1% reports have been effectively handled by volunteers and law enforcement officers. The Complaint Map has effectively engaged the public and promoted a smoke-free Beijing.
CONCLUSIONS: Beijing's innovative and systematic approach that involves the Complaint Map, volunteer management, coordination with the enforcement team, and media exposure are an effective and feasible practice of tobacco control social co-governance model. These digital solutions can be replicated or adapted in other cities in China and abroad that are implementing smoke-free laws or tobacco control laws in general.
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Adolescents' perceptions of flavoured and capsule cigarette packaging and point-of-sale marketing in Argentina

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BACKGROUND: Packaging and point-of-sale marketing are critical strategies for tobacco companies. Capsule cigarettes are particularly popular in Argentina, one of the top ten global markets for this product. With varying retail marketing regulations across the country, this study explores adolescent perceptions of flavoured and capsule cigarette packaging and their marketing at the point of sale, addressing a notable gap in the literature.
METHODS: We conducted eight focus groups (n=51) across four Argentine cities (Cordoba, Quilmes, San Salvador de Jujuy, Santa Rosa), stratifying adolescents by gender, age (12-14/15-17), and smoking susceptibility. Photos of cigarette marketing and flavoured and capsule

packs were used as prompts for participants to share their perceptions. Discussions were recorded, transcribed, and analysed using NVivo v20.

RESULTS: Participants reported noticing cigarette packs at the point-of-sale, even in provinces with marketing restrictions. When shown pictures of point-of-sale cigarette marketing they described it as commonplace, highlighted the colours and lights in advertisements, and criticised its proximity to children's products. Colourful and eye-catching packs —often of flavoured or capsule cigarettes— were perceived as more appealing. Typography was also influential, with a preference for novelty designs. Indications of flavours (through colours or descriptors) were perceived as both harm-increasing (by adding chemicals) and harm-reducing (by reducing tobacco content). Neutral colours (e.g., white, light green) were associated with reduced harm. Health warnings captured participants' attention, while many were unaware they were mandatory. Warnings were seen as contradictory to the vibrant packaging and ineffective in deterring smoking, although they might influence children.

CONCLUSIONS: Adolescents were familiar with cigarette marketing at the point of sale, even in provinces where it is prohibited. They found the colourful packs of flavoured and capsule cigarettes appealing, associating light-coloured packs with less harmful products. Health warnings sparked interest and prompted debate.

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The effect of WHO FCTC ratification and the implementation of MPOWER measures: An analysis using ITSA with synthetic control groups

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BACKGROUND: The smoking epidemic causes over 8 million deaths annually, making it the leading preventable cause of death globally. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), an international treaty aimed at reducing tobacco demand and supply through a set of measures known as MPOWER. However, its effectiveness remains uncertain.

METHODS: We employed Interrupted Time Series Analysis (ITSA) with synthetic control groups formed by countries that never ratified the FCTC. This approach compared changes in smoking trends and levels before and after ratification between treated and control groups. The effect of the FCTC on the number of current smokers (25 years and less) was quantified by contrasting the current levels and trends in ratifying countries with the counterfactual scenario, represented by synthetic control groups composed of countries that never ratified the FCTC. Additionally, we analysed the differential impact of the FCTC by classifying countries according to their level of implementation of MPOWER measures.

RESULTS: Focusing on countries that ratified the FCTC by 2010 (more than 95% of the global population), we found that, in the population under 25 years (when consumption usually begins), if these countries had not ratified, they would have had 19% more current smokers 10 years after ratification than there had (about 23 million more current smokers). Considering that smoking kills about half to two-thirds of those who start early and don't quit, the FCTC may have avoided at least 11-15 million deaths in the first decade of implementation. Notably, reductions were statistically higher in countries that maintained a high implementation of MPOWER measures or moved to high implementation.

CONCLUSIONS: The FCTC has demonstrably reduced the number of current smokers in ratifying countries. However, ratification alone is insufficient, and a high implementation of MPOWER measures is essential to maximise the treaty's impact.

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Changes and predictors of quitting among females who smoke in Hong Kong after using gender-specific smoking cessation services

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BACKGROUND: We established the first Hong Kong gender-specific smoking cessation services for female smokers in 2006 when the female smoking prevalence increased with the increasing population. We examined the changes and predictors of intention to quit, self-reported quit rate, and sustained abstinence among female smokers after receiving the smoking cessation services.

METHODS: This was a longitudinal study of 1019 current female smokers who used gender-specific smoking cessation services. Telephone surveys were conducted at baseline, 1-week, 3-month, and 6-month to assess the changes in smoking status and other risk factors. Intention to quit smoking (quit within 30 days), 7-day point prevalence of abstinence, and sustained abstinence (number of days of abstinence since the first quit attempt) were documented. Generalized estimating equations were applied to explore the predictors of the quitting process at 6-month follow-up for multiple time points.

RESULTS: The mean (SD) age of female smokers was 38.2 years (±10.4). The mean daily cigarette consumption was 13.9 (±8.1), and the mean age of started smoking was 18.3 years (±5.3). 29.6% were living with smokers in the same household, and 33.3% had a partner who smoked. At 6-month follow-up, the intention to quit smoking was 38.9% (vs. 39.3% at 1-week), 7-day point prevalence quit rate was 23.4% (vs. 11.1% at 1-week), and sustained abstinence was 84.8 days (vs. 5.4 days at 1-week). Higher daily cigarette consumption, high nicotine dependency level, living with smokers, and having a smoking partner at baseline significantly predicted lower sustained abstinence at 6-month follow-up (all P< 0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: We provided some evidence for the effectiveness of gender-specific smoking cessation services for female smokers. During the first week of abstinence, intensive monitoring of cigarette consumption and withdrawal symptoms and booster counseling are needed to prevent smoking relapse among female smokers.

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A civil society response to the tobacco industry's interference in raising tobacco taxes in Côte d'Ivoire from 2023 to 2024

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite progress in the legal framework, Côte d'Ivoire had one of the lowest levels of taxation on tobacco products in West Africa. This situation is facilitated by strong interference from the tobacco industry. Since 2022, tobacco control actors have taken multifaceted actions to counter the tobacco industry, which led to an increase in tobacco taxes from 42% in 2023 to 70% in 2024. This document aims to share the experience of civil society and its partners.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Several approaches have been taken to achieve our goal. First, we have designed an explanatory note on the increase in taxes to the state and the population. Then, with these materials, we sent letters to government agencies, including the Ministers of Health, Trade, Budget and Finance of the State to request visits and advocacy meetings. Finally, a tobacco monitoring team composed of civil society and media stakeholders was put on alert.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Various meetings, interviews, and visits were conducted with the ministers and senior officials of the relevant administrations. Tobacco industry's monitoring and press conferences followed by publications in newspapers and the audiovisual press have enabled us to reveal and denounce all the interferences. Civil society's actions have been supported by collaboration with government bodies and the National Assembly. This process led to the adoption the 2025 scale by the National Assembly, which accepted an increase from 49% to 70%.

CONCLUSIONS: It is recognized that high taxation has a proven impact on the cost of tobacco, which in turn affects smoking prevalence. The 28% increase in taxation could be a significant step forward in improving the health of the population and could also be a source of revenue for the financing of tobacco control policy. This achievement highlights the importance and need to promote tobacco industry monitoring in the implementation of any tobacco control policy.

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Tobacco retailer density and smoking prevalence following a hypothetical 500m buffer around schools in South Korea

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BACKGROUND: Restricting tobacco retailers has the potential to substantially reduce smoking prevalence while promoting health equity, as retailer density is often higher in low socioeconomic areas. In South Korea, banning tobacco sales within 500m of schools has strong public support, but evidence on its potential impact remains limited. We aimed to estimate reductions in tobacco retailer density and smoking prevalence under a hypothetical 500m buffer around schools in urban, intermediate, and rural areas.

METHODS: Data sources included the list of tobacco retailers (2024 data, n=138.021) from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, list of elementary, middle and high schools (n=11.992) from the Ministry of Education, and cigarette smoking prevalence from the 2023 Korea Community Health Survey. School and retailer locations were mapped, and reductions in retailer density were calculated after applying 500m buffer zones around schools. Smoking prevalence reductions were estimated using a previously published meta-analysis indicating a 2.06% relative decrease in smoking prevalence with reduced retailer density. Analyses were stratified by urban, intermediate and rural regions.

RESULTS: Removing retailers within 500m of schools reduced the total number from 138.021 to 63.225, a 49.7% reduction. Urban areas saw a 60.0% reduction (from 98.393 to 39.352), intermediate areas 41.4% (28.194 to 16.532), and rural areas 35.8% (11.434 to 7.341). The estimated smoking prevalence reductions averaged 0.5% nationwide (from 18.6% to 18.1%), with urban areas at 0.6% (from 18.3% to 17.7%), intermediate areas at 0.4% (from 19.6% to 19.2%), and rural areas at 0.3% (from 18.2% to 17.9%).

CONCLUSIONS: A 500m buffer around schools can substantially reduce tobacco retailer density, particularly in urban areas. However, the corresponding reduction in smoking prevalence is likely to be modest. A package of policies would be required to reduce smoking to minimal levels and promote health equity.

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Addressing tobacco control challenges and future-proofing tobacco control in Sub-Saharan Africa: Insights from Zambia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Zambia, with a high tobacco prevalence, faces challenges in developing effective tobacco control legislation since the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was ratified in 2008. The country's youth demographic, with over 60% under 25, presents both opportunities and challenges. However, the tobacco industry's presence and vulnerability as a Low-Middle-Income Country (LMIC) make it vulnerable to industry

influence and manipulation. In 2023, Zambia ranked 79th out of 90 countries on the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Tobacco Control Consortium of Zambia (TCCZ) is promoting youth-led advocacy in Zambia through various initiatives, including school debates, poetry, and infotainment road shows. This approach empowers young people to take ownership of tobacco control efforts, driving meaningful change and sustaining long-term initiatives. TCCZ advocates for flexible strategies, continuous monitoring, research, sustainable funding, capacity-building programs, education, and skill development. Incorporating tobacco control topics into school curricula is crucial. A comprehensive approach, leveraging the youth demographic, is needed to establish a strong tobacco control framework.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This has resulted in heightened awareness and participation among young individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds, significantly fostering and supporting initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS: Zambia faces challenges in establishing effective tobacco control legislation, but significant reform is possible. The large youth population presents both opportunities and challenges, driving tobacco control initiatives. Despite financial constraints, the Tobacco Control Consortium of Zambia (TCCZ) has made progress through youth advocacy, raising awareness across socio-economic groups. By promoting adaptable strategies, ongoing evaluation, research, capacity-building, and integrating tobacco control education in schools, TCCZ is building a strong foundation for a comprehensive tobacco control system, essential for reducing industry influence and ensuring a healthier future for the nation.

Empowering youth in tobacco control in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa is like planting seeds for a vibrant future; they are the foundation of transformation and guardians of health.

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Success and challenge of banning new tobacco and nicotine products: The Hong Kong lesson

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since the early 2000s, the emergence of newer tobacco and nicotine products, including electronic cigarettes, Heated Tobacco Products, and nicotine pouches has caused harms to people of all ages and acted as a gateway to youth smoking. In 2019, the Hong Kong Government introduced the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019 to the Legislative Council (LegCo) to prohibit the import, manufacture, sale, distribution, and advertisement of Alternative Smoking Products. However, the tobacco industry obstructed the scrutiny of the Bill by extensively lobbying legislators, spreading misinformation of new tobacco products via multiple channels, and bombarding the Government with legal documents and questions to delay the legislative process.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Hong Kong Government stood up to the interference from the tobacco industry, and unwaveringly proceeded with legislation accompanied by strong supports from local and international public health community, including the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH), the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control, and academia. They jointly called press conferences and press releases, attended pro-ban rallies outside the LegCo, and published research articles in the media.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Nearly three years after experiencing the twists and turns on the road to implementation, the Bill was passed on 21 October 2021 and the Ordinance came into effect on 30 April 2022, which marked a significant milestone in Hong Kong's tobacco control work and a major achievement in public health.

CONCLUSIONS: The battle to ban new tobacco products in Hong Kong would not be possible without political will and the collective effort of the government, legislators, researchers, and civil society. When legislating a ban on new tobacco products, Governments from other countries should strengthen the legislative framework, engage and seek support from the community to countering opposition from tobacco industry, and monitor legislative effectiveness and enforce compliance after passing the bill.

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Exploring stakeholder perspectives on preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth: A health literacy approach

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarette use among early adolescents in Thailand is rising. Despite efforts by tobacco control agencies, preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth remains a challenge. This study aimed to explore stakeholder perspectives on preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth, applying the Health Literacy (HL) framework.

METHODS: This descriptive qualitative study was conducted through in-depth interviews and focus groups with youth at risk (n=9), parents (n=9), and teachers involved in tobacco control (n=8). The research took place in a northern province of Thailand from September to November 2024. Purposive sampling was employed until data saturation was achieved. Interview questions, grounded in the HL framework, were validated for content. Data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically, with investigator triangulation to enhance reliability.

RESULTS: Six main themes with 20 subthemes emerged, most of which were consistent across participant groups. Stakeholders' perspectives on e-cigarette prevention were categorized into three levels of HL. At the functional literacy level, participants understood the health risks

of e-cigarettes but lacked detailed knowledge about the substances in e-cigarettes and their specific health consequences. In terms of communication literacy, parents and teachers acknowledged the significant influence of online advertising on youth e-cigarette use, and vulnerable adolescents struggled to resist peer pressure. At the critical literacy level, stakeholders suggested that prevention could be achieved by helping youth evaluate the consequences of e-cigarette use and encouraging the setting of personal life goals through contemporary, accessible methods.

CONCLUSIONS: Stakeholders recognize the health risks of e-cigarettes but feel less confident in effectively communicating these risks to others. Online e-cigarette advertising plays a significant role in shaping youth behavior. Enhancing health literacy, decision-making skills, and self-management among at-risk youth—using modern tools such as mobile apps and online platforms—could help prevent e-cigarette use. Additionally, stricter regulations on online e-cigarette advertising are essential.

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Illicit cigarettes consumption: Empty packs survey in six Indonesian cities

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BACKGROUND: Illicit cigarettes, because of their high affordability, can hinder Indonesia's efforts to reduce its high smoking prevalence. Their presence can also cause significant revenue loss to the government. However, estimating the size of illicit cigarette consumption is challenging due to the country's large archipelagic territories and complex cigarette pack legitimacy criteria. Thus, the evidence on to what extent illicit cigarettes were consumed in Indonesia has been inconclusive. This study aimed to estimate the consumption size of illicit cigarettes in Indonesia, particularly in six major cities.

METHODS: This study employed an empty-pack survey method with a cluster sampling design. Six Indonesian cities with the highest population density and number of smokers—Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Medan, and Makassar—were selected as survey sites. We collected empty cigarette packs discarded on the roads from October 23 to November 4.2024. The forensic analysis of the presence and attributes of tax stamps and pictorial health warnings was then performed to classify packs as licit or illicit.

RESULTS: From a total of 8.173 collected packs, 7.343 (89.8%) were eligible for analysis. Of these, 1.924 packs (19.2%) were considered illicit. The majority of illicit packs consist of packs with unregistered brands, which did not have a tax stamp (79.9%). Among the illicit packs, machine-rolled kreteks—cigarettes with cloves, were the type of cigarettes that were counterfeited the most (66.2%). Comparing the results across the cities, Makassar (31.5%) and Surabaya (32.4%) had the highest prevalence of illicit pack consumption.

CONCLUSIONS: Illicit cigarette consumption in six major Indonesian cities was found to be relatively high. This implies that the government should increase efforts to combat illegal cigarette production and sales, improve trace-and-track measures, and simplify the excise tax structure.

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An analysis of e-cigarette policy action, inaction and industry influence: Implications for youth uptake in New Zealand

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BACKGROUND: In 2024, New Zealand had one of the highest youth vaping rates globally. In this paper, we aim to examine key developments in e-cigarette policy that may have contributed to high uptake among young people in New Zealand between 2015 and 2024. By identifying key policy-relevant documents by government agencies and interactions with the industry, we aim to offer insights for jurisdictions looking to implement or strengthen e-cigarette policies.

METHODS: We searched publicly available New Zealand government websites to identify documents related to e-cigarette policy between 2015 and 2024 (Ministry of Health, New Zealand Parliament, Beehive, Courts of New Zealand and New Zealand Customs). We included key policy-related documents for analysis. We organised and summarised the documents sequentially into a timeline graphic and chronological narrative results.

RESULTS: New Zealand introduced policies aimed at reducing youth e-cigarette uptake slowly compared to other high-income countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia. When policies were introduced, they lacked strength, which enabled the e-cigarette and tobacco industry to oppose, bypass and, ultimately, weaken the impact of such policies. The vaping industry had multiple interactions with public health actors that may have positioned the industry as a legitimate partner in tobacco harm reduction.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights that jurisdictions must move quickly to introduce effective measures on e-cigarettes to protect health. Policies must be comprehensive to prevent the industry from opposing and bypassing laws. Governments must protect policy processes from companies that profit from nicotine addiction in line with the World Health Organization Framework on Tobacco Control.

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Tobacco is not just bad for your health; tobacco shares are poor financial investments

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry is, quite correctly, perceived as very profitable and economically powerful. However, the share price performance of any company is determined by changes in sales and profits, and future prospects, rather than by its absolute size. Organisations like Tobacco Free Portfolios argue that, if asset management companies avoid investing in tobacco companies, this will weaken them and reduce their influence. In this research we consider the financial and operational performance of nine leading listed global tobacco companies, and assess the financial rationale for investing in, or divesting from them.
METHODS: Using data sourced from Bloomberg from 2008 to 2023, and to be updated to include 2024, we evaluate historical sales volumes, real revenue, real gross profit per cigarette, stock performance and price-to-earnings trends for nine leading listed global tobacco companies.
RESULTS: Before 2016, share prices of cigarette companies greatly outperformed the share prices of other companies on their respective stock exchanges. However, since 2016, cigarette companies' shares have substantially underperformed the market.
Since 2008, global cigarette sales volumes have declined steadily. Before 2016, most companies were able to increase the real net-of-tax price to offset the decrease in the volume of cigarettes sold. This has become increasingly difficult since 2016. Excluding inorganic growth, six of the nine companies experienced real revenue declines since 2008. Despite efforts to diversify towards novel products, revenues from these products remain small, and cigarettes remain the primary revenue source.
CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco companies have experienced rapidly deteriorating financial performance since 2016, amidst ever-escalating regulation. It remains unclear whether the growth in novel products will mitigate the decline in cigarette sales. This uncertainty poses heightened risks for investors. While the moral reason to disinvest from tobacco shares is well-established, the research indicates that the financial rationale for investing in the tobacco industry is questionable, at best.
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Early COVID-19 policy changes and decreased smoking cessation rates among users of community-based services in Hong Kong: A longitudinal study

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BACKGROUND: Cigarette consumption showed varied trends during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some individuals reducing use due to health concerns and others increasing use due to stress. This study examined the early pandemic's impact on abstinence outcomes among tobacco users who were seeking smoking cessation (SC) services in Hong Kong.
METHODS: We conducted a secondary analysis of two cluster randomized controlled trials from 2018 to 2021 involving smokers using community-based SC services. We primarily assessed smoking cessation rates before and after January 25, 2020, when Hong Kong elevated its COVID-19 response level from 'serious' to 'emergency.' Poisson regression models were used for analysis. Sensitivity analyses were conducted for February 8, 2020, when a 14-day mandatory quarantine for all arrivals from Mainland China was implemented, and March 28, 2020, when restrictions on public gatherings over four people and regulations on catering businesses (i.e., Max 50% seating capacity) were enacted. Subgroup analyses by the two trials were also performed.
RESULTS: A total of 1.762 participants (80.5% male) were included. Biochemically validated abstinence rates at the 6-month follow-up after January 25th (6.8% [51/748]) were lower than before January 25th (12.3% [125/1.014], Adjusted Risk Ratio (ARR) [95% CI]: 0.44 [0.30-0.65], p<0.001). The self-reported 7-day abstinence rates at the 3-month (31.3% [89/284] vs. 49.1% [725/1.478], ARR [95% CI]: 0.46 [0.35-0.60]) and 6-month follow-ups (32.2% [241/748] vs. 41.0% [416/1.014], ARR [95% CI]: 0.70 [0.60-0.81]) after January 25th were consistently lower than before (all ps<0.001). Subgroup analysis by different trials and sensitivity analyses showed the same lower abstinence rates after the policy changes.
CONCLUSIONS: The early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on abstinence outcomes among tobacco users utilizing community-based SC services. Efforts to enhance support for smoking cessation during and after such public health crises are essential.
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Non-combustible nicotine product cessation interventions in adolescents and young adults: A systematic review

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BACKGROUND: New nicotine products such as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco and smokeless tobacco/nicotine products, are popular among young people. Most regret having started using these products, but little is known about how to help adolescents and young adults to quit most effectively. This systematic review aimed to identify all existing studies on the efficacy of cessation interventions on the use of novel nicotine and tobacco products in adolescents and young adults.
METHODS: Original randomized controlled trials on cessation of use of e-cigarettes, heated tobacco and smokeless nicotine/tobacco products aimed at young people aged between 15 and 25 were included. The exclusion criteria were interventions on cessation of cigarette/conventional tobacco smoking and studies that focused on preventing initiation rather than cessation. Both researchers independently screened articles and extracted data. The risk of bias was assessed.
RESULTS: A total of 345 papers were screened for

eligibility, and nine original studies were included. All studies were conducted in the United States. Populations ranged from 24 to 2588. Five studies reported significant effects of the study interventions, of which four were extensive multi-component smokeless tobacco cessation interventions in a high school or college setting. The fifth effective intervention was an SMS text-based e-cigarette cessation program.

CONCLUSIONS: Low-grade evidence suggests that multi-component interventions that include counseling and an SMS text-based cessation program that is also based on behavioral support may be effective in the cessation of the use nicotine products in adolescents and young adults. Further research that includes cessation of the use of all new tobacco- and nicotine products is needed.

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Tobacco use in Tunisian female adults: Data from a regional survey, 2023

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BACKGROUND: Although less common compared to tobacco smoking (TS) in men, TS in women has increased over the past decades. Epidemiological studies have confirmed the higher vulnerability of smoking women to earlier death and risk of stroke. We aimed to estimate the prevalence of TS in tunisian adult women and investigate its association with socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

METHODS: A cross-sectional descriptive multicenter study was conducted in December 2023. Based on two-stage stratification sampling method, the study targeted women aged 25-65 years, living in the Grand Tunis region. Socio-demographic characteristics and lifestyle habits were face to face collected by trained investigators. A binary logistic regression model was used to identify factors associated with TS, and Adjusted Odds Ratio (AOR) were presented with 95% Confidence Interval (95% CI).

RESULTS: A total of 2324 women were enrolled with a mean age of 44.0 years±0.2. Almost quarter of participants [26.4%; 95% CI (24.5-28.6)] had university education, [77.7%; 95% CI (75.8-79.5)] had an average socio-economic level, and [37.7%; 95% CI (35.4-40.1)] had a stable professional status. The prevalence of TS was 7.8% (95% CI, 6.6%-9.1%) significantly higher in single / divorced women compared to married women (18.9% vs 7.3%, p value=0.002) and significantly higher in women with elevated socio-economic level (11.6% vs 7.3%, p value=0.05). In multivariable analysis, there was no significant association between TS and age, educational level, professional status and socio-economic level. Marital status was, however, significantly associated with TS, with AOR equal to 2.7; 95% CI (1.3 to 5.7) for single/divorced women.

CONCLUSIONS: Our study showed a relatively high prevalence of TS in tunisian adult women compared to previous published data. Taking into consideration the potential impact of new tobacco products and the tobacco industry's efforts targeting this vulnerable population, awareness-raising efforts and law enforcement should be strengthened.

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An independent assessment of the nicotine and flavor chemical composition of Velo (British American Tobacco) nicotine pouches sold in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine pouch sales are increasing, particularly in Pakistan where British American Tobacco's Velo pouches are sold in a variety of flavors. Flavors appeal to young people and are a product feature that can be banned. This study is the first independent assessment of Velo nicotine pouch ingredients (nicotine, flavor chemicals) and how they relate to product price. Findings can inform future nicotine pouch regulatory strategies in Pakistan.

METHODS: We purchased ten brand variants of Velo pouches in Karachi, Pakistan in 2022. Data collectors recorded purchase price and took a pack photo, which was examined for labeled nicotine content. Within two weeks of purchase, each pack was chemically analyzed for nicotine and 180 individual flavor chemicals. Flavor chemicals were grouped into total fruit flavor chemicals (TFFCs), total non-menthol mint chemicals (TNMMCs), and total menthol/mint chemicals (TM/MCs).

RESULTS: All brand variants were labeled with a nicotine content on the container (6, 10, or 14 mg/pouch). The 6 and 10 mg variants were sold at the same price, while the 14 mg variants cost 25% more. Measured nicotine levels were slightly lower than the labeled values. In terms of flavors, our analyses found measurable levels of flavor chemicals across all brand variants, and we detected benzyl alcohol (cherry flavor), menthol, α-terpineol (cardamom flavor), and carvone (a mint flavor) in all 10 products. There was wide variation in the levels of TFFCs, TNMMCs and TM/MCs across products. The level of total flavor chemicals present did not appear to be dictating purchase price.

CONCLUSIONS: Consumers in Pakistan are being offered a buffet of oral nicotine pouch options, with a range of

flavor levels, flavor mixes, nicotine levels and some price differentials. Regulation of flavor chemicals in oral nicotine pouches should be considered given that flavors are known to increase product appeal, initiation by adolescents, and quitting difficulty.

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The FCTC and the UN sustainable development goals: Challenges and opportunities

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BACKGROUND: The implementation of the FCTC represents Target 3.a of the SDGs and has been recognized as an SDG accelerator. To this end, the FCTC Global Accelerator for Tobacco Control was approved at the 8th Conference of the Parties in 2018 to help advance the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and was followed by the related launch of the FCTC Global Strategy 2025. The overall target of the strategy was to achieve a 30% reduction in global tobacco use prevalence between 2010 and 2025. This study reviewed the role of the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) with the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reports related challenges and opportunities.

METHODS: The FCTC Global Strategy 2025 indicator data was obtained from the WHO FCTC Secretariat and compiled on the Global Tobacco Control Progress Hub for review and analysis. Related decisions and reports from FCTC Conferences of the Parties (COPs), WHO and UN were also collected and reviewed.

RESULTS: The 2023 UN SDG Mid-Point Review downgraded numerous SDG targets, including Target 3.a. Reasons cited for these downgrades include global challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, political conflict, and climate change. In February 2024, delegates attending FCTC COP10 formally delayed the initial 2025 timeline of the FCTC Global Strategy to 2030.

CONCLUSIONS: The delay in achieving Target 3.a may result in increased morbidity and mortality from tobacco use and impairs the ability of FCTC implementation to accelerate the SDGs. Enhanced efforts to improve FCTC implementation are justified to ensure that the revised 2025 target will be met without further delay, including reinforcing key elements of the FCTC Global Strategy. We will review these elements with WCTC delegates.

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Lessons for a significant decline in tobacco use: A qualitative quantitative analysis of 10 Indian states over the three decades

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BACKGROUND: India accounts for about two million tobacco-attributable adult deaths annually. As a federal democracy, India presents diverse socio-economic and regulatory contexts across states. India started economic liberalisation in 1990s and this is also the period when intense tobacco control reforms started. We, therefore, chose to use 10 Indian states over 1990-2017 period to understand macro factors (state regimes, tobacco industry influence, regulatory and civil society intervention) that explains a significant decline in tobacco use in order to inform present/future tobacco control.

METHODS: We used a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis technique. We sourced a range of qualitative and quantitative data to assess four macro conditions: (1) power and stability of political regimes, (2) the degree of tobacco industry interference, (3) tobacco control orientation within public policies, and (4) the civil society action for tobacco control. We studied 10 Indian states as cases. We used qualitative methods to calibrate the conditions and used fs-qca software for analysis.

RESULTS: We found that none of the conditions were necessary for the outcome though the absence of tobacco industry interference came closer to being a necessary condition. We identified three causal configurations explaining significant decline in tobacco use in Indian states: (1) (strong & stable regime) & (low tobacco industry interference); (2) (strong public policy) & (low tobacco industry interference); (3) (weak and unstable regime) & (strong public policy) & (strong civil society action). This solution had high coverage (0.81) and consistency (0.87) implying its importance and explanatory power.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the importance of strong tobacco control policies, civil society actions, and presence of powerful and stable regimes in Indian states for significant decline in tobacco use. However, these factors yield results when tobacco industry interference is absent/minimal. There is urgent need for a national policy in line with the WHO FCTC Article 5.3.

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The affordability of tobacco products in Viet Nam: Findings from increased tobacco tax

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BACKGROUND: The affordability of tobacco products is a crucial determinant of smoker behavior, particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Viet Nam, where economic growth has accelerated. Despite a tobacco tax increase in 2019, tobacco products remain relatively affordable due to income growth exceeding price increases. Our study examines trends in tobacco affordability in Viet Nam from 2018 to 2020, focusing on the impact of the 2019 tax increase.

METHODS: We analyzed data from (i) three waves of a survey conducted by the Development and Policies Research Center (DEPOCEN) between 2018 and 2020 as part of the project 'Making Tobacco Taxation Work in Viet Nam,' funded by the International Development

Research Centre (IDRC) and (ii) the Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey in the same period. Affordability was measured using various Relative Income Price (RIP) indices, calculated as the ratio of cigarette price to income or expenditure. Robustness was ensured using alternative methods, including district-level data and fixed-effects models to control for unobserved heterogeneity. We also use an instrumental variable approach to address endogeneity problem.

RESULTS: The findings reveal that individual incomes grew faster than tobacco prices post-2019, making tobacco products more affordable despite tax increases. RIP values showed significant differences across regions and income levels, with affordability remaining high among low-income groups. The tax increase in 2019 did not significantly impact affordability in 2020, indicating the need for more substantial adjustments. Robustness checks confirmed the reliability of our findings.

CONCLUSIONS: Current tobacco tax policies in Viet Nam are insufficient to counteract the effects of rising incomes. To achieve public health objectives and reduce tobacco consumption, future tax policies must be more progressive, focusing on a tax structure that aligns with economic growth, as recommended by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

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Focusing cessation interventions on less-connected students reduces smoking prevalence and inequalities

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BACKGROUND: Reducing adolescent smoking is critical for improving long-term health and economic outcomes. However, many interventions inadvertently exacerbate socio-economic inequality. To address this, we propose a network-based social contagion model to assess innovative smoking cessation interventions among adolescents that can reduce both prevalence and inequalities.

METHODS: Our model describes how students influence each other's smoking behaviour through social interaction. Each student transitions between three states: never-smoker, smoker, or quitter. Smoking cessation interventions are delivered via counselling sessions, modelled as external influences similar to social contagion.

To quantify intervention impact, we used Bayesian calibration (BOLFI) and real-world data from American students in grades 9 to 12. We simulated various strategies for targeting students (e.g., by social connectivity) and allocating intervention resources (e.g., contact hours) across the smoking population. The reduction in prevalence after 12 months was compared to random interventions.

RESULTS: Two strategies emerged as particularly effective. First, spreading resources across more than 40% of smoking students provides no additional benefit due to diminishing returns. Instead, focusing on fewer students can achieve the same impact while reducing operational costs. Second, prioritising smokers with fewer social connections outperforms targeting highly connected smokers. This improves intervention effectiveness and disproportionately benefits adolescents from deprived backgrounds, who tend to have fewer connections.

Combining these two strategies boosts cessation rates by an additional 1% compared to standard counselling: a modest but meaningful improvement, with the added benefits of lowering costs and addressing inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS: Our results suggest that targeting students with fewer connections, up to 40% of the smoking population, simultaneously outperforms random targeting, improves equity, and reduces costs, which makes it a compelling strategy for policymakers seeking to maximise impact.

Also, although this study focuses on adolescents, our framework can be adapted to other contexts, offering researchers a tool for designing effective cessation strategies with a broader reach.

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Promotion of electronic cigarettes on social media in Brazil: a challenge for the implementation of Article 13 of the FCTC

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BACKGROUND: The Internet facilitates the rapid formation and spread of consumption communities. The tobacco industry utilizes social media for stealth marketing, and the dissemination of tobacco-related content remains challenging to control, posing a significant issue for regulatory authorities. This study explores the methods of promoting e-cigarettes and related products (ESDs) on social media platforms in Brazil.

METHODS: A total of 147,294 tobacco-related posts from YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, portals, and blogs were selected using the Stilingue AI platform between March 2020 and March 2021. After filtering terms related to ESDs and excluding anonymous users, 2,519 posts remained. The first 50 from each platform were analyzed for the presence of direct and indirect advertising, brand mentions, product sales, promotions, health advocacy, and interaction metrics based on relevance criteria such

as views and engagement.
RESULTS: YouTube was the leading platform for direct (86%) and indirect (54%) advertising, generating 4.6 million views and 436,000 likes, with a focus on tutorials and reviews, coupons and giveaways. Instagram was also significant, with 66% of posts in direct advertising and 28% in indirect advertising, and also promoted commerce (26%) and engagement through giveaways and discounts (16%). Facebook emphasized health advocacy (70%) and had the largest number of followers (77.5 million). Blogs featured 54% health-related content and 16% direct advertising, with the blog 'Vapor Aqui' offering discounts and store recommendations. Social media promoted vaporizers and accessories, highlighting brands such as Vaporesso, Voopoo, Elite Smoke and White Cloud. Portals covered health, legislation and fake news, fostering discussions on social media.
CONCLUSIONS: Social media platforms are strategically used by the e-cigarette industry to promote advertising, sponsorship, and promotion, in violation of FCTC Article 13 and tobacco product regulations. Promoted items include devices, batteries, and liquids, advertised through video sponsorships, posts featuring product names, links to retail websites, promotions, giveaways, and coupons.
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Media coverage of tobacco control in China: a comparative analysis of agenda-setting across different policy contexts during 2017-2022

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BACKGROUND: While media plays a crucial role in tobacco control policy advancement, little is known about how different policy contexts shape media coverage of tobacco control, particularly in China's unique political and administrative systems. This study innovatively compares tobacco control news coverage across three regions with distinct tobacco control policy environments: mainland China, Guangdong Province, and Macao SAR, examining how policy contexts influence media agenda-setting before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
METHODS: Using the WisersOne database, we analyzed 749 tobacco control news articles from three influential newspapers (People's Daily, Southern Daily, and Macao Daily) from 2017-2022. We employed a mixed-method approach combining co-word analysis and topic modeling using Python. The analysis was divided into pre-pandemic (2017-2019) and pandemic periods (2020-2022) to examine temporal changes in media coverage patterns and policy priorities.
RESULTS: Significant disparities in coverage intensity and thematic focus were found across regions. Macao Daily published substantially more tobacco control articles (596) than People's Daily (46) and Southern Daily (107). While mainland media primarily focused on youth tobacco prevention and World No Tobacco Day, Macao's coverage demonstrated more comprehensive themes including enforcement, legislative participation, and addiction prevention. During the pandemic, all regions showed reduced coverage but maintained distinct thematic priorities, with emerging emphasis on e-cigarette regulation and youth protection.
CONCLUSIONS: This study reveals how policy environments substantially influence media agenda-setting in tobacco control. Macao's comprehensive tobacco control legislation corresponds with more frequent and diverse media coverage, while mainland China's limited national smoke-free legislation is reflected in sparse, fragmented coverage. These findings suggest the need to strengthen media advocacy strategies in mainland China to advance national tobacco control policies, particularly by leveraging successful examples from regions with strong tobacco control measures.
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Corporate accountability in tobacco farming: a case study of worker injury and legal precedent in Brazil

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco farming poses serious health risks to workers, yet the industry has historically avoided accountability. This case study examines the story of a Brazilian former tobacco farmer, diagnosed with polyneuropathy from chronic pesticide exposure, who is now pursuing legal action against the company she worked for.
METHODS: The analysis draws on legal documents and journalistic reports published between 2015 and 2024.
RESULTS: From an early age, the farmer experienced acute pesticide poisoning symptoms. In 2007, after three decades of exposure, she collapsed while applying pesticides and was permanently unable to return to work. In 2012, she was diagnosed with organophosphate-induced delayed polyneuropathy, a degenerative condition characterized by cramping pain, numbness, and tingling in the lower limbs, progressing to muscle weakness and reduced reflexes, with potential effects on the upper limbs. This Brazilian farmer lost the use of her lower limbs.
Her permanent disability was confirmed by a medical report in 2015, prompting her to file a lawsuit against the tobacco corporation she had worked with. Both the lower and appellate courts ruled in her favor, establishing a causal link between the polyneuropathy and her work in tobacco farming, and recognizing the employment relationship with the company.
The court ordered the corporation to provide ongoing financial support to cover essential medical treatment expenses. The company has appealed the decision to the

Superior Labor Court, and the case is currently scheduled for a final ruling.

CONCLUSIONS: This case highlights the need for greater oversight and accountability regarding working conditions and health risks in tobacco fields. The court ruling in favor of the farmer may set a precedent for others in similar situations.

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Building tobacco control capacity in large Chinese cities

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BACKGROUND: The Tobacco Free Cities (TFC) initiative (2008-2018), a collaboration by the Emory Global Health Institute, Georgia State University, and China's Think Tank Research Center for Health, aimed to establish effective and sustainable tobacco control programs in China. MPOWER-focused targeted training and technical assistance were provided to program staff in 22 selected large and influential cities to increase their skills to execute best practices in tobacco control. In 2023, an evaluation assessed the initiative's impact on capacity building and leadership development among TFC program staff.

METHODS: Ten cities were selected for evaluation based on criteria including smoke-free policy status, location, economics, and population size. In 2023, TFC staff from these cities participated in qualitative interviews to assess their perceptions of improvements in public health and tobacco control skills and leadership development, resulting from participation in the TFC program. Questions were structured on a Likert scale with options including 'not at all', 'some', 'a great amount' and 'already very skilled'.

RESULTS: The most notable increase in skill advancement was in developing and implementing evidence-based tobacco control policies, with many indicating their skills increased 'a great amount'. One-half indicated their skills increased 'some' or 'a great amount' in conducting situational analysis, and one-half reported 'a great amount' improvement in data collection skills. TFC grantees perceived their participation in the program increased their leadership skills by 'some' or 'a great amount' in inspiring and motivating partners outside of their organization, in creating an environment where differences and opinions can be voiced, and in resolving conflict among staff, colleagues, and partners.

CONCLUSIONS: The TFC initiative created an effective model to build tobacco control capacity and improve leadership skills. These skills enabled program staff to effectively implement and sustain tobacco control programs and media campaigns, adopt and enforce smoke-free policies, and monitor and evaluate tobacco measures.

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Longitudinal association between tobacco retailer access, policy compliance, and adolescent tobacco use susceptibility in urban India

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BACKGROUND: Reducing tobacco retailer access and increasing retailer policy compliance are considered essential strategies for tobacco control. We examined retailer access and policy compliance and their associations with tobacco use susceptibility in a cohort of adolescents in two Indian cities.

METHODS: A population-based cohort of adolescents (12–14 years, n=1982) from neighborhoods in Kolkata (n=26) and Mumbai (n=23) was surveyed over three waves (2018–2023). During Wave 1, all neighborhood tobacco retailers were mapped, and a random sample (n=1229) was selected for compliance checks. Predictors were neighborhood tobacco retail density (number of retailers per square kilometer), adolescent retailer visit frequency (weekly or more visits to tobacco-selling retailers), neighborhood compliance rates for bans on retailer tobacco advertising, and tobacco sales within 100 yards of schools. Tobacco use susceptibility outcomes included intention to use and perceived peer use. Regression analyses (adjusted for age, sex, parent education, and religion) estimated associations between predictors and outcomes.

RESULTS: Neighborhood tobacco retailer access was high: overall mean density=93.1 (SD=75.1), Kolkata=82.0(31.3), Mumbai=106.0(104); 71.8% and 91.7% percent of adolescents reported weekly or more visits to tobacco-selling retailers in Kolkata and Mumbai, respectively. Neighborhood compliance rates with the ban on tobacco sales near schools (Kolkata=81.3%; Mumbai=75.1%) and retailer tobacco advertising (Kolkata=73.7%; Mumbai=46.5%) were moderate. In Mumbai, retailer density was positively associated with perceived peer use (p=0.025), and retailer visit frequency was positively associated with intention to use (p=0.043). Compliance with the ban on tobacco sales near schools was positively associated with reduced perceived peer use (p=0.028). In Kolkata, none of the predictors were associated with tobacco use susceptibility outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS: Reducing retailer access and increasing policy compliance may benefit tobacco use prevention in youth, but the influence of these neighborhood tobacco environmental factors may be context-dependent; we found effects in Mumbai but none in Kolkata.

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The impact of YouTube Priority Flagger Program in monitoring and reporting online tobacco advertising and promotion in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Online tobacco advertising has become a subject of concern due to its potential impact on public health. Despite restrictions on direct advertising, tobacco companies have employed various strategies to promote their products online, including through social media influencers and subtle placements on various platforms, including YouTube.

METHODS: In the periods of August - December 2023 and March - August 2024, Vital Strategies and the Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet) monitored and reported tobacco advertising and promotion content on YouTube. SAFEnet is only one of five Indonesian civil society organizations considered as YouTube Priority Flagger. The program helps provide robust tools to government agencies and CSOs. This program used keywords related to tobacco advertising and promotion to identify which videos violated their guidelines.

RESULTS: The monitoring found 2,328 videos on YouTube related to tobacco, vape, and electronic cigarette advertising and promotions that violated YouTube's Community Guidelines. The videos were classified into eight types: product review, smoking activity, product talk show, product recommendation, tutorial related to product use, showcase of brand, straight advertising, and price promotion. Most of the violated videos were product reviews (81.62%) and the products most seen were conventional cigarettes (64%), electronic cigarettes (25.3%), and other products, such as cigars, and dried tobacco leaves. YouTube responded by terminating three accounts (more than 1 million subscribers), age-restricting 70% and deleting 15%.

CONCLUSIONS: The Priority Flagger Program to monitor and report tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship has been proven as an effective alternative in times when government regulations and enforcements are lacking. The findings have also been presented as evidence in the Ministry of Health's enforcement effort. Digital rights and consumer advocates have also raised the need to revise the platform's Community Guidelines in order to respond to tobacco industry's new online marketing strategies.

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Regulatory gaps in tobacco product definitions for nicotine products: A comparative analysis in the WHO Western Pacific Region

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BACKGROUND: The rapid evolution and proliferation of nicotine-containing products, including e-cigarettes, challenge tobacco control regulation. This study examines how legislative definitions of 'tobacco products' in countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region (WPR) address nicotine-containing products.

METHODS: A qualitative comparative analysis of laws from 24 of 27 countries in the WHO WPR was conducted in November 2024. Definitions of 'tobacco products' were categorized by reference to ingredients and nicotine delivery methods (e.g., smoking, chewing, snuffing, inhaling). Related terms, such as 'tobacco', 'electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)', and 'imitation tobacco products', were analyzed to identify regulatory gaps in addressing nicotine products alongside comprehensive tobacco control.

RESULTS: Of the 24 countries, 83.3% (n=20) define 'tobacco products' with reference to the tobacco plant, with ten specifically referencing tobacco leaves, leaving gaps for products with nicotine from other parts of the plant or synthetic sources. Six countries extend 'tobacco product' definitions to nicotine products, but two limit this to tobacco-derived nicotine. Four adopt broader definitions covering nicotine products regardless of source. Three countries explicitly classify ENDS as 'tobacco products' but no other nicotine products, such as nicotine pouches. Methods of use are specified in eight countries (37.5), but three omit 'inhaling', leaving potential loopholes for products marketed as 'suitable for inhalation'. Eight countries regulate e-cigarettes using terms separate from 'tobacco product', such as 'vaping product' or 'imitation tobacco product', with their ability to address e-cigarettes depending on how tobacco control measures apply to these separate categories.

CONCLUSIONS: Current definitions often fail to encompass all tobacco and nicotine products. A broader definition addressing nicotine delivery by any means and including substances, such as synthetic nicotine and new substances designed to simulate tobacco and nicotine product use, is critical for futureproofing regulations. This analysis provides insights to strengthen tobacco control laws and combat tobacco and nicotine addiction more effectively.

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Impact of the construction of smoke-free government on staff's smoking cessation behavior

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BACKGROUND: Exposure to secondhand smoke is a health hazard that can lead to many diseases. Creation on comprehensive smoke-free indoor environments can effectively protect people from secondhand smoke. This study aimed to assess the impact of smoke-free government construction on staff smoking and cessation behaviors, focusing on the promotion of cessation behaviors by smoke-free environments and possible related mechanisms.
METHODS: This was a retrospective cohort study. The study used stratified random cluster sampling method to select 144 government institutions from 31 Provinces and the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. The survey was carried out between October and November, 2023 by filling out questionnaires online among the insiders of the institutions and all the smoking staff members. The main indicators included the number of smokers before and after the construction of smoke-free governments and the measures for the construction of smoke-free governments. 144 questionnaires from insiders were recovered, including 1 716 valid questionnaires. The SAS 9.4 was used to perform x2 test and log-binomial regression analysis.
RESULTS: The smoking rate decreased from 8.81% to 6.70% after the construction of smoke-free party and government organs (P<0.001). The facilitators of smoking cessation included a total ban on smoking in indoor public places in the host city (OR=2.301, P<0.01), a punitive mechanism (OR=1.219, P<0.01), a smoking cessation contest activity (OR=1.865, P<0.01), and reimbursement or provision of smoking cessation medication (OR=2.210, P<0.01); and the number of smoking leaders (OR= 0.858, P<0.001) and years of smoking (OR=0.932, P<0.001) had a negative impact on smoking cessation.
CONCLUSIONS: The construction of smoke-free governments can effectively promote the smoking cessation behaviors of smoking staff members. Comprehensive smoke-free policies, punishment mechanism for smoking staff members and activities such as smoking cessation competitions, and reimbursement for or provision of smoking cessation medications are important, which should be popularized and widely implemented nationwide.
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Evaluation of a pilot project introducing alternative crops to tobacco farmers in Sri Lanka

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BACKGROUND: Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) requires promoting economically viable alternatives to tobacco cultivation to reduce tobacco use and protect the environment. In line with this, a pilot project in Sri Lanka introduced alternative crops to tobacco farmers in Monaragala and Anuradhapura districts, where favourable growing conditions and industry support have encouraged tobacco farming. The project aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of these alternatives in reducing tobacco cultivation.
METHODS: The study, conducted over six months, involved 202 farmers from Monaragala and Anuradhapura districts, both situated in Sri Lanka's dry zone. A three-phase approach was used, consisting of pretesting, intervention, and evaluation. Both secondary and primary data collection methods were used. Secondary data was gathered through literature reviews, while primary data came from interviewer-administered questionnaires. The intervention phase included advocacy and consultative programs for senior government officials, advocacy programs for ground-level agriculture officers, and community empowerment programs for tobacco farmers and their families. Three months after the intervention, its impact was evaluated using interviewer-administered questionnaires.
RESULTS: The results revealed a significant reduction in tobacco farming in both districts. In Monaragala, 38.6% of farmers completely stopped tobacco farming, 29.8% partially stopped, and another 29.8% expressed willingness to stop. The area under tobacco cultivation in this district decreased by 58%. In Anuradhapura, 67.4% of farmers completely ceased tobacco farming, 10.5% partially stopped, and 6.3% showed willingness to stop. The area under tobacco cultivation was reduced by an impressive 92%.
CONCLUSIONS: This study concluded the potential of alternative crop initiatives to reduce tobacco farming effectively. These results offer valuable insights for replicating similar programs, aligning with WHO FCTC Article 17, and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.
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Effectiveness of a randomized controlled trial of a community-based smoking cessation intervention in Yinchuan City, China, 2024

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BACKGROUND: Although more than 2000 cessation clinics were established in China, less than 10% of smokers who attempted quitting in the past 12 months visited these cessation clinics to get support. In order to improve the accessibility of cessation services, we developed the '3+1' community-based smoking cessation intervention in Yinchuan City, which includes intensive cessation counseling from trained community health center (CHC) physicians and many initiatives conducted by community workers within the communities.

METHODS: A two-arm, parallel, cluster randomized controlled trial was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a '3+1' community-based smoking cessation intervention. Twenty communities were randomized into intervention ('3+1' smoking cessation intervention) and control groups (brief smoking cessation intervention). In each community, current smokers aged eighteen and older who intended to quit within one month were recruited. Then the participants got corresponding cessation interventions according to the communities they lived in. The primary outcome was the continuous abstinence rate (CAR) in the 6-month, which was validated by the carbon monoxide test result for exhaled breath. Additionally, a 7-day point prevalence of abstinence rate (PPAR) was reported. Intent-to-treat (ITT) analysis was used in this study.
RESULTS: 704 participants from 20 communities completed the baseline survey, with 354 in the intervention group and 350 in the control group. During the trial, 688 (97.7%) completed follow-up assessment at the six months. The ITT analysis showed that at the six-month follow-up assessment, the CAR of the intervention group was 23.16%, which was significantly higher than that in the control group (3.43%) (P<0.0001). The PPAR was 29.10% in the intervention group, while 10.29% was in the control group (P<0.0001).
CONCLUSIONS: The '3+1' intensive smoking cessation intervention model in communities was effective and feasible. It suggested that this intervention model should be a part of Basic Public Health Service Program (BPHSP) and be widely used in communities.
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The Swedish experience

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2016 the Swedish tobacco industry launched the 'tobacco free' white snus. By calling their new nicotine products 'tobacco-free' the tobacco industry managed to circumvent the Swedish tobacco laws such as marketing ban, ban on flavours, age limit for buying, smoke-free environments, permits for selling and excise duty. The tobacco industry was thereby able to reach vulnerable adolescents with effective influencer marketing and free samples in social media, at festivals, and other youth events. The new nicotine products have been presented as harmless products, featuring attractive designs and appealing flavors. Since they are not classified as tobacco and lack excise duty, they are also very affordable and easy to access by youth. The result of the tobacco industry's strategies is a dramatic increase in nicotine use among minors in Sweden. It is also important to note that not only the use of new nicotine products is increasing but also the use of combustible cigarettes.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: By engaging youth and examining their experiences, attitudes, and knowledge, we have managed to shed light at this alarming and unacceptable development. In addition to recurring and extensive surveys, we have also conducted innovative fact-based awareness campaigns, advocacy initiatives, and political lobbying to stop the tobacco industry's recruitment of youth and minors. This advocacy work eventually resulted in a new law in 2022, regulating tobacco-free nicotine products.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Since our government chose to regulate the tobacco industry's new products under a new and less comprehensive law, it has now become evident that this law is insufficient to protect children and young people. In our latest surveys, we see that young people's access to and use of new nicotine products continues to increase.
CONCLUSIONS: To protect youth we need to fully implement the WHO FCTC article 5.3 and regulate and tax all tobacco industry products as tobacco.
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A protection motivation theory-based scale for e-cigarette use prediction among Chinese college students: development and validation

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BACKGROUND: This study aimed to develop and validate a scale based on the Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) to assess cognitive factors related to e-cigarette use among Chinese college students, and to predict e-cigarette use intention and behavior for prevention purposes.
METHODS: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 303 students aged 18-24 years from universities in China. A 21-item PMT scale was adapted from a previous study on Chinese youth tobacco use. Construct validity was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's α. Predictive validity was examined by correlating PMT constructs with e-cigarette use susceptibility.
RESULTS: After removing one item, the final 20-item scale demonstrated good model fit in the CFA (GFI=0.917, CFI=0.933, RMSEA=0.055). Internal reliability was acceptable to good (Cronbach's α=0.52-0.83). The overall Cronbach's α coefficient was 0.831. All PMT constructs were significantly correlated with e-cigarette use susceptibility in the expected directions (p<0.05).
CONCLUSIONS: The PMT-based scale is a valid and reliable measure to investigate e-cigarette use related cognitions, and predict intentions to use among Chinese college students, and can be used as a tool to guide prevention efforts. The study supports the utility of applying PMT to e-cigarette research in different socio-cultural contexts.
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Advocacy and communication strategies for the banning of electronic smoking devices in Brazil

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since 2009, the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) has prohibited the sale, advertising and import of Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) in Brazil. The resolution was updated in 2024, including the manufacture, transportation, distribution and storage of ESDs. The tobacco industry has been lobbying to change the current regulation, both in ANVISA and at the National Congress, supporting bills allowing the sales and ads of ESDs. Undue pressure was seen in other government bodies, too.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Civil society's role has been key to promote awareness on the risks of the ESDs, countering tobacco industry arguments, besides promoting the accountability of the Ministry of Health.

The national tobacco control coalition actively participated in the regulatory process. International partners collaborated by sending videos, letters or updated data on the issue. Medical associations joined the debate and around 80 signed a letter in favor of the banning.

Campaigns were launched, showing the risks associated with vape consumption, especially by youth. Investigative journalism provided additional information on lobbying strategies from the tobacco industry and its allies, as vapers associations. Undue interference attempts and conflicts of interests were revealed.

Regular meetings with parliamentarians and key decision makers from the government ensured the delivery of updated evidence, including countering arguments related to illicit trade, harm reduction and economic losses, the main used by tobacco industry in Brazil.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The consumption of illegal ESDs in Brazil is around 2%, according VIGITEL 2023, a national survey. Public support for the ESDs banning is 79%, according to a national public opinion poll conducted in 2024. ANVISA published RDC 855 in April 2024.

CONCLUSIONS: The strong work developed by the civil society coalition alongside ANVISA has been decisive to the adoption of higher levels of tobacco control policies in Brazil and to keep the banning of ESDs despite strong pressure from tobacco industry.

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Newest findings from the Cochrane living systematic review of e-cigarettes for smoking cessation

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BACKGROUND: This review examines the effects of using e-cigarettes to help people who smoke achieve smoking (combustible tobacco) abstinence at six months or longer. This review update is part of a living systematic review.

METHODS: Searches for new intervention studies are undertaken monthly, and the review updated whenever findings could affect conclusions. Searches are currently to January 2025. We follow standard Cochrane methods and calculate pooled risk ratios (RRs) with 95% confidence intervals (CI).

RESULTS: This newest update includes 10 new studies, bringing the total number to 100. This update was triggered because previously there was very little evidence comparing nicotine e-cigarettes with varenicline, and since the last update a large trial was published. Compared with varenicline, people randomized to nicotine e-cigarettes had slightly lower quit rates at six months, but CIs included the possibility of no difference and there was evidence of substantial statistical heterogeneity (RR 0.82, 95% CI 0.63 to 1.05, I2=78%, 2 trials, n=359). Findings of increased quit rates with nicotine e-cigarettes compared to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), to non-nicotine e-cigarettes and to control remain largely unchanged. Additionally in this update, the first trial of its kind compared e-cigarettes to oral nicotine pouches and three studies focused on special populations (people experiencing homelessness, opioid use disorder, and chronic illnesses). We will briefly summarize key findings from the review-to-date, but will focus on the newer findings.

CONCLUSIONS: There is high-certainty evidence that nicotine e-cigarettes increase quit rates compared to NRT. There is less certain evidence that nicotine e-cigarettes may be less or as effective as varenicline. We did not detect evidence of serious harm but larger studies with longer follow-up are needed to fully evaluate safety. Included studies tested regulated nicotine-containing e-cigarettes; illicit products and/or products containing other active substances (e.g. tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)) may have different harm profiles.

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Menthol as a social justice issue: Utilizing local, national, and international mechanisms to protect the right to health

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In the United States, tobacco corporations have targeted people of color for generations, specficially with advertising for menthol cigarettes. As a result, 85% of African-Americans who smoke use menthol cigarettes. Menthol was not included in the federal flavors ban, and remains on the market in most states.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Advocates in the United States have been tackling this problem at a local, national, and international level, through local legislation, a lawsuit against the United States Food and Drug Administration

(FDA), and submissions to international human rights bodies, specifcially the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

RESULTS AND IMPACT: We've seen success locally, nationally and internationally. Locally, our allies in Washington D.C. used human rights arguments to help pass a menthol ban. Nationally, the lawsuit against the F.D.A. led to a draft rule banning menthol flavoring in cigarettes, which as since stalled, resulting in a second lawsuit. Internationally, advocacy ensured that tobacco was included in a recent comment from the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, which will help ensure that people of all races are protected from the harms of tobacco.

CONCLUSIONS: While menthol in the United States is used as an illustration, many other tobacco control issues can be framed as a human rights and/or social justice issue, including exporting tobacco products to LMICs, labor, the environment, targeting the LGBTQIA+ community, etc. Social justice and human rights arguments can catalyze progress towards ending the tobacco epidemic. The public health community should utilize these arguments in their advocacy at the local, national, and international level.

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Illicit trade in South Africa: New evidence from nationally representative surveys

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BACKGROUND: South Africa faces one of the highest levels of illicit cigarette trade among low-and middle-income countries. The cigarette sales ban during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21 further fueled the increase of illicit cigarettes, as legal sales were prohibited. This unregulated trade undermines public health initiatives and erodes government revenue. This study investigates the change in the illicit cigarette market in South Africa between 2018 and 2021, shedding light on the impact of these dynamics on both policy and public health outcomes.

METHODS: This study utilized data from two nationally representative surveys: the 2021 Global Adult Tobacco Survey South Africa (GATS SA) and the 2018 National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS). GATS SA data collection was conducted between May and August 2021, after the sales ban. Cigarette prices were standardized to per-stick equivalents and adjusted using consumption weights to account for smoking habits. Illicit trade was assessed using a price threshold approach to estimate its prevalence between 2018 and 2021. The analysis further disaggregated illicit consumption by cigarette brand, demographic characteristics, manufacturer, retailer type, and packaging type.

RESULTS: Our findings reveal that the illicit cigarette trade in South Africa grew from 30% in 2017 to 60% in 2021. Notably, 75% of cigarettes sold in informal shops (spaza shops) are illicit, highlighting the informal sector's significant role in driving illicit trade. Furthermore, over 90% of illicit cigarettes are produced by local manufacturers.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings reveal a significant rise in the illicit cigarette trade between 2017 and 2021, highlighting the need for stronger tax administration and more effective enforcement strategies to curb illicit trade in South Africa. The surge in illicit trade has been driven largely by the increasing informalization of the market, with single-stick cigarette sales emerging as the dominant contributor to illicit purchases.

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Advertising and promotion of nicotine products in public space and social media among Polish adolescents aged 12-17 years old

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BACKGROUND: In recent years, there has been a rise in the popularity of alternative tobacco products among Polish teenagers, posing a new public health challenge. The present study was designed to gain a deeper understanding of the type of promotion and advertising of nicotine products observed by young people aged 12-17, and how they perceive it influences their decisions and opinions.

METHODS: The study was conducted in Poland between September and October 2024 among twenty respondents - eleven females and nine males aged 12-17, differentiated by place of residence, type of school and educational stage. The study utilized the individual in-depth interview (IDI) methodology, which took the form of a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview. Each interview was structured, based on a script, and lasted up to 30 minutes with an audio recording that was later transcribed. Data were qualitatively analyzed for thematic structure, discourse and sentiment using WEFT-QDA software.

RESULTS: Participants pointed out that nicotine products appeared on Instagram or TikTok as a natural and trendy feature in the daily lives of users and influencers. Respondents also noted the presence of hostesses for these products at events and clubs, who offered the opportunity to interact with the products without having to buy them. Large, visible stands with nicotine products placed in public places also played a significant role in the promotion, attracting young people by design. Price promotions in stores, especially since not all of them, according to teenagers, check for the legal age, provided a strong motivation to purchase nicotine products, especially in the form of 'buy one pack, get another free' offers.

CONCLUSIONS: Promotion of nicotine products in public spaces and social media was the norm for adolescents in this study. Teenagers did not see these activities as conventional advertising, suggesting the effectiveness of

subtle marketing strategies.

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Two-way street: Engaging international audiences to raise tobacco control awareness

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Keeping the harms of tobacco industry tactics and their products in the spotlight helps set the stage to effectively implement evidence-based policies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) used creative strategies to engage audiences and raise awareness across the globe, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) campaigns, local media coverage and an online tobacco pack database.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: WNTD provides an opportunity to reach a large audience. In 2023, participants from 49 countries completed an online quiz about the harmful effects of tobacco growing while we received videos from 15 countries in 2024 telling the tobacco industry to stop marketing to young people.

IGTC grew its media influence in 2024 through contracts with global communications firms generating 20 media stories in seven countries. A series of articles in the Philippines on youth use of e-cigarettes put IGTC's work in front of 72 million monthly readers while a state-sponsored website in the Philippines referenced an IGTC study in an article on efforts by health advocates seeking to amend the country's e-cigarette regulation. An op-ed in Mexico's El Universal reached an audience of more than 22 million readers.

The Share-a-Pack feature of our tobacco pack database alerts our team to items seen by others. A bidi pack uploaded in 2018 using the face and name of global soccer superstar Lionel Messi led to an examination of the unauthorized use of names, likenesses and the use of global sporting events to promote tobacco products.

CONCLUSIONS: Expanding the audience of our work beyond policymakers to the people they serve builds an additional layer of support for necessary change. These efforts harness the power of the public in tobacco control advocacy.

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Evaluation of an innovative on-cigarette stick warning policy in Canada: Post-policy trends among adults who smoke

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BACKGROUND: By 30th April 2024, all king size cigarettes manufactured for Canada were required to have six rotating text warnings on cigarette stick filters, with this mandatory at the retail level by 1st August. Responses to this innovative policy have not been studied.

METHODS: In May, August, and November 2024, we surveyed an open cohort of Canadian adults who smoked king size cigarettes (n=1403 individuals; n=2425 observations). For the prior 30 days, participants reported how often they read stick warnings (never/rarely=0; sometimes/often/very often/all the time=1), how much the look of their cigarette made them think about smoking risks (not at all/a little=0; moderately/very much/extremely=1), and if the look of their cigarette made them forgo a cigarette (no=0; yes=1). Weighted logistic generalized estimating equation models regressed these outcomes on sociodemographic, smoking-related variables, and survey wave; in models for thinking about risks and forgoing, frequency of reading stick warnings was included as a covariate.

RESULTS: Reading stick warnings and forgoing a cigarette due to its look increased over time (AOR=1.50, 95% CI = 1.20-1.86; AOR=1.51, 95% CI = 1.15-1.98, respectively). Those who intended to quit smoking were more likely to read the stick warnings (AOR=1.73, 95% CI=1.35-2.21). Participants who read the stick warnings (AOR=5.93, 95% CI=4.60-7.64) and those who intended to quit smoking (AOR=2.03, 95% CI=1.56-2.64) were more likely to think about the health risks of smoking due to the look of their cigarettes. Those who read the stick warnings (AOR=6.22, 95% CI=4.78-8.09), intended to quit (AOR=2.14, 95% CI=1.60-2.86), or recently attempted to quit (AOR=1.69, 95% CI=1.23-2.33) were more likely to forgo a cigarette due to the look of their cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: Engagement with cigarette stick warnings was associated with greater thinking about smoking risks and forgoing cigarettes, a precursor of cessation attempts. Stick warnings may extend pack labeling policy effects.

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Tobacco industry strategies to influence new and emerging tobacco and nicotine product regulations in Latin America and the Caribbean

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies have introduced and heavily promoted new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products (NETNPs), including electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products, using various tactics that could

undermine achievements in tobacco and nicotine control, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. This study aimed to document tobacco industry strategies to influence regulation of NETNPs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

METHODS: We analyzed industry websites, advocacy reports, news media and government documents related to NETNP, focusing on electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products. We also conducted a survey of leading health advocates. We applied the policy dystopia model to analyze industry action and argument-based strategies on NETNP regulations.

RESULTS: Industry actors engaged in four instrumental strategies to influence NETNP regulation – coalition management, information management, direct involvement in and access to the policy process, and litigation. Their actions included: Lobbying key policymakers, academics and vaping associations; providing grants to media groups to disseminate favorable NETNP information; participating in public consultations; presenting at public hearings; inserting industry-inspired language into NETNP draft legislation; and filing lawsuits to challenge NETNP bans. The industry disseminated its so-called harm reduction argument through large/influential countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico). Industry discursive strategies claimed NETNPs were less harmful, provided safer alternatives and should be regulated as so-called harm reduction products or have fewer restrictions on their sale and use than those currently in place.

CONCLUSIONS: Our analysis provides a better understanding of industry strategies to undermine tobacco and nicotine control. To help counter industry efforts, health advocates should proactively strengthen government capacities and alert policymakers to industry attempts to create new regulatory categories (so-called reduced-risk products), provide misleading information of government authorizations of NETNPs, and co-opt so-called harm-reduction messages that serve the industry's agenda.

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The association between vaping and future smoking in young Australians aged 12-17 years

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BACKGROUND: Vaping's popularity among adolescents has raised concerns about its potential role as a gateway to cigarette smoking. This study offers the first assessment of the relationship between vaping and subsequent cigarette smoking initiation among Australian adolescents and underscores potential methodological limitations in previous investigations in other countries.

METHODS: We conducted a retrospective cohort analysis of data from 5114 Australian adolescents aged 14-17 recalling information on smoking and vaping initiation from age 12 to 17. The outcome was smoking initiation, analysed with negative-binomial regression to estimate incidence rate ratios (IRRs) for vape-status (ever-vaped vs never-vaped) as a time-varying exposure. We also re-analysed using the methods of previous studies not accounting for the time-varying nature of e-cigarette exposure.

RESULTS: Participants (n=5114) were retrospectively followed for 20478 person-years. After adjusting for socio-demographic variables and proxy measures of common liabilities for vaping and smoking, the rate of smoking initiation for those who ever-vaped was nearly 5 times that of those who never-vaped (IRR=4.9; 95% confidence interval: [3.9, 6.0], p<0.001), with IRRs considerably higher at younger ages. Not accounting for the time-varying nature of e-cigarette exposure in re-analysis attenuated the estimated IRR by 44%.

CONCLUSIONS: Vaping markedly increases the risk of subsequent smoking initiation among Australian adolescents from age 12 to 17, with those initiate vaping earlier bearing an alarmingly disproportionate burden of the elevated risk. Additionally, the relative risk of future smoking due to vaping may have been underestimated in other studies due to methodological differences. Our findings are particularly significant as they highlight the need for public health interventions and strict e-cigarette access laws. The learnings from this study and it's methods are hugely relevant to the international tobacco control community and will support the development and implementation of evidence-based policy in other countries.

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Understanding adoption and implementation procedure of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy guidelines in the state of Maharashtra, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Maharashtra being the second most populous state in India with a total population of 11.2 million has about 2.9 million adult tobacco users. India followed a bottom-up approach for the implementation of FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines. Following that the Public Health Department, Government of Maharashtra released a circular numbered Tanika-2017/Chapter number 208/Health-5 dated 4th October 2017 to prevent tobacco industry interference (TII). However, this circular was not comprehensive enough.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2020 and 2021 instances of TII by the Foundation for Smoke-Free World were reported. Thus, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) played a catalytic role in advocating for Article 5.3 guidelines. During the years 2021 to 2023, CSO-led three state-level

consultations were conducted to highlight the significance of Article 5.3. Consequently, the State Tobacco Control Cell organized the State-level Coordination Committee meeting on 30th September 2022 focusing on the adoption of comprehensive Article 5.3 policy. Eventually, multiple consultations between CSOs and a Government of India-funded premier institute Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer resulted in submission of the draft of FCTC article 5.3 guidelines on 26th June 2023 to the state. Following a series of administrative policy processes on 12th June 2024 the draft was tabled and finally approved on 3rd October 2024.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The government of Maharashtra adopted Article 5.3 guidelines through a resolution by the Department of Public Health numbered- Tobacco/Meeting-2024/Chapter Number 66/Health-5 dated 3rd October 2024. These guidelines follow the four guiding principles and seven out of eight recommendations of the 2008 WHO FCTC 5.3 policy. The formation of Empowered Committees with the defined role of each member at the state and in 34 districts has led to the formation of a robust governance structure.

CONCLUSIONS: Maharashtra's approach to adopt WHO FCTC article 5.3 policy guidelines is a result of an unwavering commitment by CSOs-led multistakeholder engagement.

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How can children support their parents to quit tobacco? Experiences from LifeFirst

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Parental tobacco use plays a crucial role in influencing tobacco use and initiation among adolescents. Therefore, parental tobacco cessation is important and children can motivate the parents to stop using tobacco. Children are uniquely positioned to identify tobacco users with in the family. However, lack of knowledge and access to cessation services prevents any further action from their side.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: An orientation programme was conducted from 2023-2024 in 100 municipal and govt-aided schools catering lower socioeconomic population in slum areas of Mumbai. During the session all the students of 7th, 8th and 9th std were sensitized about ill-effects of tobacco and informed about available counselling services. The students were asked to refer their family members who were using tobacco. The referred parents were contacted, screened, motivated to quit and voluntarily enrolled for the counselling services. Six-month telephonic counselling involving six follow-up sessions was provided to them.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: 9298 students who attended the orientation sessions referred 1463 parents. Among them, 1172 (80%) could be successfully contacted and screened for current tobacco use. 1032 (88%) reported tobacco use in the past 30 days and 1020 registered for the six-month counselling services. 140 of the screened parents did not accept consuming tobacco as reported by their child. Among the registered parents, 887(87%) were males. Majority (87%) of them used smokeless tobacco, 63 (6%) smoked and 66 (6%) were dual users. At the end of programme, 399 (39%) self-reported not using tobacco.

CONCLUSIONS: Increasing accessibility to cessation services by sensitizing children and establishing a referral mechanism is feasible and effective. Parental tobacco cessation can also prevent tobacco use initiation and promote cessation among adolescents.

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Layperson-delivered nicotine replacement therapy sampling for individuals who smoke in the community: 3-month results from a pragmatic cluster-randomised controlled trial

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) sampling by layperson may be a scalable approach to increasing access to and uptake of smoking cessation treatment. This trial evaluated the effectiveness of 1-week NRT sampling delivered by laypersons in increasing tobacco abstinence among smokers in the community.

METHODS: This was a territory-wide, 2-arm pragmatic cluster-randomised controlled trial nested within a 'Quit to Win' contest in Hong Kong. Trained laypersons proactively recruited adults aged 18 years or older who consumed cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or heated tobacco products daily from 88 community sites. All participants received brief cessation advice at baseline and were offered referrals to a smoking cessation service of their choice at 1-, 2-, and 3-month follow-ups. Participants in the intervention group additionally received a 1-week sample of NRT patches or gum at baseline. The primary outcome was biochemically validated tobacco abstinence at 6-month follow-up. Secondary outcomes included self-reported 7-day point-prevalent abstinence, 24-hour quit attempt, NRT use and smoking cessation service use at 3 and 6 months. Analyses were by intention-to-treat. The trial was registered with ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT05881083).

RESULTS: From June 17 to October 31, 2023, 1017 participants (79.6% male, mean [SD] age=44.9 [15.0] years, 95.8% cigarette smokers) were cluster-randomised to the intervention (N=559) or control (N=458) groups. At 3-month follow-up (retention rate 70.3%), biochemically validated tobacco abstinence was similar between the intervention and control groups (18.3% vs 16.4%; p=0.43). For self-reported outcomes, any NRT use was significantly higher in the intervention than control group (50.6% vs 20.3%, p<0.001), but there was no significant difference in smoking cessation service use (19.0% vs 20.1%; p=0.65),

quit attempt (66.7% vs 70.5%, p=0.20), and 7-day point-prevalent abstinence (25.6% vs 25.1%; p=0.86).
CONCLUSIONS: The trial showed that 1-week NRT sampling increased NRT use but not tobacco abstinence or cessation service use at 3 months among smokers proactively recruited from the community.
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Prevalence and trends of adult smoking prevalence in South Korea, 2013 to 2022

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Although South Korea's overall smoking rate has declined, significant disparities persist by gender, age, and household type. The gap between men and women remains considerable, and age groups show differing trends. These disparities highlight the need to analyze various tobacco products, including conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products (HTPs), and dual use. Identifying vulnerable groups with minimal reductions in smoking rates can guide targeted cessation efforts.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Using KNHANES data (2013–2022), we analyzed adults aged 19 and older by gender (male/female), age group (young adult, middle-aged, older adult, elderly), and household type (single-person/multi-person). Tobacco categories included current use, conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, dual use, HTPs, and liquid e-cigarettes. Basic statistics were calculated using SPSS, and trends were analyzed with the Joinpoint Regression Program to estimate the average annual percent change (AAPC).
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Among men, current tobacco use and conventional smoking significantly declined. In women, no significant change occurred; e-cigarette use increased with an AAPC of 21.83%. Single-person women had a higher e-cigarette use rate (AAPC 34.08%) than multi-person households (AAPC 20.50%). By age, young adults did not reduce conventional smoking, but e-cigarette use increased significantly. Middle-aged adults showed a decline in conventional smoking but a surge in e-cigarette use. The elderly showed no significant changes. Single-person households had higher rates of tobacco use, conventional smoking, e-cigarette use, and dual use, with limited policy effectiveness and a sharp rise in e-cigarette use. In multi-person households, conventional smoking decreased, but e-cigarette and dual use increased, requiring additional regulation.
CONCLUSIONS: Smoking trends vary by gender, age, and household type. E-cigarette use is increasing among women, young adults, and single-person households, highlighting the need for policies beyond conventional smoking. Tailored cessation programs for vulnerable groups are essential. Further research on the health impacts of e-cigarette and dual use is needed to refine interventions.
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Funding mechanism for capacity building of rural NGOs for implementing the tobacco-free school programme within various states of India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Easy access and cultural normalization of varied tobacco products influence initiation among adolescents in India. Implementation of tobacco-free educational institution (ToFEI) guidelines under India's National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) can be challenging for rural school authorities without funding and guidance from experts in tobacco control. Targeted intervention through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the grassroots in partnership with the education department at the district level will create a snowball effect in making schools tobacco-free.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2010, Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation (NSF) instituted a Grant Award in collaboration with Salaam Mumbai Foundation (SMF) as its technical partner to implement 'tobacco-free school programme' in districts of rural India. With a two-year grant cycle, NSF has funded 35 NGOs in 12 states of India through a rigorous selection process building sustained involvement of the grantees in the field of tobacco control. A common activity-based budget is allocated also covering human resources, travel and administration costs.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: NGO grantees have trained 180343 teachers, 247540 stakeholders (school principals, village heads, police etc), sensitized 1562059 community members, organized 4826 tobacco-free campaigns (rallies, competitions etc.), and declared 1867 schools tobacco-free using ToFEI scores. NGOs acknowledged the award as a seed fund to initiate work in tobacco control. 18 NGOs joined district-level committees of the NTCP, 13 won awards from state and central agencies. Pressure to complete the school curriculum by education departments and interference from local politicians and tobacco vendors were barriers to implement ToFEI guidelines. Almost all NGOs integrated tobacco control within their routine work while found it difficult to garner sufficient funding for scaling their work.
CONCLUSIONS: The grant model can be scaled for high reach with minimal funding, exploring co-funding and technical partnerships to induct small organizations in tobacco control. Active involvement from the funding organization can lead to the optimization of the grant.
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Patterns of cigarette and e-cigarette use among teenage boys in Jakarta: Implications for monitoring and cessation strategies

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BACKGROUND: In 2021, an estimated 70 million adults in Indonesia used tobacco, mostly male initiating by age 19. The 2023 National Health Survey reported a smoking prevalence of 14.3% among boys ages 10–18. This study examined cigarette and e-cigarette use, as well as quit intentions and attempts, among teenage boys in Jakarta, the capital city of the country.
METHODS: A school-based survey was conducted from September–October 2024 among 2771 male students (ages 12–19, grades 7–12) from 82 schools in Jakarta's five administrative regions. Probability proportional sampling was used, stratified by region, school type, and grade. Participants completed a web-based self-administered survey on electronic devices in a group setting facilitated by data collectors.
RESULTS: 12% of respondents currently smoked, with the highest prevalence among vocational school students (27%). Of those who reported ever smoking (39%), the average initiation age was 13.2 (SD=2.3), and most obtained their first cigarettes from friends (68%). 66% of individuals who currently smoked had attempted to quit in the past six months. Reasons for not intending to quit included seeking relaxation (68%), believing that smoking is not as harmful as claimed (34%), and previous failed attempts (33%). Barriers to quitting reported by individuals who had ever smoked included peer influence (32%) and limited access to cessation resources (27%). E-cigarette use was prevalent: 39% had ever tried e-cigarettes, and 24% used them in the past 30 days. Among those who had never smoked (61%), 18% had tried e-cigarettes.
CONCLUSIONS: Findings reveal concerning prevalences of nicotine and tobacco product use, highlighting the need for cessation efforts tailored to youth in Indonesia, addressing peer influence, misconceptions about smoking risks, and access to cessation resources. Routine monitoring of emerging nicotine products is essential to inform targeted public health strategies to ensure cessation initiatives remain relevant in a changing product landscape.
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Tobacco industry arguments against new laws and regulations in the Netherlands

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since the establishment of the National Prevention Agreement (2018), several tobacco control measures have been implemented in the Netherlands to realise a Smokefree Generation before 2040. Regulations have been drafted, to which citizens and organisations could respond via online consultations. The tobacco industry also responded, both directly and indirectly via related stakeholders.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Health Funds for a Smokefree Netherlands wanted to gain insight into the arguments most commonly used by the tobacco industry. We instructed a research company to summarise and analyse the arguments used by the tobacco industry, between 2019 and 2022, to weaken, delay or block regulations.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: From the 4388 public responses to in total 17 online consultations, 4113 responses contain arguments against tobacco control regulations. Most responses argue that the specific measure is not effective, as well as arguing that e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products are a tool to quit smoking. Other common arguments relate to the economy, technical issues and illicit trade. Arguments are often substantiated with literature or examples from abroad. The tobacco industry tried to delay certain measures by pleading for a transition period. The consultation regarding the ban on e-cigarette flavours generated the most responses. This seems to be caused by tobacco industry campaigns to get e-cigarette users and retailers to speak up.
CONCLUSIONS: Most responses from the tobacco industry and its allies follow a specific pattern. They state that they fully support the government's goal to achieve a Smokefree Generation, but that they are against the tobacco control measure(s) in question as a means to achieve this goal. Insight into the arguments most commonly used by the tobacco industry can help NGOs better prepare for industry interference and improve their advocacy strategies.
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Experiences of community health workers in providing tobacco cessation support within antenatal care services in rural India

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BACKGROUND: Community health workers (CHWs) play a critical role in strengthening maternal and child health (MCH) programmes at the grassroots level within India's three-tier health system. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2 (India), 7.5% of pregnant women use tobacco. Limited knowledge and lack of access to cessation support perpetuates tobacco use during pregnancy.
METHODS: From May 2022 to April 2024, LifeFirst, an evidence-based tobacco cessation service, was integrated into a rural community-based MCH program across three Indian states. CHWs were trained to screen, offer brief advice, and provide tailored cessation support to pregnant women. A qualitative post-implementation evaluation was conducted in August 2024 to assess the feasibility, acceptability, and sustainability of the intervention. In-depth interviews were conducted with CHWs (n=23) till data saturation was attained. Thematic data analysis was

conducted using the framework method.
RESULTS: CHWs initially normalized tobacco use among pregnant women. Training on cessation enabled them to understand the harms of tobacco use, particularly in the context of pregnancy and childbirth. Baseline screening and documentation helped CHWs establish rapport with pregnant women and provide personalized cessation guidance. CHWs confirmed the cessation service integrating seamlessly into their work routine within the MCH workflow. Monthly home visits to pregnant women proved critical for reduced tobacco use and abstinence. Since pregnant women reported abstinence post 3-6 months of receiving the intervention, CHWs expressed the need to extend the service to adolescent girls and newly married women for early prevention. While CHWs were highly motivated, financial incentives were highlighted as needed of cessation service delivery.
CONCLUSIONS: Integrating task-shifting strategies to empower CHWs to deliver culturally appropriate cessation support within the antenatal care setting can enhance access and outcomes, particularly in remote rural areas. Scaling up this model can strengthen maternal and child health outcomes while addressing the broader public health challenge of tobacco use.
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Countering tobacco industry interference in the digital space: Lessons from Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative (TIIDWI)

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco industry interference undermines public health efforts by spreading misinformation, manipulating narratives, and opposing evidence-based policies like tobacco tax increases. On digital platforms, these tactics include misleading claims about job creation, economic harm from taxes, and corporate responsibility. Monitoring and countering such interference presents challenges, including timely responses, identifying subtle pro-tobacco messaging, and amplifying counter-narratives to effectively engage broader audiences.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2024, Stowelink Foundation, in partnership with the International Institute for Legislative Affairs (IILA), implemented the Tobacco Industry Interference Digital Watch Initiative to monitor and counter tobacco industry interference on social media. Four digital health consultants collaborated with 16 micro-influencers to identify and address pro-tobacco content on weekly basis and leveraging health calendar days such as World No Tobacco Day. The initiative tracked and exposed misleading claims, highlighted the tobacco industry's tactics, and advocated for policies like tobacco taxes. Additionally, over 20 media articles subtly advancing tobacco industry interests were analyzed for biased framing and language, providing evidence of covert industry support.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The initiative reached 1251342 individuals across digital platforms. It identified and countered 57 misleading posts from the tobacco industry and pro-tobacco individuals- industry proxies/third-party allies. Strategic use of influencer networks and targeted campaigns debunked industry claims and heightened public awareness of its deceptive tactics. Increased engagement and observational insights indicated significant public enlightenment regarding the industry's role in undermining health policies.
CONCLUSIONS: This initiative highlights the critical role of digital platforms in monitoring and countering tobacco industry interference. Partnerships with influencers and strategic use of health calendar days effectively amplified counter-narratives and educated the public. Sustained vigilance and innovative strategies are essential to combat the evolving tactics of the tobacco industry.
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Strengthening smoke-free compliance in Indonesia by mobilizing Community Health Center workers

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains a significant public health concern, and smoke-free policies play a crucial role in mitigating its impact. In Indonesia, however, the enforcement of smoke-free laws faces several challenges, including limited resources and low public awareness, which hinder full compliance and leave venue managers and the public inadequately informed about their responsibilities. Mobilizing community health center workers offers a viable solution to address these challenges and strengthen enforcement efforts.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To overcome enforcement challenges, Vital Strategies support Palembang, Pontianak, and Depok city to incorporate community health workers into the smoke-free enforcement framework. By integrating with the routine activities of teams, the intervention aimed to expand the reach and capacity of local enforcement efforts. Health workers were tasked with educating venue managers, conducting no-smoking signage campaign, performing random inspections to identify violations, and record and report enforcement drives to city Smoke-Free Task Force. This innovative, cost-efficient model reduced the resource constraints faced by local authorities, thus strengthening the overall impact of smoke-free policies.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: This initiative led to significant improvements in compliance across six smoke-free indicators. in Pontianak, compliance increased from 33.3% to 90.1%; In Palembang, it rose from 23.5% in 2019 to 60.6% in 2023; and in Depok, from 15.3% to 42.3%. The successful collaboration between community health center teams and local enforcement authorities highlighted the effectiveness of utilizing existing community health

infrastructure to enhance enforcement mechanisms. Engaging community health center workers proved to be a viable and impactful strategy for overcoming barriers and improving compliance with smoke-free policies.

CONCLUSIONS: Mobilizing community health workers for smoke-free law enforcement offers a sustainable and impactful solution to compliance challenges in Indonesia. This model has the potential to be expanded to other cities nationwide, fostering stronger enforcement, improved compliance, and better protection against the harms of tobacco use.

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Integrating tobacco cessation counselling for pregnant women into an existing ante-natal care programme

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use during pregnancy significantly increases risks of preterm birth, low birth weight, and developmental issues. Despite these risks, many pregnant women continue to use tobacco due to lack of awareness or access to cessation services.

METHODS: An implementation research study was conducted by LifeFirst to integrate tobacco cessation service into a maternal and child health programme implemented by a large non-governmental organisation. A pre-implementation evaluation was followed by development of a tailored intervention protocol including training and suitable communication material. Sakhis (community based frontline workers) were trained to screen for tobacco use during antenatal home visits, provide brief advice, and conduct follow-ups during routine monthly visits; upto six months postpartum. The intervention included education on harms of tobacco use quitting strategies and monitoring of tobacco consumption.

RESULTS: Out of 820 pregnant women enrolled in the MCH program during first trimester, 104 (13%) were identified as current tobacco users. 98 of them agreed to participate in a cessation program and were monitored for 12 months. 94% were using only smokeless tobacco, while the remaining were dual users. Sakhis conducted an average of 13 follow-ups. By the end of the intervention, 55% quit tobacco, 13% reduced usage, 27% showed no change, and 4% were lost to follow-up. Participants who quit required an average of six follow-up sessions, with 47% quitting before delivery. Normal delivery rates were higher among those who quit (78%) compared to those who did not (62%). Seven women reported spontaneous abortions, of whom five had reported no change in tobacco use at their last follow-up.

CONCLUSIONS: Integrating tobacco cessation into antenatal care is feasible and beneficial. These interventions leverage regular engagement with pregnant women during a critical period for health behaviour change.Community-based frontline workers are well-positioned to deliver culturally tailored advice and provide ongoing support, improving maternal and foetal outcomes.

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The evolution of tobacco marketing to women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has historically been lower than among men. However, recent trends indicate an alarming rise in smoking rates among this demographic, driven by the tobacco industry's aggressive marketing strategies. These trends coincide with cultural shifts, urbanisation, and regulatory gaps that allow the industry to exploit vulnerable populations. This study examines the evolution of marketing strategies targeting women and girls in Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, and Senegal, assessing their implications for public health and policy.

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys of 593 women aged 19–75 across the five countries, qualitative semi-structured interviews with 45 key informants, and a literature review. A historical analysis of 30 years of tobacco industry documents (TIDs) and a policy evaluation of tobacco control laws and regulations were conducted.

RESULTS: The findings reveal that the tobacco industry employs diverse strategies to target women, including the use of flavoured products, harm reduction narratives, influencer marketing, and proximity marketing near educational institutions and social venues. Television and movies emerged as dominant marketing channels, with 77.2% of respondents reporting exposure. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok, were also significant, with younger women being the most exposed demographic. Key informant interviews highlighted the normalisation of smoking through depictions of tobacco use in entertainment and the framing of smoking as a symbol of empowerment and autonomy for women. Cultural stigmas against female tobacco use remain strong in countries like Senegal and Rwanda, driving women to smoke discreetly. However, these stigmas are eroding in South Africa and urban Nigeria.

CONCLUSIONS: Governments must adopt gender-sensitive policies, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and proactively regulate emerging products to combat tobacco marketing targeting women in SSA. Public health campaigns should counter industry narratives of empowerment, emphasizing the health and economic risks of tobacco use.

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Optimizing tobacco control campaigns for multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing tobacco control in rural areas of Uttarakhand

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco consumption remains a leading cause of preventable death and disease globally, with an estimated 1.3 million deaths annually in India. In response to this public health crisis, Uttarakhand has implemented a range of strategies to reduce tobacco consumption and raise awareness about its detrimental health effects. Tobacco control campaigns have demonstrated high cost-effectiveness in influencing tobacco use behaviours among both adults and youth. However, rural areas face distinct challenges, including limited awareness and access to healthcare, which hinder the effective implementation of tobacco control measures.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address these challenges, the 'Aao Gaon Chale Uttarakhand Ko Tambaku Mukt Karen' campaign was launched as a two-month initiative by the Health and Education Ministers, and senior officials from different departments like Police, Education, and Tourism. Culminating on World No Tobacco Day 2022, the campaign engaged rural populations through multi-departmental collaboration. Led by Balajee Sewa Sansthan, a Non-Governmental Organisation, the program featured activities emphasizing awareness and behaviour change, with annual oversight by the Health Minister reflecting sustained governmental commitment.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign organized over 10000 events, including pledge and signature campaigns, puppet shows, and educational programs, reaching more than 1 million individuals. Tobacco-free pledges were administered at 5000 locations, and 625 villages declared themselves tobacco-free under state-developed protocols. A flagship event at Government Doon Medical College saw over 2000 participants. Government of Uttarakhand aims to declare two villages tobacco-free per block annually and reduce tobacco consumption by 5% by 2027.

CONCLUSIONS: The success of these campaigns underscores the value of multi-stakeholder engagement in public health. Strengthening enforcement, expanding rural outreach, and targeting youth through digital and school-based programs are critical. Leveraging digital platforms, integrating tobacco control into broader health initiatives, and ensuring long-term funding and evaluation are essential to sustaining progress and reducing tobacco use.

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Establishing a tobacco cessation service for inpatients in a tertiary care hospital in Navi Mumbai, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains a major risk factor for various diseases and complications, contributing to increased hospitalization and adverse treatment outcomes. Providing inpatients with bedside brief advice and structured tobacco cessation support offers a significant opportunity for them to quit. Despite this, tobacco cessation services are limited in hospitals across India.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: LifeFirst, a hospital-based tobacco cessation program, was implemented in the Medicine and Surgery wards of a municipal tertiary care hospital in Navi Mumbai, India. The programme followed a structured protocol, including bedside screening of all patients, brief advice and behaviour modification counselling based on the transtheoretical model of change. The program extended beyond the hospital stay, offering telephonic counselling at regular intervals for six months post-discharge.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: From July 2021 to March 2024, 11462 adult patients were admitted to the identified wards, with 10175 (89%) screened for tobacco use. Among those, 2108 (21%) were identified as current tobacco users. All tobacco users received brief advice from a LifeFirst counsellor and 1272 (60%) voluntarily enrolled for counselling. Majority were male (98%), with an average age of 39 years. 13% had no formal education, while 31% had primary schooling. The most commonly used tobacco products included tobacco-lime mixture (64%), gutkha (35%), cigarettes (23%), and bidis (8%).

Over the six-month counselling period, 29 patients (2%) died and 14 (1%) opted out. 560 patients (44%) reported successfully stopping tobacco use, 227 (18%) reduced consumption and 358 (28%) were lost to follow-up. The average follow-up rate at each scheduled follow-up was 70%.

CONCLUSIONS: Tailored bedside tobacco cessation counselling with follow-up support is both feasible and effective for hospitalized patients in India. The model can be scaled up across other hospitals after further research; contributing to improved access and health outcomes and reduced tobacco-related morbidity and mortality.

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Access to Information Act: Monitoring tobacco industry lobby on electronic smoking devices regulation in Brazil's Executive Power

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since 2009, the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa) has prohibited the sale of Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) in Brazil, and the 2024 regulation covers the manufacture, transportation, distribution, storage, advertising and import of these devices, too. The tobacco industry has been working to change the regulation and

legalize the sale of ESDs. In addition to the lobby in Anvisa, they are lobbying the National Congress to approve bills of its interests.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Brazil has an Access to Information Act (AIA), and through the documents obtained using it, it is possible to analyze the tobacco industry's presence in official agendas related to ESDs in the Executive Power, exposing potential influence or conflicts of interest.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: We used this instrument for monitoring. Between October 2023 and October 2024, 27 meetings were identified and attended by at least one lobbyist or company that advocates in favor of ESDs on the agendas of the government representatives. After holding ten meetings with the tobacco sector, the Secretary of the Federal Revenue defended the sale of electronic cigarettes in a meeting with Anvisa. Through the AIA we obtained the subject of those meetings.

CONCLUSIONS: Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control establishes that public health policies for tobacco control must be protected from the commercial interests and other interests of the tobacco industry. The guidelines recommend that any interaction with the tobacco industry must be conducted with transparency. Along with other strategies, AIA is an important instrument for monitoring the tobacco industry. The information supports advocacy initiatives, news publication and actions aiming to increase control and transparency measures from the government. Approving and using instruments such as the AIA can help countries to improve social control and prevent attempts of undue interference in public health policies.

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Preferences of individuals who smoke and do not smoke on cigarette plain packaging and price: A discrete choice experiment in Chile

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BACKGROUND: Despite growing evidence supporting plain packaging, only 19 countries had implemented this policy by 2021. Chile, with the highest smoking prevalence among women in Latin America, has yet to adopt plain packaging. This study aims to estimate the effect of plain packaging and health warning labels on smokers' cigarette uptake and non-smokers' intention to try.

METHODS: Seven hundred thirty-one smokers and 298, 18 and older, non-smokers participated in an online nationally representative discrete choice experiment (DCE). Participants chose between three cigarette packages (licit and illicit) and an opt-out option. Licit package attributes were price, packaging design (branded or plain), and stick design (branded or with health warnings). Illicit packages had only the price attribute. We estimated the preference for attributes using a latent class model with two classes was used to estimate attribute preferences. Using the estimated coefficients, we simulated the effect of policy scenarios of a 50% price increase, the adoption of plain packaging, and warning sticks.

RESULTS: We found that, among smokers, 40% decreased cigarette uptake with plain packaging and warning stick policies, while 60% decreased with price policies. For non-smokers, both groups reduced uptake with price policies; 44% decreased with packaging and stick policies, and 56% did not. Implementing a 50% price increase with plain packaging and warning sticks reduced cigarette uptake by 4.3% among smokers (95% CI: 1.2%–7.4%). Among non-smokers, the reduction was 4.3%, but not significant (95% CI: –9.6%–18.2%). A limited substitution effect between licit and illicit packages was observed.

CONCLUSIONS: Price increases, plain packaging, and sticks with health warnings reduce cigarette uptake. Both price policies and stick and packaging are necessary to minimise uptake, as some individuals react to price and others to packaging and stick policies. Measures to reduce the illicit trade in tobacco products are essential to maximise the effectiveness of these policies.

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Tobacco industry response to 'Smoke Free cities' programme by strengthening retail chain: A case study from Sri Lanka

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BACKGROUND: Sri Lanka has made significant progress in controlling tobacco use through policy measures and community-level interventions. Grassroots-level government officials have played a vital role in advocating for cigarette retailers to cease sales, with many complying. However, in 2013, an incentivized program called 'Abhisheka' (coronation) was introduced, targeting cigarette retailers. This program featured uniquely branded billboards displaying shop names without company or product logos. It was later revealed that the Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC), a subsidiary of British American Tobacco, was behind this initiative. This study aimed to investigate the 'Abhisheka' program to uncover its selection criteria and the rewards used to secure retailer loyalty.

METHODS: During this study, 540 'Abhisheka' retail shops were identified and documented nationwide. A cross-verification study was conducted to compare the operations of standard retail outlets and 'Abhisheka' designated retailers in three locations within the Western Province. The study included both cigarette retailers ('Abhisheka' outlets) and non-selling shops located within a 100-meter radius of major junctions.

RESULTS: Data was collected from 161 shops in the cross-verification study. The findings revealed that daily

cigarette sales at 'Abhisheka' outlets were three times higher than those at regular outlets. Retail owners of 'Abhisheka' shops received various incentives from the tobacco industry, including point-of-sale (POS) discounts, sponsored pilgrimages or foreign tours, clocks, water purifiers, cashier counters, product displays, cash counter machines, exclusive dinners, and other perks.

CONCLUSIONS: The 'Abhisheka' rewards program was strategically designed to undermine the nationwide 'Smoke-Free City' campaign led by stakeholders. Additionally, Tobacco Industry Advertising, Promotions, and Sponsorships (TAPS) were deeply embedded in the program. Effective policies and regulations are urgently needed to address these challenges, as the tobacco industry continues to exploit regulatory loopholes to promote its products.

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Case study: Synthetic nicotine pouches – advertising in Brazil through social media

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In Brazil, advertising of tobacco products is prohibited, including on the Internet. The regulatory framework bans tobacco product advertisements that influence the public by associating them with well-being or health. In this study, we report a Brazilian account on Instagram that associates nicotine pouches containing synthetic nicotine with well-being and health. These products are not registered with the health regulatory authority, and it is being introduced for illegal trade in Brazilian territory.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The advertisement emphasizes the potential benefits of consuming Snus, such as the product does not produce smoke; it is tobacco-free; it reduces exposure to toxins; and it offers flavor. On the other hand, it highlights the harms of consuming tobacco products like filtered cigarettes, which include smoke production; containing tobacco; potential exposure to various toxins; and lack of flavoring. Due to its high price in Brazil, nicotine pouches appear to target a middle- to high-income audience and this specific account, different from others, is therefore not aimed at younger individuals. It is also observed that public comments express a positive interest in the benefits highlighted in the post and mistakenly view this product as a solution to smoking cessation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The page has over 2000 followers and follows about 1500 users. Illegally, it incorporates marketing elements to promote nicotine pouches using humor, associations with famous personalities, social highlights, as well as well-being and health.

CONCLUSIONS: This page utilizes elements of persuasion theory and mass communication in marketing to promote the implementation of this product. A prior analysis of these elements can assist in the development of regulations and mechanisms to monitor such irregularities on social media.

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Smoking cessation advice from healthcare professionals: Findings from the 2022 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey

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BACKGROUND: FCTC Article 14 obligates Parties to support tobacco cessation and implement effective measures to help people quit smoking; cessation advice from healthcare professionals (HP) is a key component. We examined whether adults who regularly smoke reported receiving cessation advice from an HP, and whether advice varied across a range of equity dimensions.

METHODS: Data are from the 2022 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey of adults who smoke cigarettes ≥weekly. A descriptive weighted analysis estimated prevalence of self-reported receipt of any advice about quitting smoking among those who visited an HP in the last two years (Australia:n=735; Canada:n=717; England:n=795; United States (US):n=669). An adjusted regression model was fit to examine whether advice differed by age, sex, income, education, high-risk alcohol use, and treatment for depression, anxiety, or lung disease, adjusting for country and smoking frequency. We also tested for country differences in HPs recommending approved cessation aids (NRT/Varenicline/Bupropion).

RESULTS: 46.8% of adults who regularly smoke reported receiving cessation advice from an HP, differing by country ($p<0.0001$): US was highest (60.7%), followed by Australia (57.1%), Canada (40.7%), and England (32.0%). In the adjusted model, females were less likely to receive cessation advice ($p=0.01$), and those being treated for depression ($p=0.03$) and lung disease ($p<0.001$) were more likely to receive advice. Country differences remained significant ($p<0.0001$). Advice did not differ by age, income, education, or high-risk alcohol use. Among those who received cessation advice, there were country differences in HPs recommending NRT/Varenicline/Bupropion ($p=0.009$): highest in Canada (66.9%) and lowest in England (47.4%).

CONCLUSIONS: Across all four countries, about half of adults who regularly smoke reported receiving advice about quitting after visiting a healthcare professional, with few differences across equity dimensions. These results

highlight the missed opportunities for HPs to deliver cessation advice, including the recommendation to use an approved cessation aid.

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Bridging the gap: Implementation of WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10 for sustainable tobacco control: A scoping review

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco consumption remains a major global public health concern, responsible for over 8 million preventable deaths annually. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) offers a comprehensive approach to tackling the tobacco epidemic, with Articles 9 and 10 addressing the testing, measurement, and disclosure of tobacco product contents. Effective implementation of these articles is essential for regulatory progress and tobacco control worldwide. However, implementation of these provisions varies significantly across different countries.

METHODS: This scoping review investigates the global landscape of implementing WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10, utilizing the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) to guide the analysis. A comprehensive literature search yielded 5947 articles from PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus databases, with 4519 duplicates detected and resolved. Studies were screened independently by three reviewers according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Findings were synthesized narratively and analyzed qualitatively following PRISMA-ScR guidelines.

RESULTS: The review included a total of eight studies, revealing diverse strategies for implementing WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10. Key barriers identified were corporate opposition (25%) and ambiguous flavor definitions (25%), which hindered progress. Facilitators such as plain packaging (highlighted in 50% of studies) and standardized definitions of flavors (25%) demonstrated significant potential to enhance regulatory compliance. Regional variations were evident, with countries like Australia, France, and Canada showing strong adoption of these measures, while others struggled due to limited resources and enforcement challenges.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings emphasize uneven progress in implementing WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10, with critical barriers like corporate opposition and resource constraints affecting compliance. Facilitators such as plain packaging and standardized flavour definitions can serve as effective strategies for overcoming these challenges. Region-specific interventions can be adapted to address systemic barriers and replicate successful practices are essential to improve global tobacco control efforts and achieve the objectives of the WHO FCTC.

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Community science and engagement of youth in tobacco control

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BACKGROUND: Youth engagement is critical in tobacco control (TC), yet young people are increasingly targeted by the tobacco industry through digital advertising and user-generated content. In Slovenia, the consumption of tobacco among youth mirrors European averages, with e-cigarettes becoming increasingly prevalent. This study explores the influence of digital media on youth perceptions and behaviors related to tobacco products, highlighting innovative strategies which can be used for advocacy and engagement of youth.

METHODS: The research combined qualitative and participatory methods. Five focus groups were conducted with students from diverse educational backgrounds across Slovenia, analyzing their perspectives on online tobacco advertising. At the same time, a citizen science approach was implemented, with young volunteers monitoring their social media content. Data were coded and analyzed to uncover themes related to the normalization of tobacco use and the effectiveness of online advertising strategies.

RESULTS: Youth reported significant exposure to tobacco-related content on social media, with peer-generated posts often glamorizing use. Key themes included:

- Normalization through advertising: Subtle strategies, such as influencer collaborations and youth-centric language, made tobacco use appear socially acceptable.
- Peer influence: Youth-generated content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok significantly shaped perceptions, with tobacco products portrayed as integral to social bonding.
- Critical awareness: While many participants recognized the manipulative nature of advertisements, peer pressure and societal norms often overpowered these insights.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore the urgent need for innovative TC strategies that leverage youth participation in counter-marketing campaigns and digital literacy initiatives. Advocacy should prioritize stricter regulation of online advertising and empower youth to create content that challenges tobacco normalization. The data collected with the involved youth was presented in different discussions with stakeholders which opens a new approach to engagement of youth. By integrating these approaches, TC efforts can effectively combat the tobacco industry's influence and foster healthier behaviors among young people.

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Responses of individuals who smoke to efficacy messages inside cigarette packs: A longitudinal study of Canada's policy update

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BACKGROUND: Canada is the only country with a fully implemented labeling policy that includes efficacy messages about cessation tips and benefits inside cigarette packs. In 2024, messages were updated and responses to them remain unassessed.

METHODS: We analyzed data from an open-cohort of Canadian adults who smoke, surveyed every 3 months from February 2023 to November 2024 (n=12022 observations, 4716 individuals). At each survey wave, participants reported the frequency of reading health messages inside packs in the past 30 days (0=never/rarely; 1=sometimes/very often); how much the messages made them feel they would benefit from quitting (1=Not at all-5=Extremely); confidence/self-efficacy to quit smoking (1-'not at all'–5-'extremely'); and forgoing cigarettes due to these messages in the prior 30 days (1=yes vs. 0=no). Before answering these questions, participants viewed a brief video to focus their attention on messages inside packs. Linear and logistic generalized estimating equation models regressed these outcomes on implementation period (pre-policy 2023=[ref] vs post-policy 2024 surveys). Mixed-effects logistic models analyzed quit attempts during a 3-month interval for participants with at least one follow-up (6959 observations, 2356 individuals), using message responses from the previous survey as predictors. All models adjusted for sociodemographics, smoking-related variables, and post-stratification weights.

RESULTS: In adjusted models, reading the messages (AOR=1.18; p=0.010), perceived benefits of quitting (ß=0.07; p=0.020), self-efficacy to quit (ß=0.08; p<0.01), and forgoing cigarettes (AOR=1.14; p=0.039) increased from pre-to post-policy. The likelihood of attempting to quit by follow-up was higher for participants who read messages more frequently (AOR=1.54; p<0.001), perceived greater benefits of quitting (AOR=1.31; p<0.001), had greater self-efficacy to quit (AOR=1.32; p<0.001), and forwent cigarettes (AOR=1.88; p<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: After Canada implemented new efficacy messages inside packs, reading messages, perceived cessation benefits, self-efficacy to quit, and forgoing cigarettes increased, suggesting these messages successfully re-engaged smokers. Other countries should consider complementing pictorial warnings with efficacy messages.

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Assessment of Ghana's legislative ban on tobacco advertisement, promotions and sponsorship in entertainment media

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BACKGROUND: In Ghana, there is a total ban on tobacco advertisement, promotions and sponsorships (TAPS) according to the Public Health Act 2012 (Act 851). However, there is increasing concern about depictions of tobacco in the media. Media platforms significantly contribute to exposing users to pro-tobacco content, influencing perceptions, and promoting smoking among adolescents. This research aimed to understand how tobacco is depicted in Ghanaian entertainment media and compliance to the ban on TAPS. The outcome will influence development of strategies that address the pervasive influence of tobacco marketing.

METHODS: Researchers analyzed content for tobacco depictions on 4 television and 4 social media platforms (movies, advertisements, music videos, posts) over six weeks. A coding system, adapted from existing research by Barker et al, Breathe California and Fitzpatrick et al., was used to categorize depictions (e.g., direct, implied, or brand appearance). Depictions were analyzed considering character demographics, context of use (e.g., social, aggressive), character behavior (e.g., violence, entertainment), exposure (viewing time, age ratings, platform reach).

RESULTS: Depictions included direct use (30%), implied use (31%), and brand appearances (13%), frequently depicting males (56%). Depictions often portrayed tobacco use as 'fun' or part of social activities (82%) and wealth, affluence, and power were identified in 11% of depictions. Most posts originated from personal pages with low influence. Notably, no age restrictions or health warnings were observed on any platform, some pages even sold tobacco products. These findings highlight the prevalence of tobacco depictions in a positive light, potentially normalizing its use and raising concerns about youth exposure to tobacco marketing.

CONCLUSIONS: This survey resulted in the development of an enforcement guide. This guide once enforced will enhance the ban of tobacco products advertisement and sale on new media. Depiction of tobacco in entertainment media will be classified and in addition have anti-tobacco messages.

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Health, economic and social burden of tobacco in Brazil and the expected gains of implementing taxes

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BACKGROUND: The burden of smoking in Brazil remains high despite the success of various measures implemented over the past two decades.This study estimated the burden of smoking in terms of mortality, morbidity, and economic and social costs from a societal perspective and the potential benefits of increasing taxes on tobacco products, considering the effects of the illegal market.

METHODS: A probabilistic Markov microsimulation model was applied, in which individuals aged 35 and older were followed in hypothetical cohorts. This model quantified the number of deaths, health events, direct healthcare costs, and indirect costs due to productivity losses. A model was also developed to estimate the health and economic gains from different tax increase scenarios over ten years, including illegal market. Data on smoking prevalence, Brazil's demographic structure, mortality, and morbidity were obtained from official databases and the literature. Healthcare resource utilization was gathered through the literature and consultations with experts. A literature review on informal caregivers' time use was carried out focusing on the tobacco-related diseases. Cost estimates were expressed in 2024 US dollars.

RESULTS: Smoking caused 174000 deaths and 5.7 million years of life lost due to premature mortality and disability. The economic burden amounted to US 26 billion, with US 11 billion attributed to direct costs and US 8 billion to indirect costs. Informal caregiver costs reached US 7 billion. These economic losses represent 1.6% of country gross domestic product. In the scenario that includes the illegal tobacco product market, a 50% increase in cigarette prices has the potential to generate economic benefits of US 27 billion over ten years.

CONCLUSIONS: This is a cost-effective measure that could reduce the burden of smoking and increase fiscal revenue. The ongoing Tax Reform is a timely opportunity for the country to adopt a permanent pricing and tax policy.

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Support for ending tobacco sales in supermarkets, convenience stores, and petrol stations: ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey findings

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BACKGROUND: In most countries, tobacco products are widely sold alongside necessities such as food and petrol. However, some countries, such as the Netherlands, have restricted the type of retail outlets that can sell tobacco. We measured support amongst people who smoke and/or vape, or have recently quit smoking and don't vape, for ending smoked tobacco product sales in certain types of retail outlets.

METHODS: We analysed data from the 2022 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey that included 4108 adults who exclusively smoke cigarettes (n=1842), exclusively vape (n=470), smoke and vape (n=1225), or have recently quit smoking and don't vape (n=571) in England (n=1111), Canada (n=1085), Australia (n=794), and the US (n=1118). Multivariate logistic regression was used to estimate the association between country and smoking/vaping status and support for laws ending sales of smoked tobacco products in a) convenience stores, local shops, gas/petrol stations, and b) supermarkets.

RESULTS: Across countries, about one third supported ending the sale of tobacco products from convenience stores and petrol stations (30.6%) and supermarkets (33.9%), with country-differences (p<0.001). The US had the lowest level of support for ending sales in convenience stores and petrol stations (US 21.9%, Canada 35.9%, England 33.9%, Australia 30.9%). For supermarkets, support was lowest in US (28.5%) and highest in Canada (46.3%). Tobacco and vaping product use status was associated with support for ending sales in the different outlets, with daily smoking associated with the least support, as expected. Country level differences remained significant after controlling for socio-demographics and smoking status (p<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: A substantial minority of the study sample in all four countries supported ending the sale of cigarettes in convenience stores, gas/petrol stations and supermarkets. Qualitative research could explore reasons for country-level differences in support and inform targeted communication strategies if the policy was introduced in these countries.

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Estimating the number and longitudinal growth of specialty tobacco and vape retailers in Queensland, Australia

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BACKGROUND: In 2022, Queensland and Victoria were the only Australian states to have not implemented a tobacco retailer licensing scheme and register. This novel study aimed to develop a prototype system to periodically collect and consolidate geolocations of tobacconists and/or vape retailers (TVRs) in Queensland over 12-months to explore retailer growth.

METHODS: The 'Text Search' function on Google Maps application programming interface (API) was used to return business information based on a string query with a specific latitude and longitude coordinate (search points) sourced from the Australian Postcode Database (n=3481). Searches of TVRs were repeated monthly on or around the same date from July 2022 to June 2023, and results were placed in a PostreSQL database. Retailers that likely sold tobacco products but were not specialty stores (e.g. supermarkets) were excluded. Two team members independently and manually checked, confirmed, and categorised 'New' entries.

RESULTS: From July 2022 to June 2023, confirmed operational TVRs across Queensland increased by 14.3% from 624 to 713, a mean of 7.4 new stores per month. Of the total stores collected in July 2022, 71.5% were manually confirmed as TVRs. The proportion of new entries confirmed as TVRs increased between March and June 2023 from 40% to 86.7%. Most confirmed stores were 'tobacco only' but the number of confirmed TVRs categorised as 'tobacco and vape' and 'vape only' increased and decreased, respectively, over 12-months.

CONCLUSIONS: The prototype system developed in this study effectively identified and tracked the longitudinal growth of specialty tobacco/vape stores in Queensland. As the database grew, false positive results decreased as evidenced by the monthly increase in the proportion of confirmed new TVRs. Results can provide baseline and ongoing data to assist compliance with the Queensland smoking product licensing scheme, and longitudinal data to supplement evaluations of the state and federal supply policies.

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Trends and predictors of tobacco product purchases from various retailers in Australia

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BACKGROUND: Australia has made significant progress in tobacco control, reducing adult smoking prevalence to 12% in 2022/23. However, tobacco supply reduction measures are limited and there are no restrictions on the types of outlets that can sell tobacco. This study examines trends in the types of sources that Australians obtained tobacco products from between 2013 and 2022/23.

METHODS: We analysed data from individuals who smoked cigarettes (N=10975) in four waves of the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (2013, 2016, 2019, 2022/23). Weighted multinomial logistic regression was used to analyse trends in the types of sources where Australians who smoked cigarettes report purchasing tobacco.

RESULTS: Tobacco purchases from major supermarket chains significantly decreased from 50% in 2013 to 34.6% in 2022/23 (p=0.001). In contrast, purchasing from tobacconists increased significantly from 17.5% in 2013 to 33.1% in 2022/23 (p=0.001). Individuals aged 14-17 years were more likely to purchase tobacco from informal sources, convenience stores, and liquor stores compared to those aged 70+ (p>0.05). Smoking less frequently (<weekly) was associated with purchasing from informal sources (aRRR=12.02, 95%CI:9.35–15.47) and hospitality venues and liquor stores (aRRR=3.92, 95%CI:2.58–5.95) compared to daily smoking. Residents of the states of Victoria and Queensland were significantly less likely to purchase from tobacconists (aRRR=0.54, 95% CI (0.46 - 0.62) and 0.75, 95% CI (0.64 - 0.88), respectively) than those in New South Wales. Living in the most disadvantaged areas was associated with purchasing from tobacconists (aRRR=1.34, 95% CI: 1.10–1.63) and informal sources (aRRR=1.32, 95% CI: 1.00–1.74) compared to living in the most advantaged areas.

CONCLUSIONS: Australians' tobacco purchasing behaviours over the past 10 years have shifted from supermarkets to tobacconists and is influenced by sociodemographic factors such as age and smoking frequency. Understanding changes in where people purchase tobacco products may inform supply side tobacco control strategies.

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From treaty to the community: Recent experiences in localizing the FCTC to cities and municipalities in the Philippines

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Philippines, which is a party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) since 2005, passed a number of tobacco-control related laws and policies at the national level in the past decade. The notable policies include the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, Food and Drugs Administration Act of 2009, Department of Health and Civil Service Commission Joint Memorandum Circular to Protect the Bureaucracy from Tobacco Industry Interference, Graphic Health Warning on Tobacco Products Law of 2014, Sin Tax Law of 2012 and 2019; and the Vape Regulation Law of 2022, among others. Some of these policies are considered a global standard in FCTC implementation while the others have loopholes that the industry continue to exploit. Another challenge is the devolved governance system of the Philippines because cities and municipalities have their own legislative and

executive powers that affects how national policies are translated at the local level.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Due to the devolved governance system of the Philippines and the changing political dynamics at the local level, HealthJustice worked with government and civil society partners to develop a template policy that complies with the FCTC and national laws; and a training manual on how to defend it if challenged by the tobacco industry.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The result is a FCTC template ordinance that both government and civil society organizations are sharing to cities and municipalities in the Philippines. For the past 2 years, at least 1 province and 5 cities or municipalities have adopted it. Implementation of these policies are also closely being monitored by partners that assist them.

CONCLUSIONS: The recent Philippine experience shows that the FCTC and national laws related to tobacco control need to be translated into a local policy that works. A multi-stakeholder approach is also an effective strategy to ensure that it is effectively implemented and sustained.

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Smoking and smokeless tobacco use during breastfeeding: A cross-sectional study based on 78 low-income and middle-income countries

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BACKGROUND: Prevalence of smoking and smokeless tobacco use during breastfeeding: A cross-sectional secondary data analysis based on 0.32 million sample women in 78 low-income and middle-income countries

METHODS: In this cross-sectional study we used data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) conducted in 78 LMICs between January 2010 and December 2019 to study tobacco use among 0.32 million sample lactating women. Age-standardized prevalence of smoking and smokeless tobacco use was estimated and presented with a 95% Confidence Interval (CI) for 78 LMICs. Pooled estimates overall and by WHO regions were obtained using random-effects meta-analyses. Country-level and community-level variance to understand contextual variance was also quantified using multilevel modelling.

RESULTS: Pooled prevalence of any tobacco use among breastfeeding women in LMICs was 3.61% (95% CI 3.53-3.70); with the lowest prevalence in regions of the Americas (1.44%, 1.26-1.63) and the highest in the Southeast Asia region (6.13%, 6.0-6.27). The pooled prevalence of tobacco smoking was reported to be 1.16% (1.11-1.21), with the highest prevalence in the Eastern Mediterranean region (4.27%, 3.88-4.67) and the lowest in the African region (0.81%, 0.76-0.86). The pooled prevalence of smokeless tobacco use was reported to be 2.56% (2.49-2.63), with the highest prevalence in the Southeast Asia region (4.92%, 4.80-5.04). Illiterate and poor women in LMICs bore the enormous burden of tobacco use.

CONCLUSIONS: The prevalence of smoking and smokeless tobacco use among lactating women in LMICs varied considerably across different WHO regions. Considering the cross sectional design of the study, caution is required while interpreting the results. To improve mothers' and children's health and nutrition outcomes and reduce health inequalities in LMICs, reducing tobacco use through evidence-based interventions is critical.

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Effectiveness of 90% pictorial health warnings (PHW) on tobacco products in Nepal

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BACKGROUND: The aim of this study was to assess the effectiveness of 90% pictorial health warnings (PHW) on tobacco products in Nepal.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted between July 2024 to October 2024 in 11 cities of Nepal. The sample size was calculated using SurveyMonkey. A population of 29.16 million is taken into account while calculating a sample size with a margin error of 1.8% at a 95% confidence level. The respondents were randomly selected and interviewed face to face using a semi-structured questionnaire. The effectiveness of PHWs were measured as perceived: i) scariness; ii) quit motivation iii) convincing youth not to start smoking; iv) encouraging ex-smokers to remain as quitters; and v) building public awareness. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine the factors associated with the effectiveness of PHWs using IBM SPSS version 24.

RESULTS: Of the 3002 general public participants, 94.7% believed that smoking was addictive. 83% participants said to have noticed PHWs in tobacco packs. PHWs made 81.1% of respondents concerned about the danger of consuming tobacco and motivated 80.3% to either think about quitting tobacco or never start it. PHWs made 60% of current smokers reduce their cigarettes intake. In case of retailers, 85.8% said to have knowledge about 90% PHW and 80.3% supported it to increase public awareness. 23% of the retailers stated decline in sale of tobacco products as a result of PHWs.

CONCLUSIONS: PHWs were found important to prevent people from starting smoking or consuming tobacco products, motivate smokers to quit, reduce consumption of cigarettes and prevent relapse in ex-smokers. Evidence from the study suggests that the PHWs are required to

be increased to 100% and images to be improved for it to become more effective

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Prevalence and consequences of parental tobacco use in Bangladesh: Insights for developing SBCC strategies

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use in Bangladesh, both smoked and smokeless forms, constitutes a major health hazard with a wide-ranging impact on the economy and productivity of our developing nation. Evidence shows that family, especially parental, smoking increases the risk for adolescent smoking initiation. Bangladesh lacks local evidence to develop and implement effective Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Programs for tobacco control. Therefore, the study was conducted to assess the prevalence of parental tobacco use in Bangladesh and its impact on the children to pave the way for making Bangladesh Tobacco-free by 2040.

METHODS: The research was a cross-sectional quantitative study covering a representative sample of 4043 adults (aged 50+ years) with children 15+ years. A two-stage stratified cluster approach was followed to interview the respondents at the household level. Statistical tests were performed to determine the association between parental tobacco use and its impact on children.

RESULTS: The prevalence of tobacco use among the study respondents was 60.9% and the majority (91%) were aware of the health risks of tobacco. Among the respondents' children available during the survey, 35.0% had ever used tobacco, with 30.8% specifically used smoking tobacco. The association between parental tobacco use and at least one child with ever use of tobacco was found to be highly significant ($p<0.001$). Notably, 41.7% of ever tobacco users had at least one child who had also used tobacco at some point. Children's involvement in purchasing tobacco products (both smoking and smokeless tobacco) for parents and attraction to parental tobacco uses significantly ($p<0.001$) affect children's tobacco use.

CONCLUSIONS: Since the Tobacco Control Act respects the privacy of people and their homes, the power of SBCC should be optimally utilized, especially targeting parents and elders, to reduce tobacco use in the home and ensure the health of all family members.

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Ensuring tobacco control budgets at the subnational level: Challenges, interventions, and impact

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The allocation of budgets for tobacco control in Indonesia faces significant challenges in the era of local autonomy, particularly at the subnational level. Historically, tobacco control programs have lacked a dedicated budget nomenclature within district health offices, making their funding vulnerable to reallocation and limiting transparency. Recognizing these issues, ADINKES (Association of Indonesia Local Health Offices) initiated an advocacy process in 2021 to address the systemic barriers to securing tobacco control budgets.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The advocacy involved collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), culminating in the establishment of a specific budget nomenclature for tobacco control. This nomenclature was formalized through Policy No. 900.1.15.5-1317 in 2023 and integrated into the Governance Information System (SIPD) to streamline planning and budgeting processes for smoke-free area (KTR) implementation. Despite these advancements, adoption by districts remained limited, with fewer than 10 districts utilizing the nomenclature in 2023 due to factors such as weak policy enforcement, fixed budget cycles, and limited awareness.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: By 2024, advocacy and dissemination efforts expanded the use of the nomenclature to 63 districts/cities, comprising 17 cities and 46 districts. This progress highlights the importance of sustained engagement with subnational governments and continued policy enforcement by MoHA. However, challenges persist, including ensuring consistent implementation across regions and strengthening local capacity to manage tobacco control programs.

CONCLUSIONS: The results demonstrate that dedicated budget nomenclatures and systematic advocacy can significantly enhance the visibility and allocation of resources for tobacco control. Moving forward, intensified dissemination efforts, capacity-building initiatives, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms are essential to sustain progress and improve public health outcomes. This study underscores the critical role of policy innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing tobacco control efforts at the subnational level.

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I QUIT: Evolving a mass smoking cessation programme to address vaping challenges

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: With the rise in e-cigarette (vape) adoption in Singapore, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) recognised the need to adapt its cessation services to support e-cigarette users. Two key programmes, the I QUIT cessation counselling programme and QuitLine tele-counselling, were enhanced to address evolving social behaviours and national policy shifts.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Launched in 2013, I QUIT began as a 28-day challenge supported by SMS reminders, ad hoc QuitLine services, and community pharmacy

consultations. Recognising the need for stronger, long-term support, the programme incorporated addiction-level surveys, expanded counselling pathways (SMS, phone, face-to-face), and six months of relapse prevention follow-ups in 2021.

In 2022, participant feedback and national initiatives inspired further enhancements, including online post-programme cotinine evaluations and plans to integrate addiction assessments with primary care under the Healthier SG initiative. By 2024, the integration was implemented, allowing addiction profiles to be shared with family physicians, enabling more holistic care for participants. Relapse follow-ups were also extended to 12 months.

To better support e-cigarette users in 2024, a profiling tool was added alongside the Fagerstrom test, vaper-centric counselling guides were introduced, and a youth virtual counselling cessation pilot was launched in schools to strengthen engagement.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: These adjustments yielded encouraging results, with quit rates increasing from 28.7% to 37.8% in 2021 and from 12.4% to 13.7% in 2022. Data on outcomes for e-cigarette users is forthcoming.

CONCLUSIONS: Tailored, behaviour-informed approaches have proven effective in enhancing cessation outcomes in Singapore. Integrating cessation efforts with primary care under the Healthier SG initiative ensures comprehensive, sustained support for participants. As e-cigarette use continues to rise, the programme's innovative adaptations, including vaper-centric counselling and youth engagement, offer scalable, impactful solutions. These measures highlight the importance of evolving cessation strategies to address emerging challenges and drive societal norm shifts against tobacco and nicotine use.

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Flavor additives in tobacco products: A challenge to reducing youth smoking in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The prevalence of smoking among 10–18-year-olds is 7.4% in Indonesia[1], affecting approximately 5.9 million adolescents. Tobacco companies have introduced various flavor additives to their products to attract young consumers, by offering a different and more enjoyable smoking experience. A 2024 Lentera Anak poll found that 91% of adolescent respondents had seen advertisements for cigarettes and e-cigarettes[2]. Notably, 46.5% of these adolescents recalled advertisements for unique and appealing flavored variants. Fruity flavors are particularly popular among young people, especially non-smokers. Although Indonesia's Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024 prohibits to use of flavor additives in tobacco and e-cigarette products, the regulation's implementation needs adjustment by two years from its issuance[3].

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: We conducted product identification and analysis on flavor additives in cigarettes and e-cigarettes to support the implementation of the ban on flavor additives in tobacco and e-cigarette products.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Field findings showed that out of 245 cigarette brands available on the market, 33.5% used fruit flavors, 9.9% used menthol, and 5.8% used coffee/tea flavors. For e-cigarette liquid variants across 1339 brands, 37.9% featured fruit flavors, while 21.2% included dessert flavors. These results confirm the tobacco industry's efforts to attract new consumers, particularly adolescents, through the use of flavors in their products[4].

CONCLUSIONS: The presence of flavors in cigarettes and e-cigarettes increases their appeal to adolescents while reducing the perceived harm of smoking. Implementing the ban on flavor additives in tobacco and e-cigarette products has the potential to decrease youth attraction to smoking, ultimately reducing smoking prevalence and protecting adolescents in Indonesia from the dangers of tobacco use.

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Prioritizing people who use tobacco for latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) screening and preventive treatment in India: Evidence for policy action

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BACKGROUND: Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI), a key driver of TB transmission, poses a significant challenge to India's TB elimination goal by 2025. Treating LTBI is central to the National Strategic Plan to End TB, emphasizing the need to expand shorter Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (TPT) regimens for high-risk groups. Tobacco users, with

compromised immunity and an elevated risk of LTBI progression, remain under-prioritized. While WHO lacks systematic testing recommendations for tobacco users due to insufficient evidence, locally tailored strategies are essential. This systematic review and meta-analysis estimates LTBI prevalence among tobacco users in India to inform high-risk group prioritization and prevention policies.

METHODS: This review, conducted in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, performed a comprehensive literature search across Medline, Embase, CINAHL, and Scopus, focusing on studies reporting LTBI prevalence among tobacco users published up to March 2024, regardless of the diagnostic method employed. Data were pooled using a random-effects model to estimate prevalence, with heterogeneity assessed via Cochrane's Q and I^2 statistics. The methodological quality of included studies was evaluated using the Joanna Briggs Institute appraisal tools.

RESULTS: From 10868 records, a total of 9 studies with 23283 individuals were included in the review. The pooled LTBI prevalence among tobacco users was 60% (95% CI: 54%-66%), compared to 31.3% in the general population. Males had a higher prevalence (65%) than females (50%), and rural populations (62%) slightly exceeded urban ones (58%). Prevalence was highest in individuals over 45 years, while younger groups (<30 years) had ~47%. Tobacco users with additional risk factors, like malnutrition and alcohol use, showed elevated prevalence (~70%). The pooled odds ratio of 1.8 (95% CI: 1.4–2.3) confirmed tobacco users were nearly twice as likely to have LTBI as non-users.

CONCLUSIONS: Our review revealed a high burden of LTBI among tobacco users, emphasizing the need to reprioritize this group for tailored TPT strategies.

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Unveiling surrogate advertising of smokeless tobacco products on Instagram: Practices and trends

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BACKGROUND: South-East-Asia accounts for 81% of global smokeless tobacco (SLT) users, with SLT consumed in various forms. To address the associated public health concerns, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) implemented comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising across traditional and digital media. However, tobacco companies have adopted surrogate advertising, using products like pan masala and mouth fresheners bearing similar brand names as SLT products. These strategies exploit legal loopholes, enabling strategic brand promotion. This study investigates surrogate advertising of SLT products on Instagram, analyzing their reach and impact through engagement metrics like likes, shares, and comments.

METHODS: A qualitative content analysis was conducted on Instagram. The methodology involves two primary components: a literature review to identify surrogate products and brands and an Instagram analysis of posts and reels using relevant hashtags and keywords.

The findings from the literature were used to contextualize and identify brands used for surrogate advertising. Instagram handles linked to surrogate products were analysed for their engagement metrics.

RESULTS: The existing literature highlights the strategic use of surrogate products, such as pan masala and mouth fresheners to promote SLT brands. Instagram reels showed significant engagement, with an average of 10742 likes per reel, peaking at 97810 likes, 768 shares, and 169 comments. Posts achieved an average of 6640 likes, with the highest likes reaching 101799, along with 499 shares and 146 comments. The results highlights that the number of posts increases during festive seasons, reflecting strategic engagement practices.

CONCLUSIONS: The use of surrogate products allows companies to bypass legal restrictions while maintain visibility in public spaces and digital platforms. Posts and Reels leverage themes like festivals, traditions, success and luxury to resonate with a broader audience and higher engagement, highlighting the need for stricter regulatory enforcement to address the public health implications of such practices.

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From cancer to cardiovascular risks: A bibliometric exploration of smokeless tobacco's toll on health

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BACKGROUND: Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use poses significant public health challenges globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where it is deeply rooted in cultural practices. SLT is consumed in various forms, including chewing tobacco, snuff, betel quid, gutkha, and khaini, and is associated with a wide range of morbidities such as oral cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and adverse pregnancy outcomes. Despite its widespread use, SLT has received less attention than combustible tobacco in global tobacco control efforts, underscoring the need for a deeper understanding of research trends and themes in SLT-associated health outcomes.

METHODS: A bibliometric analysis of 2467 articles from Scopus, published up to 2024, utilized the Population-Exposure-Outcomes framework. The search strategy included terms related to SLT (e.g., 'smokeless tobacco,' 'gutkha') and morbidities (e.g., 'oral cancer,' 'cardiovascular diseases,' 'diabetes'). It examined publication trends, geographic distribution, research themes, key authors, and collaborative networks. Advanced tools like keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping revealed emerging trends and focal areas.

RESULTS: From the analysis, 42% of publications

originated in South Asia, with India contributing 34% of the global output. Oral cancers were the most studied morbidity, appearing in 38% of articles, followed by cardiovascular diseases (22%) and diabetes (16%). Publications on metabolic disorders and pregnancy complications have shown a 25% annual growth rate over the last five years, reflecting emerging research priorities. Collaboration network analysis revealed that only 18% of studies involved international co-authorship, with limited engagement between high- and low-prevalence regions. Thematic maps highlighted underexplored areas such as reproductive health and SLT-related respiratory diseases.
CONCLUSIONS: This bibliometric analysis highlights global research trends on SLT and its morbidities, guiding researchers and policymakers in prioritizing interventions and addressing research gaps, especially in high-prevalence regions. Future efforts should promote international collaboration and explore under-researched morbidities to reduce SLT's health impact.
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Study of tobacco control law implementation in bus and waterway terminals in Bangladesh: Barriers and progress in achieving smoke-free transport

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BACKGROUND: The GATS Survey (2017) indicates that 24% of adults in Bangladesh are exposed to secondhand smoking (SHS) in public transport. The Tobacco Control Law 2005 imposes a fine of 300 BDT for smoking in public places or transport, while failure to display no-smoking signage results in a 1000 BDT fine.
This study evaluates the implementation of tobacco control laws in bus and waterway terminals in Bangladesh as of December 2023. It focuses on creating smoke-free and Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS)-free environments, assessing awareness, compliance, and enforcement mechanisms to identify progress and challenges in achieving tobacco-free public transport.
METHODS: A two-phase approach was employed, combining a baseline survey in 2023 and a compliance study in 2024. The study utilized structured surveys, in-depth interviews with key informants, and systematic on-site observations. Participants included passengers, transport workers, and regulatory authorities responsible for enforcing compliance.
Data collection involved well-designed questionnaires to capture quantitative insights and detailed visual assessments of terminal facilities. Comparative analysis with baseline data identified trends, gaps, and improvements in adherence to tobacco control measures, providing a comprehensive understanding of policy effectiveness.
RESULTS: Awareness of tobacco control laws rose among transport staff (76% from 33%) and passengers (53% from 20%). Smoking incidents among passengers decreased from 75% to 45%, and anti-tobacco signage improved from 14% to 54%. Transport staff increasingly protested against smoking incidents, while workplace smoking declined. However, enforcement challenges persist, with tobacco marketing observed in 52.94% of areas and smoking paraphernalia in 82.35%. Barriers include lack of directives, limited resources, and inconsistent compliance.
CONCLUSIONS: Significant progress has been made in awareness and reducing smoking incidents. However, enforcement gaps and pervasive tobacco marketing hinder full compliance. Strengthening enforcement, public education, and stakeholder collaboration are crucial. Achievements, including official orders and awareness campaigns, demonstrate the potential for further progress with scaled-up efforts.
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Cigarette taxes and illicit trade in Bangladesh: Dispelling industry myths through evidence

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BACKGROUND: Despite industry claims that higher taxes drive illicit trade, empirical evidence in this regard is limited in the Bangladeshi context. Therefore, an understanding of the extent and the dynamics of illicit cigarette markets is crucial for evidence-based policymaking. This study presents an independent estimate of the size and evolution of the illicit cigarette market in Bangladesh between 2009 and 2017.
METHODS: Using the gap analysis method, the study estimated the size of the illicit cigarette market by comparing reported cigarette consumption from surveys with legal sales data obtained from government records. Two rounds of Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) were used to generate the estimates and to have an understanding of the dynamics of the changes. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to account for potential underreporting and data limitations. We also compared changes in illicit market size to relative change in tax rates over time.
RESULTS: The study indicates that the share of the illicit cigarette market compared to in Bangladesh declined from 31% in 2009 to 13% in 2017 (conservative estimate), with central estimates showing a decline from 16% to 2%. Legal sales of cigarettes grew at a faster rate than reported consumption, indicating a reduction in illicit market size. Despite sustained tax increases, there was no evidence of illegal significant trade expansion during 2009-2017.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings demonstrate that even with continued increases in taxes on cigarettes, the illicit cigarette trade in Bangladesh remains low and has declined over time. Our findings provide evidence against the argument often spearheaded by the tobacco industry that higher taxes lead to increased illicit trade. Therefore, policymakers should not hesitate to implement substantial tax hikes to reduce smoking prevalence but should simultaneously strengthen enforcement measures to minimize any potential risks of illicit trade.

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Effectiveness of smoke–free local administration organizations implementing comprehensive tobacco control intervention based on the Ottawa Charter, 2021 and 2022

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BACKGROUND: Incorporating the five key action areas in Health Promotion based on the Ottawa Charter remains a challenge in tobacco control community-based interventions. This study evaluated the effectiveness of smoke-free local administration organizations (LAOs) implementing comprehensive tobacco control interventions based on the Ottawa Charter in 2022 compared to 2021.

METHODS: A participatory action research (PAR) approach was applied in 23 LAOs nationwide, participating in the smoke–free LAOs project under ASH. Each LAO identified community-specific tobacco consumption issues, including smoking prevalence, establishing public areas as designated smoke-free areas, and ensuring compliance with tobacco sales laws. Comprehensive tobacco control interventions, aligned with the five action areas of the Ottawa Charter, were implemented. Research teams supported capacity building among community personnel, provided ongoing supervision, and developed tools for data collection and evaluation. Samples of 22867 individuals aged 15 years and older were selected using a two-stage stratified cluster sampling in 2021, and 33218 individuals were selected in 2022. Observations were conducted in all public areas and stores selling tobacco products—2581 public places and 2237 stores in 2021, as well as 2409 public places and 2060 stores in 2022. Effectiveness was analyzed using Chi-square tests at a 0.05 significance level.

RESULTS: Significant improvements were observed across the 23 LAOs over two batches ($p<0.001$). Current smoking prevalence among people aged 15 years and above decreased from 19.6% to 17.5%. The proportion of cigarette smokers purchasing single cigarettes dropped from 22.0% to 14.5%, while non-compliance with tobacco sales laws among retailers declined from 42.3% to 34.5%. Additionally, the proportion of 100% smoke-free public areas meeting legal standards increased from 49.5% to 59.6%.

CONCLUSIONS: Comprehensive tobacco control intervention should be promoted and integrated into annual LAO plans to ensure sustained implementation, protecting people from the harmful effects of tobacco and improving community quality of life.

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Empowering adolescents with hearing impairment: A social media intervention for tobacco education and cessation in Oyo State, Nigeria

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Adolescents With Hearing Impairments (AWHI) face unique barriers to receiving tobacco health education, making it crucial to explore innovative interventions that leverage their preferred communication methods. Therefore, this educational intervention is designed for AWHI-registered users of at least one social media platform in Oyo State, Nigeria.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A total of 312 AWHI from 167 communities were administered a screening form using a snowball sampling technique. Among these, 65 (21.4%) participants who reported currently consuming tobacco were selected for this intervention. A semi-structured questionnaire was then used to obtain baseline information from the 61 (93.8%) consented participants on tobacco knowledge and smoking practices. The baseline outcome was used in developing a training curriculum, and participants were trained through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp for 4 weeks. Participants were followed up for six months, and the intervention was evaluated at 3 and 6 months. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and the Chi-square test.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Mean age of participants was 24.3 ± 5.6 years, and 77.9% were currently in secondary education. All (100.0%) have a Facebook account, Whatsapp (100.0%), Instagram (83.9%), and X (26.1%). Respondents with good knowledge of tobacco increased from 15.6% to 79.9% within three months and 89.1% after six months. Reported tobacco smoking daily practices reduced to 62.1% within three months and 29.4% after six months. At baseline, 18.1% and 24.7% of the participants considered themselves at risk of lung cancer and heart disease, and after six months, this increased to 67.9% and 76.9% for lung cancer and heart disease.

CONCLUSIONS: The participants demonstration of a remarkable improvement in their understanding of tobacco-related health risks and reduction in daily smoking practices illustrates the intervention's effectiveness in prompting behaviour change. Incorporating social media strategies into public health campaigns could enhance outreach and effectiveness, especially among the hearing-impaired population.

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Countermeasures against tobacco industry influence on ENDS/HTPs policies: Insights from Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The growing popularity of E-cigarette (ENDS) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) has posed significant challenges for tobacco control efforts globally, including in Vietnam. ENDS/HTPs have quickly become widespread, particularly among youth, driven by the tobacco industry's (TI) diverse marketing strategies and interference in ENDS/HTPs policy development. In response, joint efforts between NGOs and the government have been undertaken to counter TI influence and facilitate to the adoption of the ban on ENDS/HTPs in Vietnam, take effect in January 2025.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address TI interference, a series of strategies were implemented: (1) Monitoring and documenting TI tactics to establish evidence; (2) Regularly informing policymakers of TI's interference; (3) Providing real-time technical support to the government and tobacco control partners for coordinated counteraction; (4) Strengthening media capacity and engaging journalists to expose TI's false claims; (5) Mobilizing and expanding coalitions to include diverse stakeholders; and (6) Raising awareness among policymakers and the public about TI's interference and the importance of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Evidence base on TI interference was timely documented and disseminated, bolstering advocacy campaigns and coordinated responses. Policymakers became more aware of TI tactics, enabling stronger alignment in counterstrategies. Real-time technical support facilitated unified action among the government and tobacco control partners, while media engagement empowered journalists to expose misinformation and raise public awareness. Expanded coalitions, including non-health sectors, fostered a multi-sectoral response to TI influence. These efforts have contributed to support for the passage of the 2024 National Assembly Resolution banning the manufacture, trade, import, storage, transportation, and use of ENDS/HTPs in Vietnam.

CONCLUSIONS: This experience highlights the importance of sustained vigilance, thorough monitoring, multi-sector collaboration, and promoting the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC to safeguard public health policies from TI interference.

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An innovative approach to implementing FCTC Article

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite considerable success in tobacco control over the previous decades, it has been difficult for tobacco control advocates to engage government officials in proper implementation of FCTC Article 5.3. Policymakers have remained focus on issues such as advertising and product labeling, while ignoring or denying the existence of tobacco industry interference in policymaking and other areas.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: With the aforementioned issue in mind, WBB Trust, in collaboration with BATA, developed a strategy which focused on NGOs and universities instead of government institutions. They informed them of the tactics of the tobacco industry, for example, the sponsorship of quizzes and job fairs for the youth. WBB called upon those institutions to endorse and disseminate a code of conduct that prohibits them from receiving such sponsorships or working with the tobacco industry. This approach proved to be effective, since five prominent universities, Bangladesh Medical Student Society (BMSS) with 15000 medical students, Bangladesh Cancer Society, as well as 152 institutions endorsed the code, which is a major step towards resisting and preventing interference by the industry.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: By publicizing these codes of conduct, we are thus able to place pressure on government to do likewise. Bangladesh Railway responded positively to our suggestion and took the initiative to sign a code of conduct themselves, the first government agency to do so. The National Tobacco Control Cell has also moved forward with a code of conduct, though to date it is not yet signed.

CONCLUSIONS: While we are in the early stages of this process, we hope to have continuing success in convincing government departments to sign codes of conduct and be transparent about any remaining interactions with the tobacco industry, in order to gain full compliance with the FCTC Article 5.3 and prevent the tobacco industry from continuing its activities in weakening law enforcement and taxation policy.

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Health and economic burden of smoking-related cancers in China and the impact of tobacco tax increases: An economic modelling study

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BACKGROUND: Smoking is a leading cause of preventable death globally, responsible for over 7 million deaths annually, with the burden expected to rise, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In China, smoking contributes significantly to mortality, disability, poverty, and healthcare costs. While tobacco taxation is a proven strategy to reduce smoking, it remains underutilized in China. This study aims to estimate the burden of smoking-related cancers in China and evaluate the potential health and economic impacts of increasing tobacco taxes.

METHODS: In this modeling study, we simulated the disease burden of 10 smoking-related cancers under varying tobacco tax rates in China. Population data were based on the China Statistical Yearbook 2024. A Markov model was used from 2024 to 2033, with tobacco consumption and cessation modeled based on price elasticity. We evaluated the resulting reduction in disease burden and healthcare costs.

RESULTS: We assessed the impact of increasing tobacco taxes on the incidence of lung, colorectal, esophageal, stomach, liver, pancreatic, breast, cervical, kidney, and head and neck cancers. A 5% increase in tobacco tax would prevent 32272 cancer cases over 10 years, while a 10% increase would avert 64462 cases. A 13.6% increase, reaching the WHO-recommended level of 75%, could prevent 87694 cases. The largest reductions in incidence were seen in lung cancer (59602 cases), followed by stomach cancer (8212 cases) and liver cancer (7010 cases), with significant reductions across other cancer types as well. The direct medical costs saved over the 10-year period were estimated to be $314 million, $628 million, and $854 million, respectively, for the 5%, 10%, and 13.6% tax increases.

CONCLUSIONS: Smoking-related cancers impose a significant health and economic burden in China. Increasing tobacco taxes to 75% could significantly reduce the incidence of smoking-related cancers in China, lower healthcare costs, and generate substantial economic benefits.

Additional text + Co-first authors

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Comparison of smoking and quit attempt rates among people who smoke in the Netherlands and Germany, from 2016 to 2022

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BACKGROUND: The Netherlands and Germany share many cultural, economic and geographical characteristics. However, while tobacco control policies tend to be strong and comprehensive in the Netherlands, tobacco control efforts have been weak in Germany in the past decades.

METHODS: We combined data from the Netherlands Health Survey (N=52815) and the German DEBRA study (N=76838) into one dataset that is representative of the adult population in Germany and the Netherlands. Logistic regression models were used to examine differences between the two countries in trends in smoking and quit attempts between 2016 and 2022.

RESULTS: In the Netherlands smoking rates decreased from 24.1% in 2016 to 18.9% in 2022 and quit attempt rates remained stable (from 32.5% to 35.9%). In contrast, in Germany smoking rates increased from 28.6% to 36.2% and quit attempt rates dropped dramatically in the same period (from 30.5% to 9.3%).

CONCLUSIONS: The strength of tobacco control policies between the Netherlands and Germany is reflected in differences in national smoking and quit attempt rates. The differences may be explained by the effectiveness of the tobacco industry lobby versus the strength of civil society in the field of tobacco control. In order to avoid future increases in smoking rates and declines in quit attempt rates, countries should continue to implement strong and comprehensive tobacco control policies and promote smoking cessation among smokers.

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Helping individuals who smoke to quit with prolonged cytisine administration: Real-world data

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine withdrawal symptoms are intense and last more than a month. Additionally, heavy smokers cannot usually quit in 5 days in order to follow cytisine's proposed scheme of administration in the smoking cessation process. In our study, we aimed to evaluate smoking abstinence results with the use of cytisine for an extended period more than 25 days combined with intense behavioural support in a smoking cessation clinic.

METHODS: 60 smokers (22 males and 38 females) without kidney nor liver failure, aged 52.58±12.69, 52.54±40 pack years, Fagerstrom nicotine dependence 6 (IQR5-8) used cytisine administered free of charge. Cytisine was administered in a daily dose of 9mg until smoking cessation was achieved (usually between day 14-21) in highly addicted smokers with history >30 py. 9mg was continued for an additional week and then reduced gradually for a total period of two months. Intense behavioural support was additionally given in five sessions. 46.9% of participants had a prior unsuccessful quit attempt.

RESULTS: 45 out of 60 smokers (75%), who used cytisine for 2 months had succesfull smoking abstinence rates. The drug was well tolerated [vival dreams (3.3%), diarrhea (3.3%), frequent urination (3.3%), nausea (3%), vomiting (3%)]. 61.5% of smokers had comorbidities (30.7% COPD, 38.5% asthma, 31.2 % hypertension, 25% hyperlipidemia, 25% anxiety, 31.2% depression).

CONCLUSIONS: Cytisine is highly effective when used in a dosage of 9mg in smokers that are highly addicted and is well tolerated. An extended regimen for more than 25 days, could be given in smokers without renal failure under smoking cessation experts guidance. There is urgent need for further studies in order to guide health care professionals in the use of cytisine for effective

smoking cessation.

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Attitudes towards tobacco control policies among Italian adults: Insights from a representative 2024 national survey

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BACKGROUND: Innovative tobacco control policies, such as raising the minimum age for purchasing tobacco to 21 years (Tobacco 21, T21), banning tobacco sales to person born after a certain year (Smoke-Free Generation, SFG), increasing tobacco taxation, banning e-cigarettes (e-cigs) and heated tobacco products (HTP) in indoor public places and workplaces, and prohibiting tobacco and e-cigs advertising, aim to reduce smoking and secondhand smoke and aerosol exposure. This study assesses the support of the Italian population for these measures.

METHODS: A face-to-face survey was conducted among a representative sample of 3125 Italian adults. Support for T21, SFG, increasing tobacco taxation, banning e-cigs and HTPs in indoor public spaces and workplaces, and banning tobacco and e-cigs advertisements was evaluated based on sociodemographic characteristics, smoking status, and e-cigs and HTPs use.

RESULTS: Overall, 72.9% and 67.0% of respondents supported T21 and SFG laws, respectively, while 61.46% supported increasing tobacco taxes, 80.8% supported banning e-cigs and HTPs in indoor places, 81.7% supported banning e-cigs and HTPs in workplaces, and 78.2% supported banning tobacco and e-cigs advertising. Support for T21 and the advertising ban increases with increasing age (p-values for trend <0.01). People with higher income are more supportive to tax increases and workplace bans on e-cigs and HTPs (multivariable odds ratios, OR, ranging between 1.56 and 1.94). Never smokers show significantly higher support for all policies compared to current smokers (OR ranging between 0.05 and 0.22). HTP users are less supportive of the indoor and workplace ban on e-cigs and HTPs and the advertising ban (OR ranging between 0.41 and 0.59).

CONCLUSIONS: In Italy, there is widespread public support for new tobacco control legislation, particularly among never smokers and in older age groups. Public awareness campaigns should aim to increase support among smokers, young people and other less supportive groups.

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Death and disability due to bidi consumption in India: Findings from a country-wide hospital-based primary survey

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BACKGROUND: Indian cigarillos (bidi) are a low-cost alternative to cigarettes and treated as a cottage industry with lax taxation and regulations. It is often considered 'safer' than cigarettes due to their marketed herbal origins. As the existing mortality and morbidity data on bidi is largely fragmented, this study was conducted to generate empirical evidences on absolute number of death and disability at national and subnational levels as a result of bidi consumption in India.

METHODS: This hospital-based country-wide case-control survey was conducted to gather bidi consumption history from patients diagnosed with COPD, Hypertension, IHD and TB, visiting health care facilities across 11 Indian states representing all the zonal divisions of the country. Gathered consumption values were used to calculate Population Attributable Fraction, which were then applied to the total deaths and DALYs from Global Burden of Disease (GBD) database for aforementioned diseases to arrive at final estimates.

RESULTS: From a total of 1012 study participants, attributable fraction of bidi consumption amongst diseased individuals was estimated to be 0.35 for TB, 0.22 for IHD, 0.23 for COPD and 0.09 for Hypertension. Applying these values to the global burden of disease (GBD 2021) data provided an estimate of 757590 annual deaths and 20168489.73 annual loss of DALYs as a result of bidi consumption in India. States of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and West Bengal alone borne nearly half (48.42%) of the national mortality burden.

CONCLUSIONS: The study provides novel estimates of deaths and DALYs attributable to bidi consumption in India at national and subnational levels. The findings underscore the significant health burden attributable to bidi smoking with disproportionate burden in certain states, highlighting urgent need for targeted interventions in high-burden regions, robust policy measures and stricter regulation of bidi industry to safeguarding public health from such preventable burden of disease.

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Countering tobacco industry interference for law amendment in Pakistan through effective advocacy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2024, Tobacco Industry reached out to the Pakistan's Ministry of National Health Service Regulation and Coordination (MONHSR&C) to request for law amendment (SRO revision) that would permit the industry to manufacture and export cigarette packs with less than 20 cigarettes from Pakistan.

It was challenging from the prospective of impacting the public health across the globe, easy accessibility to the youth, impacting lower income tier as easy customer base, non-compliant country to the international obligations as signatory to FCTC (Pakistan) and also posed threat of increased tobacco consumption and easy accessibility to youth as being conveniently available in local market as

well.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: CTFK and the partner organizations in Pakistan strongly opposed the TI request by engaging key parliamentarians, media and health activists to convey concerns to MONHSR&C for the drastic impact of revision on local market and global image of Pakistan especially in relevance to the FCTC obligations. Extensive efforts were channelized to generate public response and over 350 letters were sent to Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) raising the public concerns for this revision through multiple civil society organizations, public health professionals, youth activists, students and through public health institutes/universities.

Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of National Assembly, Health Minister of Punjab Province and Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Region were also sensitized to write letters of concern to MONHSR&C to review the decision.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: TI request for law amendment remain halted by MONHSR&C and TI lost USD 20.5 million export contract to Sudan for 10 stick cigarette packs. It not only avoided the TI efforts to weaken the Pakistan tobacco control laws but it also saved other (Africa Region) countries from easy access of small cigarette packs.

CONCLUSIONS: Public led campaigns and strong advocacy efforts to safeguard the public health as top priority should never be undermined.

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Consolidated efforts that foiled tobacco industry attempts to water down Nigeria's Tobacco Control Act

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Nigeria enacted the Tobacco Control Act in 2015 and the Nigerian Tobacco Control Regulations in 2019. The Tobacco industry has long-standing history of plotting to weaken public health laws. One of it's recent attempts was the submission of multiple bills to amend existing provisions of the Tobacco laws viz: 'A bill for an Act to amend the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 and ensure that the implementation of this Act is carried out by the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control and for related matter 2024' ; ''A bill for an Act to amend the National Tobacco Smoking (Control) Act 2015 to impose stiffer penalties for smoking of tobacco in public places and related matters'' and 'A bill for an Act to amend the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 to cure certain defects in the Act, ensure its effective implementation in Nigeria and address the lacuna that may be easily exploited by the Tobacco industry in Nigeria; and for related matters''.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) along side several stakeholders, submitted detailed memorandum to challenge the proposed bills, highlighting the dangers posed by the industry to weaken existing laws and called for an amendment to strengthen Nigeria's tobacco control laws. Furthermore, CAPPA engaged progressive parliamentarians with interest in public health issues to support its position. It also mobilized the media for widespread coverage of the issues and build public outrage against the industry's agenda.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: These multi-faceted approaches, played pivotal role in ensuring that the existing tobacco control laws are preserved. It set precedents that future tobacco industry interference will be met with strong and strategic oppositions.

CONCLUSIONS: There is need for vigilance and strategic response to protect tobacco control laws from incessant industry interference which can come via amendment bills

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Putting the NTCP mechanism to work: Interdepartmental coordination to ensure 100% Tobacco-Free Village implementation in Amreli District, Gujarat

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use poses significant health, social, and environmental issues. Amreli district, in Gujarat's Saurashtra region, has a population of around 1.51 million people (Census 2011), spread across 603 villages in 11 talukas. Amreli, known for its proactive initiatives, has excelled in executing state directives for initiatives such as ToFEI, Tobacco-Free Village, and Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign, displaying its dedication to promoting healthier communities with tobacco control programs.

METHODS: The Tobacco-Free Village (TFV) campaign in Amreli district followed national, state (STCC), and district-level (DTCC) orders issued in September 2024. With technical support from Faith Foundation for translation of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) guidelines into the vernacular language – Gujarati, District tobacco control cell Amreli engaged key stakeholders including health department officials and mechanism, Panchayati Raj, Education department. On the 2nd Oct 2024, 603 Village-Level Coordination Committees (VLCCs) were formed and led by Village sarpanch, conducted awareness campaigns through health talks, rallies, street plays, puppet shows, and IEC material distribution, incorporated tobacco control in Gram Sabha meetings, facilitated the passage of tobacco-free resolutions, appointed Village Tobacco Control Ambassadors, and provided capacity-building training on tobacco-related legislation for effective implementation. Compliance of tobacco-free village will be monitored quarterly by DTCC.

RESULTS: •VLCCs established across the district.

• 603 Gram Sabha meetings conducted for stakeholder sensitization.

• 603 Village Tobacco Control Ambassadors designated.

• 18847 stakeholders/individuals participated in awareness campaigns across all the villages level institutions namely

CHC/PHC, Schools, Panchayat house etc.
• 603 villages passed tobacco-free village resolutions.
• 42 villages officially declared as tobacco-free village.
CONCLUSIONS: The 'Tobacco-Free Village' Amreli District demonstrates the effectiveness of collaborative and community-driven strategies in achieving tobacco control especially GO- NGO collaboration. The widespread participation and successful implementation highlight the potential for similar programs to create healthier environments. This model has a scope of replicability across the state.
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Smoking prevalence and socioeconomic disparities in 23 Sub-Saharan African countries: The role of changes in tax scores post-WHO FCTC implementation

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BACKGROUND: This study examines the relationship between changes in tobacco excise tax scores and changes in smoking prevalence while exploring gender and socioeconomic disparities in tobacco smoking in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) since the 2005 implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).
METHODS: Data was obtained from adult participants in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted in 23 SSA countries between 2005 and 2023. We compared smoking prevalence between the first DHS survey conducted post-2005 and the most recent DHS survey available for each country. We explored differences in change in smoking prevalence by gender, income, and education level within each country and changes in smoking prevalence by changes in tax scores across countries. Smoking prevalence was computed as the percentage of respondents who reported current tobacco smoking. Socioeconomic status was assessed using wealth index quantiles, while the highest educational attainment was categorized into low (<high school) and high (≥high school) levels.
RESULTS: A higher increase in tax score was associated with a greater decrease in smoking prevalence over the two survey periods compared for each country (R2=0.24). In most countries, male smoking prevalence have decreased significantly, while female smoking prevalence have increased in some countries, especially in West-Central African sub-region. Smoking prevalence was consistently higher among the poorest and the least educated. These socioeconomic disparities increased, particularly in the Eastern-Southern African Sub-region, between the initial round of DHS surveys compared to the latest recorded round of DHS surveys
CONCLUSIONS: There is an urgent need to address the sociocultural and economic factors driving tobacco smoking among women and individuals of lower socioeconomic status. The implementation of the WHO FCTC, including significant excise tax increases and continuous surveillance and enforcement of the tobacco control laws, is critical to reducing the overall burden of tobacco-related diseases and the emerging disparities across SSA.
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Co-production in practice: Inter-sectoral coordination for tobacco control policy implementation

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Intersectoral collaboration is vital to addressing complex public health challenges and achieving health equity including tobacco control. However, policy implementation has predominantly been led by the health sector, despite the cross-cutting nature of tobacco control policies that require active involvement from diverse departments such as police, urban development, excise, education, and civil society. In India, the varied administrative structures across states contribute to differing levels of understanding and engagement among stakeholders in implementing tobacco control policies.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In order to understand what worked in which state and under what circumstances, we conducted two regional consultations covering 20 Indian states and brought together stakeholders as part of a realist evaluation in an implementation research study titled ANUSHTHANA. Through these consultations we aimed to identify challenges, share best practices, and enhance inter-sectoral coordination in the implementation of tobacco control policies. Stakeholder mapping was undertaken using official databases and civil society networks to ensure comprehensive and mixed, even ensuring gender balance representation.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The first consultation, involving 39 stakeholders from 9 southern states was conducted virtually and the second in a hybrid format, with 20 participants from northern and northeastern states. Stakeholders included representatives from health, education, police, and food safety departments, academia, and civil society organizations. The consultations provided a platform for stakeholder engagement through focus group discussions cantered on awareness, enforcement, intersectoral coordination, and tobacco industry interference. Key outcomes included identification of implementation barriers, facilitation of interdepartmental knowledge exchange, and development of a Communities of Practice (CoP) to sustain collaborative efforts. Overall, 90 stakeholders from 20 states participated, contributing actionable insights and strengthening multi-sectoral partnerships.
CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco control is one public health aspect that requires dire attention from various stakeholders. The consultation helped in understanding that policy implementation around tobacco control do not work uniformly in all political and administrative settings.

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A phygital approach to support quitting tobacco

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco addiction poses significant global health risks, however quitting is challenging and necessitates innovative approaches. A hybrid approach combining physical and virtual therapy could offer significant benefits. This study evaluates an in-person quit program with behavioural counseling and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) supplemented by mobile application, integrating nudging, gamification, and cognitive behavioral therapy principles to empower individuals in their cessation journey and phone-call based follow up.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Participants (n=600) received in-person behavioral counseling or a combination of counseling and NRT, supported by a structured low cost follow-up mechanism in a community and hospital setting in India. Community health workers conducted monthly call-based check-ins to motivate participants and maintain accountability. The app served as a supplementary tool, enabling users to log tobacco consumption, monitor cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Nudging techniques redirected cravings toward engaging activities, while gamified elements like leaderboards and rewards reinforced motivation. A peer support system encouraged mutual accountability and emotional resilience.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Preliminary results for the first 120 participants over a 6 months period showed that among two intervention groups (n=60 each), the NRT and counseling group achieved a 60% complete cessation rate (n=36) and a 40% reduction rate (n=24). The counseling-only group attained 48.3% complete cessation (n=29) and 51.7% reduction (n=31). While NRT showed a trend toward higher cessation rates, the difference was not statistically significant (χ^2=1.69, p=0.194). Both approaches outperformed conventional cessation programs, which typically achieve 15-35% success rates. Regular follow-ups by healthcare workers significantly improved self-regulation and participant satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS: This in-person quit program, supported by a mobile app, demonstrated higher quit rates than traditional methods, with both intervention modalities achieving approximately 1.7-2 times greater success. Behavioral counseling, NRT, and virtual follow-up support were critical in fostering motivation and accountability and the study will further examine the impact of combining virtual follow up with cessation therapy.

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A rainbow smokescreen? Tobacco industry and pinkwashing in Switzerland

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BACKGROUND: Positioning itself as a progressive and inclusive advocate for LGBTIQ rights has become a common strategy employed by the tobacco industry (TI), and Switzerland is no exception. This study analyses the manifestation of 'pinkwashing' within the Swiss context, a country marked by major delays in tobacco control. The research seeks to explore the scope and mechanisms of these strategies.

METHODS: A study of TI's communications and its links with LGBTIQ associations was carried out on TI's websites, social networks and internal documents, as well as on the activities of LGBTIQ associations. Findings were then compared with TI financial support of political parties and the smoking rate among LGBTIQ people in Switzerland.

RESULTS: This study highlights the strong use of LGBTIQ themes as a public relations tool by TI in Switzerland. Philip Morris International (PMI) and Japan Tobacco International (JTI) have both received the Swiss LGBTI label from local Swiss LGBTIQ associations, actively participate in Pride events, and extensively promote their involvement through websites and social media.

As in other countries, their financial support for politics contrasts sharply with these commitments. PMI has been a major supporter of the far-right UDC party, known for its strong opposition to extending rights to LGBTIQ individuals. Meanwhile, LGBTIQ people, heavily targeted by TI marketing, have significant higher smoke rate in Switzerland.

CONCLUSIONS: This situation is made possible by the laxity of Swiss legislation. Public support of LGBTIQ-rights offers TI serious commercial gains. Freedom and inclusion are a pillar of its discourse, enabling it to attract new employees and present itself as a generous partner and a good neighbour. LGBTIQ people should be informed of TI duplicity and Switzerland should, as recommended in Article 13, ban TI's 'socially responsible' practices in order to put an end to the use of its 'pinkwashing' strategy.

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Countering tobacco industry interference: Collaborative strategies leading to legislative success in Ghana

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry is known for employing tactics to undermine public health policies globally. In Ghana, the Ghana NCD Alliance, in collaboration with Vision for Alternative Development (VALD-Ghana) as the lead organization, spearheaded efforts to counter such interference during the legislative process of the Excise Duty Amendment Act 2023

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A rapid study dubbed 'The Economics of Tobacco Control in Ghana' and also 'Ghana Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023' was conducted by VALD to document instances of tobacco industry interference. These findings were instrumental in shaping

advocacy strategies that involved engaging lawmakers, civil society, and the public. By highlighting the industry's tactics, the collaboration raised awareness and mobilized support to safeguard public health priorities.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The study revealed various strategies used by the tobacco industry to influence policymaking, including lobbying, misinformation campaigns, and exploiting regulatory gaps. The industry and its allies argued that stricter tobacco control measures, such as increased taxation, would result in widespread job losses, economic hardship, claims that were often exaggerated to create fear and resistance. The Ghana NCD Alliance and VALD utilized the study's findings to advocate effectively, providing evidence that the health and economic benefits of tobacco control outweigh these concerns. Their efforts led to the successful passage of the Excise Duty Amendment Act 2023, which strengthened tobacco taxation policies despite significant industry opposition. This milestone underscored the importance of prioritizing public health and making decisions based on accurate, reliable data

CONCLUSIONS: The collaborative efforts of Ghana's civil society organizations, particularly the Ghana NCD Alliance and VALD-Ghana, underscore the critical role of vigilance and strategic advocacy in countering tobacco industry interference. This experience demonstrates that collective action, informed by evidence, is key to advancing public health policy and protecting populations from the harmful effects of tobacco.

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Perceptions of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products among individuals who have never used them in the European Union

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BACKGROUND: The European Union (EU) issued its most recent tobacco product regulation recommendation in November 2022, expanding smoking restrictions to emerging nicotine products. This recommendation bans products that contain characterising flavours and packaging designed to alter the sensory experience. This study examines the perceptions of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) among never-tobacco and nicotine users, and how these perceptions vary across socioeconomic subgroups, aiming to inform the EU's efforts to refine its regulatory framework.

METHODS: We conducted a cross-sectional analysis of the Special Eurobarometer 99.3 (May-June 2023) across the EU among never-tobacco and nicotine users (n=13436). We estimated the weighted prevalence of four perceptions of e-cigarettes and HTPs: appeal, perceived effectiveness in aiding smoking cessation, views on whether they should be regulated like cigarettes, and support for keeping them out of sight in retail settings. Multi-level Poisson regression models, adjusted for sociodemographic factors, examined associations with perceptions of emerging nicotine products.

RESULTS: Perceptions of e-cigarettes and HTPs varied across EU Member States (MS) and societal groups. Men and younger age groups were more likely to find these products appealing. While younger age groups viewed these products as effective aids for smoking cessation, students, housepersons, and retirees were less convinced. In contrast, women, those with higher education, those without financial difficulty, and those living with children were supportive of regulating e-cigarettes and HTPs as strictly as cigarettes and keeping them out of sight in retail settings.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings reveal variations in perceptions of e-cigarettes and HTPs across EU MS and population subgroups. These insights can guide the EU's regulatory updates, particularly in light of the recent revision of smoke-free environment guidelines, helping MS design targeted policies that engage relevant groups, increase public support for regulation, and prevent the uptake of these products among never-users.

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Civil society organisations as key actors in tobacco control policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries: An interview-based study

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BACKGROUND: As tobacco control policies have seen significant global uptake over the past two decades, understanding their implementation processes is critical to ensuring policy effectiveness. Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) bear a disproportionate burden of tobacco-related harm, and progress in tobacco control often lags behind that of high-income countries. This study, part of a larger research project on tobacco control policy implementation in LMICs, focuses on the role of civil society organisations (CSOs), exploring their implementation activities and examining the facilitators and barriers that influence their efforts.

METHODS: Six LMICs, one from each WHO region, were selected based on their adoption of smoke-free policies, health warnings, or tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) restrictions—three key MPOWER measures—between 2012 and 2020. In each country, semi-

structured interviews were conducted with advocates, public officials, and staff from international organisations. Data were analysed thematically.

RESULTS: Participants from all six countries reported that CSOs engaged in several implementation activities, including: (1) raising public awareness, (2) training implementers, (3) monitoring compliance and exposing violations, and (4) supporting public bodies, for example, in developing regulations and enforcing policy. Key facilitators of these activities included public and political support, while barriers encompassed tobacco industry interference, regulatory gaps, and limited resources. A critical challenge was the lack of or reduction in funding following policy adoption, with small, short-term projects proving insufficient to sustain efforts. Variations by policy type were noted; for instance, industry interference was less prominent for smoke-free policies, while public support was less essential for health warnings than for other measures.

CONCLUSIONS: This study shows that CSOs are essential actors in tobacco control policy implementation in resource-limited settings, addressing gaps in awareness, capacity-building, and monitoring. It also highlights the need to explore strategies that can better support CSOs and ensure the long-term effectiveness of tobacco control policies in LMICs.

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From puff to policy: Unveiling the realities of e-cigarette use in Dutch Smoke and Aerosol Free Environments (SAFE)

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since July 2020, regulations on smoke-free places in the Netherlands have been extended to e-cigarettes. Authorities have limited data on the compliance with the ban regarding the use of e-cigarettes. This study aimed to gain insight into the extent of the usage of e-cigarettes in smoke and aerosol free environments (SAFE), the awareness of people using e-cigarettes in SAFE and the challenges for people who enforce the ban in such places.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: We held interviews with people who enforce the ban in SAFE and asked them about their regulations and challenges regarding enforcing the ban. In addition, we held interviews with young people who use e-cigarettes and we distributed a questionnaire among people who use e-cigarettes and asked them where they use e-cigarettes and whether they knew it was allowed in such places.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Over a third of the participants indicated to have used e-cigarettes in places where the smoking ban applies. This was particularly common in nightlife venues, train stations, schoolyards and outdoor locations where the ban applies. The awareness that e-cigarette use is also banned at smoke-free places is relatively low. Many participants believe that e-cigarette use is allowed in nightlife venues (13.4%), schoolyards (24.2%) and train stations (37.2%), while others did not know if it was allowed in these places or not (10.4%, 12.1% and 14.8% respectively). People who enforce the ban at public transport locations, sport clubs or café's claimed that the smoking ban is in general actively enforced, however there is still room for some improvement.

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights a significant gap in awareness of inclusion of e-cigarettes in smokefree regulation, and compliance with these bans. Despite active enforcement and general understanding of the smoking ban, the findings suggest a need for enhanced educational efforts to address misconceptions regarding the use of e-cigarettes in SAFE.

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Insights from the Muhammadiyah Independent Farmers School as a key strategy to support tobacco control and farmer welfare

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In Indonesia, tobacco farmers are often positioned by the tobacco industry as opponents of tobacco control policies. However, their main challenges stem from external factors such as unpredictable weather, unhealthy trading systems, and monopolistic practices, rather than from tobacco control itself. To address these issues, the Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Centre at the University of Muhammadiyah Magelang established the Muhammadiyah Independent Farmer School. This initiative aims to improve farmers' welfare, reduce dependence on the tobacco industry, and increase understanding of tobacco control.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The school employs an action research approach, integrating practical training with research to empower farmers. It focuses on enhancing agricultural and livestock skills to encourage crop diversification and transitions away from tobacco farming. Since its inception, 315 farmers from Magelang and Temanggung districts—major tobacco-producing regions in Central Java—have participated. Training includes hands-on experience in alternative farming practices, market strategies, and education on the benefits of tobacco control.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The program has successfully shifted both practices and perspectives. Of the 315 trained farmers, 246 have transitioned to alternative crops, and 69 have diversified into agriculture and livestock. These efforts have enhanced productivity and income while fostering support for tobacco control policies.

CONCLUSIONS: The Muhammadiyah Independent Farmer School offers a scalable model for addressing the economic and social challenges faced by tobacco farmers. Recommendations include expanding the program to other regions, strengthening market access for alternative crops, and integrating farmer education into broader tobacco control strategies. This initiative demonstrates the potential for empowering farmers to

achieve sustainable livelihoods and advance public health goals.

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Cost-effectiveness analysis on intervention for illicit bidi trade control

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BACKGROUND: The illicit bidi trade in India undermines tobacco control efforts, contributes to significant revenue losses, and perpetuates unregulated production and consumption. This poses substantial challenges to public health and the enforcement of tobacco control policies. This study evaluates the cost-effectiveness of interventions aimed at controlling the illicit bidi trade.

METHODS: A cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted using a decision-analytic model to compare interventions, including enhanced supply chain monitoring, and technology-driven solutions like digital track and trace systems. Data on intervention costs, revenue recovery, and health outcomes i.e. Disability-Adjusted Life Years [DALYs] averted were obtained from government reports, peer-reviewed literature, and economic modelling. Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratios (ICERs) were calculated using the cost variable of the interventions and from the existing literature.

RESULTS: The analysis found that implementing digital tracking systems and strengthening enforcement mechanisms were the most cost-effective interventions, with ICERs below the threshold of India's per capita GDP. The ICER of 0.1026 suggests that for each additional DALY averted, the cost is ₹0.1026. These interventions demonstrated significant potential for reducing illicit trade, improving tax compliance, and decreasing bidi consumption. Public awareness campaigns enhanced the effectiveness of enforcement measures when implemented concurrently, while standalone efforts yielded limited impact. The combined approach resulted in substantial reductions in DALYs, increased government revenue, and improved regulatory compliance.

CONCLUSIONS: Stronger enforcement mechanisms, coupled with digital tracking and public awareness initiatives, are highly cost-effective strategies for curbing the illicit bidi trade. Policymakers should prioritize a multi-pronged approach to maximize health and economic outcomes while addressing the regulatory gaps enabling illicit trade. Further studies should explore the long-term sustainability of these interventions and assess their impact on informal bidi sector workers.

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Integrating smoking cessation interventions into HIV settings in Botswana: Step one intervention phase of Botswana smoking abstinence reinforcement trial

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BACKGROUND: Botswana faces a high prevalence of HIV, along with significant smoking rates and limited access to cessation interventions. The Botswana Smoking Abstinence Reinforcement Trial (BSMART) evaluates the effectiveness of combining Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) with varenicline, delivered by lay health workers (LHWs) and nurse prescribers and dispensers (NPDs) within routine HIV care.

METHODS: BSMART utilizes a stepped-wedge, hybrid Type 2 effectiveness-implementation framework comprising three steps across fifteen HIV facilities, enrolling participants in both control and intervention phases. During the intervention phase of step one sites, LHWs, and NPDs from a national referral hospital (NRH), two district hospitals, and two clinics received training on the implementation of SBIRT alongside varenicline delivery. Adults living with HIV were screened for smoking by LHWs. Those who met the inclusion criteria- ⩾18 years old and on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for at least six months and consented to participate were offered SBIRT and referrals to varenicline-supported cessation services provided by the trained NPDs. Training for LHWs and NPDs was conducted at the study sites in July 2024, with participant recruitment occurring from September 2024 to January 2025.

RESULTS: Twenty-seven healthcare providers were trained across five sites including 13 of 14 (93%) LHWs and 14 of 18 (78%) NPDs. Of 2044 individuals screened, 180 (8.8%) self-reported as smokers, of whom 140 (77.8%) met the criteria for enrollment. Among eligible participants, 125 (89%) consented to participate and received SBIRT. Of those who received SBIRT, 112 (80%) were eligible for varenicline, and all 112 (100%) accepted a referral to cessation services, with all initiating varenicline treatment.

CONCLUSIONS: Step one intervention phase of the BSMART demonstrates the feasibility of integrating smoking cessation interventions into routine HIV care, highlighting the potential for scalable and sustainable strategies to reduce smoking prevalence among PLWH in similar low-resource settings.

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Development and implementation of a strategic framework to reduce supply of and demand for illicit tobacco at a sub-national level

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Illicit tobacco undermines effective tobacco control. Tobacco can be cheap and easily available in communities which already have high smoking rates, keeping people addicted and enabling children to afford cigarettes.

There is strong national action on illicit tobacco but action is also needed and delivered at sub-national levels to address the ongoing challenge of availability. This requires partnership working between local and regional regulatory teams and those working in public health.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: http://www.fresh-balance.co.uk is the North East of England's regional tobacco control programme funded by local government and regional health partners. Since its launch in 2005, Fresh has worked closely with local and regional regulatory teams and the national revenue department. In 2006, it pioneered partnership workingon tackling illicit tobacco. Evaluation showed this was an 'exemplar of partnership working' which 'should be rolled out nationally'.

This approach is encapsulated in a strategic framework of eight key strands for reducing supply and demand within broader tobacco control programmes:

- Developing partnerships
- Engaging frontline workers
- Generating intelligence
- Delivering enforcement
- Marketing and communications
- Working with businesses
- Protecting policies from the tobacco industry
- Assessing progress.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Delivery of the framework has resulted in ongoing sustained action to address illicit tobacco. The North East of England region has developed strong partnerships between health, regulation and the revenue department, resulting in the delivery of insight-led demand reduction campaigns, generating over 14,000 intelligence reports for use by enforcement partners since 2017, biannual tracking of the illicit tobacco market, active enforcement and successful collaboration. It is currently estimated that the illicit market in the region is 14% though enforcement action suggests that it still remains a problem in some areas.

All activity complies with WHO FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines.

CONCLUSIONS: The strategic framework for illicit tobacco supports partnership working and can be applied at all levels.

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Collaborative strategies for advancing tobacco control: Lessons from 14 countries across Latin America, Africa, and Asia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Over the past 20 years, a collaborative research initiative coordinated by the Institute for Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy (IECS) has engaged over 50 researchers and decision-makers across Latin American countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Honduras—as well as Nigeria and India. This initiative evaluates the burden of disease attributable to smoking and examines the economic and health impacts of MPOWER interventions. It was designed to generate high-quality information to support the implementation of MPOWER public policies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The project addressed these challenges through regional collaboration and robust evidence generation, including the disease burden and health and economic analyses of tobacco tax increases, plain packaging, smoke-free environments, and advertising bans. Locally tailored resources, such as infographics with country-specific data, local-language policy briefs, and peer-reviewed publications, empowered policymakers to design and implement policies. Additionally, webinars and policy dialogues enhanced advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The project produced evidence on the tobacco-attributable burden of disease and economic costs of tobacco use, as well as the expected impact of MPOWER interventions. Over 19 peer-reviewed publications and more than 200 documents in various formats, including infographics and policy briefs targeting decision-makers and other specific audiences, were developed, supporting public policies in multiple countries. Multi-country papers and regional policy dialogues have advanced global and regional tobacco control agendas. The study's findings have been featured in over 600 mass media appearances across Latin America and Nigeria, achieving significant local visibility and political positioning of tobacco control, and were recognized with the WHO Non-Tobacco Day award.

CONCLUSIONS: Collaboration is essential to advancing tobacco control policies. This project showcases an evidence-based advocacy model that leverages regional expertise, engages stakeholders, and promotes MPOWER policies globally.

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Advancing implementation of smoke-free policies: An observational compliance study in Sindh, Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco consumption and exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) remain significant public health challenges in Pakistan. The Government enacted the 'Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance' in 2002, mandating creation of smoke-free public places. Compliance with this ordinance is crucial to protect the public from SHS. In Karachi, district Tobacco Control Cells (TCCs) undertook a 'Tobacco-Smoke-Free Karachi Initiative' in two districts, South and East, in 2021, expanding to Hyderabad and two new districts of Karachi, Keamari and Central, in 2023-24.
METHODS: A cross-sectional observational study was carried out by Sindh TCC and the University of Karachi in October-November 2024 to assess compliance with the law in all five districts. A total of 1500 venues were visited across 10 venue categories. The enumerators collected data on the presence of active smoking, ashtrays, cigarette litter, designated smoking areas and no-smoking signage. Data were collected on mobile phones using either online forms or physical forms when internet was unavailable; analysis was conducted in Excel.
RESULTS: Compliance rates varied by district and across venue types but with overall high compliance in East and South Districts and low compliance in the three districts of Central, Keamari and Hyderabad. The full results will be presented demonstrating the difference between the two groups which is found to be greater in venues with very high levels of observed smoking in the three districts. For example, smoking was observed in 8% and 6% of restaurants in East and South Districts, respectively, compared to 58%-68% in the other three districts, an approximately seven-fold difference. However, in health facilities, smoking was observed in 28%-38% in the three districts compared with 10%-11% in East and South, an approximately three-fold difference.
CONCLUSIONS: The compliance with smoke-free polices is substantially higher in East and South District following efforts of tobacco control cells and enforcement agencies.
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Mystery shopping of tobacco/nicotine products and alcoholic beverages in Europe: The JAPreventNCD project

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BACKGROUND: Use of tobacco/nicotine and alcohol is usually initiated in adolescence, indicating the importance of decreasing the accessibility of these products to youth. Most countries have set bans on sales of these products to minors, but the infringements are common. Effective enforcement of these bans is the key in preventing sales to minors. Mystery shopping is one of the methods of checking compliance to age bans. Our aim was to describe the status of mystery shopping implementation and its characteristics in European countries.
METHODS: JA Prevent Non-communicable diseases (JAPreventNCD) is a project aiming to reduce the burden of cancer and non-communicable diseases in European Union. As part of this project, a questionnaire was developed to gather information on mystery shopping practices for tobacco/nicotine and alcohol in European countries. National experts from 36 countries (35 European countries and Israel) who could provide the data were identified and invited to complete an online questionnaire on mystery shopping implementation in their countries.
RESULTS: Experts from 31 countries provided data for their countries. Mystery shopping is implemented in 20 countries (19 European countries and Israel), either regularly (14) or occasionally (6). The characteristics of implementation of mystery shopping in different countries will be presented, including mystery shoppers' characteristics, selection of points of sales, processes of purchase attempts, data collection, funding and sustainability.
CONCLUSIONS: Mystery shopping of tobacco/nicotine and alcohol as one of the methods of checking compliance to age bans is carried out in numerous European countries, however the implementation differs. The description of the mystery shopping implementation can support further expansion and strengthening of mystery shopping practices by providing the experience and practices of different countries and thus support more effective prevention of use of tobacco/nicotine and alcohol among youth.
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Digital infrastructure for periodic surveillance on tobacco industry interferences at the points of sale of tobacco products for tobacco control

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than 8 million people a year around the world. In Bangladesh, the burden from tobacco is alarming: 35 percent of adults are currently using tobacco. The objective of the article is to show the mechanism of using the digital infrastructure in periodic monitoring and controlling the tobacco industry interferences.
METHODS: Grambangla Unnayan Committee has developed a surveillance software to document and monitor the incidences of violations of Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS) bans

at the Point of Sales (POS) of tobacco products. Two series of periodic surveillance were conducted during two consecutive project periods for tobacco control supported by Vital Strategies and The Bloomberg Philanthropies.

RESULTS: Online surveillance system recorded data of 9990 POS in 18 municipalities during 2nd round in 2022 and identified 14153 advertisements by different types. Thus average prevalence of advertisement per POS we 1.42. However, in first round of surveillance in 2019 a total of 21810 advertisements i.e. incidences of TAPS violations were recorded at 6820 POS in 12 municipalities. Thus the average prevalence of advertisement per POS was 3.2. Advertisement reduced by 55.6%. It was found that there was no tobacco advertisement material i.e. incidence of TAPS ban violations at 2.6 percent POS during first round of online surveillance in 2019, but during second round of surveillance in 2022 it was found that 31.3 percent of the POS were found free of tobacco advertisement material i.e. incidence of TAPS ban violations.

CONCLUSIONS: Comparative analysis of two series of data of consecutive surveillance in 2019 and 2022 show that a digital infrastructure in monitoring violations of TAPS ban and effective tobacco control interventions of GUC have brought considerable success in curbing tobacco industry interference.

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Advanced artificial intelligence techniques for understanding public tobacco control policy debate

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco control faces significant challenges due to complex narratives that obscure public health messages and the tobacco industry's efforts to spread misinformation to weaken policy initiatives. These challenges complicate sentiment analysis of online content, hindering effective advocacy of tobacco-related discussions.

METHODS: This research introduces an intelligent system to support tobacco control experts in policy advocacy by efficiently classifying and analyzing online media. The system employs advanced techniques to collect Vietnamese datasets and uses a novel fine-tuning of the NS-PhoBERT model, combining the Vietnamese pre-trained PhoBERT framework with Neutrosophic theory to address uncertainty and inconsistencies in information. Applied to 1038 news articles on tobacco company corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in Vietnam in 2023, the system performs tasks such as classification and sentiment analysis with high accuracy.

RESULTS: Experimental results demonstrate the system's ability to efficiently screen and analyze large volumes of articles, identifying content that supports the tobacco industry or subtly undermines public health advocacy. This saves significant time and resources, allowing experts to focus on uncovering new insights critical for shaping effective tobacco control policies.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the potential of intelligent systems to transform public health advocacy by equipping experts with advanced tools to combat misinformation and strengthen tobacco control policies efficiently and effectively. By enhancing accuracy and consistency in policy analysis, the system supports real-time monitoring and evaluation, empowering public health organizations to refine strategies, counter misinformation, and advocate for stronger policies. Scalable and replicable, this tool is a valuable resource for future public health campaigns, streamlining analysis processes and ensuring reliable sentiment tracking over time.

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Tobacco industry interference in the office of the President of Sri Lanka

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BACKGROUND: Sri Lanka is a democratic, socialist, republic in South Asia governed by an Executive President elected by people. Since the year 2000, six Executive Presidents from three major political camps led the country. Sri Lanka managed to halve its tobacco smoking prevalence (>35% to <15%) and reduce daily smoking prevalence to less than 10%. What were the major tobacco control policy changes during the era and how did the tobacco industry attempt to influence the heads of states in those processes?

METHODS: This is a cross analysis of investigative research conducted by the Centre for Combating Tobacco from 2019 to 2024. The primary data collection methods used were key informant interviews and content analysis of legal, policy, media, industry and other documents. Thematic analysis was used in a mixed inductive-deductive approach.

RESULTS: During the era Sri Lanka enacted a comprehensive tobacco control framework (2006), implemented 80% pictorial health warnings (2015), banned smokeless tobacco, flavoured cigarettes, and e-cigarettes (2016) and imposed the highest excise tax percentage in the region (2016). However, since 2016, the state's attempts to ban tobacco cultivation, ban single stick sales and implement standardized packaging, and ban tobacco sales within 100m of educational institutes have failed. The scientific tobacco taxation formula based on the inflation rate and other variables is yet to be implemented. Tobacco industry interference was evident in all the policy initiatives, the commonest strategy being direct influence on the head of state via allies, front groups, and diplomats. Interference via litigation was observed in two processes.

Indirect interference via the Cabinet of Ministers and other government entities were also noted.
CONCLUSIONS: Every occasion a policy change is initiated, the tobacco industry attempted to influence the head of the state thus interfering in the process. The outcomes seem to favour the industry from 2017 onwards.
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Trends in tobacco imagery and impact of India's 2012 tobacco-free film and TV rules on streaming platforms

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BACKGROUND: India has made progress in implementing the 2012 Tobacco-Free Film and TV Rules. This policy reduced tobacco imagery in films and TV but shifted exposure to social media and over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms. HRIDAY along with other NGOs monitored compliance and streaming platforms completely violated the 2012 Rules. This study aimed to assess tobacco and e-cigarette depictions in movies and series on OTT platforms and compliance with the 2012 Rules.
METHODS: Using the Breathe California methodology, we analysed the top 10 movies (5 Indian, 5 international) and 8 series (4 Indian, 4 international) released in 2023, alongside prior data (248 episodes, 250 movies) spanning 2006–2023. Descriptive statistics and negative binomial regression were employed to assess trends in tobacco imagery before and after the 2012 Rules.
RESULTS: Our 2021 study reported a reduction in tobacco incidents per film post-2012 Rules. However, OTT content compliance remained poor. A 2018 analysis of 10 series (188 episodes) on Netflix and Amazon Prime revealed higher tobacco depictions in foreign productions, with zero compliance with India's 2012 Rules. By 2023, tobacco incidents per hour in films decreased by 19.5%, but no significant change was observed immediately post-policy implementation. Notably, tobacco depictions in Indian series surged dramatically, from 4% in 2018 to 96% in 2023. These findings underscore a growing prevalence of tobacco imagery in Indian OTT streaming platforms and highlight the necessity of robust enforcement of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Amendment (COTPA) Rules, 2023, developed to regulate tobacco imagery on OTT platforms, including web series and online curated content.
CONCLUSIONS: Non-compliance with tobacco imagery regulations on OTT platforms underscores the urgent need for effective implementation and monitoring of the 2023 Rules to safeguard youth from tobacco exposure.
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Advancing sustainable tobacco control: Lessons from ITCS implementation in Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and Nepal

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains a critical public health issue, causing over 60% of tobacco-attributable deaths in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions. Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and Nepal face challenges in combatting this epidemic, including limited financial resources, policy implementation gaps, and insufficient integration of tobacco control into broader health strategies. Despite the presence of national tobacco control laws and adherence to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in most cases, structural and financial barriers persist. The Index of Tobacco Control Sustainability (ITCS), comprising 31 key indicators, was used to assess and guide efforts for sustainable tobacco control in these countries.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Structured ITCS assessments involved focus group discussions with stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental sectors to evaluate gaps in policy, structure, and resources. The process reviewed tobacco control programs and developed action plans to address identified shortcomings. Examples of innovative responses include Nepal's use of its Health Fund and Indonesia's subnational tax allocations, which provided dedicated resources for tobacco control efforts. These strategies facilitated improvements in structural organization and policy execution.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: From 2016 to 2022, ITCS scores showed substantial progress: Myanmar improved from 43 to 82, and Indonesia from 54 to 74. These advances reflect enhanced policy implementation, structural capacity, and resource mobilization. Nonetheless, challenges persist in areas like capacity building, promoting research, and implementing robust tobacco taxation policies. These insights demonstrate the importance of embedding tobacco control within broader health and development frameworks.
CONCLUSIONS: The ITCS assessments highlight the effectiveness of evidence-based, strategic approaches to tobacco control. Strengthening intergovernmental collaboration, securing sustainable funding, and refining policy frameworks are essential for lasting progress. These findings provide actionable lessons for other low- and middle-income countries striving to achieve sustainable tobacco control.
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Harm reduction actors employ strategic approaches to reach the youths and steer public opinion on electronic cigarettes in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia has the highest number of e-cigarette users in the world. The adult rate increased by tenfold from 0.3% in 2011 to 3.0% in 2021. The increasing use of e-cigarettes was due to poor regulation, massive marketing and active harm reduction campaigns. This report documented the actors supporting e-cigarettes and their strategies in Indonesia.

METHODS: We employed an iterative data collection process in collaboration with tobacco control partners in Indonesia from September 2023-March 2024. We distributed an online form to the partners to identify potential harm reduction actors and interview with experts. Pararelly, we also explored online news, websites, social media. Data was extracted based on the checklist which included organization name, type, description, vision and mission, affiliation, statement, strategy, CSR activities, information sources, and photos of the organization's activities. The data was analyzed descriptively.

RESULTS: We categorised the actors into four groups: seller and producer groups (n=17), education and research institutions (n=7), consumer groups (n=15) and other groups (n=6), who use various approaches and framings. The producer groups demand the application of Indonesian National Standard to support the framing that the products are safe, use innovative marketing strategies and so called corporate social responsibility including greenwashing. Whilst the education and research institution of electronic cigarettes framed the harm reduction narrative with supposed conflicting research evidence, conducting discussion, and seminars. The consumer groups were very active using the claim of the smokers' right to safer products, advocate for regulating new products separately, while the other groups presented themselves as a social movement both offline and online.

CONCLUSIONS: Harm reduction actors with their various groups deliberately encourage the use of e-cigarettes. Monitoring, documenting harm reduction actors and their strategies is necessary as well as exposing and countering it through engaging and strategic ways.

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Examining association between tobacco use and multiple long-term conditions in India: Findings from LASI to strengthen community-based health risk reduction

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use remains a significant public health concern in India, contributing substantially to the burden of multiple long-term conditions (MLTCs). MLTCs defined as the co-occurrence of two or more chronic conditions, presents complex challenges for the healthcare system. This study aims to examine the association between the tobacco use (smoking, smokeless tobacco (SLT) or both) and MLTCs in India.

METHODS: We analysed nationally representative data from the Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI) (2017–2018), encompassing 65,562 individuals aged 45 years and above. Weighted prevalence and adjusted odds ratios (AOR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) were estimated (multivariable logistic regression) to assess the association between tobacco use, and occurrence of MLTCs.

RESULTS: Among participants, 36.79% consumed tobacco: 13.92% smoked, 19.89% used SLT, and 2.98% were dual users. Among socio-economic factors, age strongly influenced the prevalence of MLTCs, with individuals aged 60–74 years having 83% higher odds (AOR: 1.83; 95% CI: 1.70–1.97) and those above 74 years showing 144% higher odds (2.44; 2.17–2.75). Females had 60% higher odds of MLTCs than males (1.60; 1.45–1.76). People belonging to the scheduled tribes had lower odds (0.73; 0.66–0.82), while no significant differences were observed among scheduled caste and other backward classes. Smoking emerged as a significant behavioural predictor of MLTCs (1.17; 1.06–1.29), with dual usage showing a stronger association (1.42; 1.20–1.68). SLT use was not significantly associated with MLTCs (1.06; 0.98–1.14).

CONCLUSIONS: Dual use of tobacco smoking and SLT or smoking alone increased the risk of MLTCs. There is a need to step up cessation through community engagement and involvement and adopt innovative models of tobacco control that leverage community-based approaches alongside the services provided at the health system level.

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Monitoring and exposing tobacco industry tactics in implementation of e-cigarette ban in India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Government of India, considering the harmful effects of electronic cigarette and the alarming rise in its prevalence amongst youth, prohibited the production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement, of electronic cigarettes which included all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah and the like devices in the year 2019.Despite a ban on Electronic cigarettes by the Government of India in 2019, E-cigarettes were easily available in tobacco shops and are sold to children below 18 years of age.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A survey was conducted in seven states of India (Delhi, Assam, Goa, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana) in February 2023 to check the compliance of e-cigarette ban. A rapid survey and sample collection was done to ascertain evidences of the violation of e-cigarette ban wherein shops/vendors were randomly selected for the investigation. The survey was conducted and evidence was gathered through both online and offline modes. The field investigators observed the availability of e-cigarettes, verification of age, checked on the awareness on e-cigarette ban among vendors and subsequent penalties in case found guilty among other

observations.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: e-cigarettes were easily available in tobacco shops and were sold to anybody without any age verification.
E-cigarettes got delivered within 1-2 days when ordered online (through e-commerce websites, exclusive vape websites, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook or other social media sites) and were being sold without any age verification.
While ordering online, a few websites asked for age verification which merely required ticking a checkbox asking whether 18 years or above.
CONCLUSIONS: The enforcement on e-cigarette ban has been weak, resulting in market being flooded with cheap and unbranded Chinese make e-cigarettes. Thus, a coordinated effort at the Central and State level, Govt. of India is urgently needed to ensure the ban is effective
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STOP launches Burned by Tobacco environmental campaign with WHO, unveiling a new audience at its intersection

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: With 4.5 trillion cigarettes discarded per year worldwide, cigarettes are the most littered item on Earth. Millions more cigarette butts end up in waterways where they contaminate water and marine life. And now, the industry's electronic products are making the problem worse with metals, plastics and batteries contributing to the world's waste. The tobacco industry not only hides its destruction of the environment while keeping people addicted to tobacco, but it tries to sell itself as a sustainability ally.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In July 2021, STOP launched Burned by Tobacco (BBT), a campaign shedding light on the industry's environmental impact. A suite of materials were created, including a webpage, brief, mythbuster, widespread social media campaign, and toolkits in Indonesian, Bengali, Spanish, French, Portuguese and English. In 2022, STOP partnered with the World Health Organization to launch an extension of the campaign focused on microplastics in cigarette filters on World No Tobacco Day. The campaign, Cigarettes = Plastics was also promoted in advance of the UN Plastics Pollution Treaty Negotiations. STOP worked closely with ASH U.S. to deploy geofencing ads that targeted attendees of the treaty negotiations in Uruguay, further amplifying the message within a critical policymaking audience.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: STOP's BBT and Cigarettes = Plastics materials collectively were seen over 28 million times on social media. These efforts drove over 909,000 pageviews to the STOP website and 10,000 downloads of our materials globally. Media efforts resulted in 110 press mentions, reinforcing the campaign's prominence in public discourse.
CONCLUSIONS: The Burned by Tobacco campaign successfully highlighted the ecological impact of the tobacco industry and engaged a new audience for STOP through multilingual resources, innovative outreach methods, and strategic partnerships that influenced discussion at the global level.
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Overcoming barriers to smokefree pregnancy: A digital solution in Greater Manchester

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2018, 13% of pregnant women in Greater Manchester smoked at the time of delivery, with the highest rates among disadvantaged populations. Traditional smoking cessation services were inconsistent, resource-intensive, and hindered by fragmented processes. To address these systemic barriers, the Greater Manchester Smokefree Pregnancy Programme introduced a digital pathway including incentives for quitting and staying smokefree to birth and beyond. Challenges included staff resistance, integrating digital tools across ten localities, and ensuring equitable access for vulnerable groups.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A digital platform was co-designed with midwives, public health experts, and service users to automate referrals, provide real-time data tracking, issue incentive payments and deliver tailored support. Training and engagement sessions equipped healthcare professionals with the skills to adopt the platform. Targeted outreach and culturally sensitive materials addressed health inequities, ensuring accessibility for disadvantaged populations.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: •Smoking at Time of Delivery (SATOD) rates decreased from 12.6% in 2017/18 to 7.7% in 2023/24, resulting in over 6,000 additional smoke-free births.
• Engagement with cessation services increased by 50%.
• Administrative burdens reduced by 20%, enabling midwives to dedicate more time to patient care.
• Annual financial savings exceeded £11 million from reduced hospital admissions and optimised resources.
• The programme has recently been scaled nationally, demonstrating its adaptability and effectiveness in diverse contexts. Patients report feeling empowered to quit smoking, and providers note streamlined workflows and improved service delivery.
CONCLUSIONS: This programme highlights how regional initiatives can inform the development of national models, providing valuable lessons for scaling public health innovations. The success of this programme demonstrates the potential of co-designed, digital-first approaches to address health inequalities and improve maternal outcomes. The approach is adaptable to other health challenges, such as obesity or substance use, offering a roadmap for scalable public health solutions.
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Exposing tobacco industry's novel tactic – Tobacco Harm Reduction (THR) narrative promoted using radio programs in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco Industry (TI) affiliate in Pakistan promoted the THR narrative using social and print media, conferences, and more distinctly radio programs. Between June 2022 and February 2023, Radio Pakistan – a state-owned entity aired 24 such programs, violating WHO FCTC obligations and Pakistan's regulation concerning the TAPS Ban. These programs misinformed the public about the risks of electronic nicotine and tobacco products, promoting their use and targeting youth and radio audiences.

METHODS: This is a critical discourse analysis of the contents of 24 radio programs (almost 20 hours in duration, spanning eight months) aired on Radio Pakistan. Qualitative data analysis software (QDACity) and corpus analysis tool (LancsBox X) were used to identify themes, narrative building, and misinformation regarding tobacco harm reduction. Furthermore, we examined compliance with international obligations under Article 5.3 of FCTC and domestic regulations and evaluated the role of state entities in facilitating TI narratives.

RESULTS: The study finds that the radio programs were designed to ensure a smooth passage of (mis-)information. TI promoted the THR narrative by misrepresenting the health risks of nicotine and new tobacco products. Despite a lack of credible scientific evidence, radio programs often framed these products as tools for smoking cessation. The findings also point to significant violations of international obligations and national laws with Radio Pakistan (inadvertently) aiding the dissemination of misleading content. The findings also signpost a lack of awareness about FCTC obligations among government entities, enabling TI interference.

CONCLUSIONS: TI's use of Radio Pakistan – a state entity, exemplifies how regulatory and information gaps can be exploited by the TI. This study highlights the need for robust enforcement of FCTC Article 5.3 provisions. Strengthening the governmental capacity to recognize and mitigate such violations is essential to safeguarding public health and fostering informed policy development.

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Towards health with justice: Making the tobacco industry accountable through administrative liability

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BACKGROUND: The transnational tobacco industry (TI) remains one of the most profitable industries, despite the immense harm caused by its products to health and the environment. Judicial mechanisms have had limited success in holding the TI accountable due to systemic challenges, such as steep costs and delays. This paper explores administrative liability as an alternative for ensuring accountability.

METHODS: This study reviewed the principles of administrative liability and their application in international law, including the 'polluter pays' principle and the victims' right to compensation. Case studies from various sectors, including environmental law, informed the development of policy recommendations

RESULTS: Administrative mechanisms, such as monetary penalties, trust funds/ compensation funds, specialized adjudicatory bodies, and harmonized dissuasive sanctions against the TI should be further studied as these could provide avenues for compensation and remediation, when judicial approaches are inadequate. The vaccine injury fund is an example of compensation mechanism that allows injured parties to claim compensation for specified injuries, without going to court. The funding is a fraction of the price of the vaccine and is charged against manufacturers. A governing body is established to disburse the funds. This exists at both national and global level, eg Covax No Fault Compensation Program. This could be a model to consider when designing non-judicial measures to hold the tobacco industry liable for harms caused. However, it is important to ensure that this type of remedy is additional, not alternative, in that it does not preclude the possibility of initiating civil and criminal proceedings against the tobacco industry.

CONCLUSIONS: Administrative liability provides a pragmatic framework to address the harms caused by the TI, enabling governments to impose effective, proportionate, and dissuasive sanctions while ensuring access to justice for victims. This approach aligns with international legal principles and offers a pathway to operationalize WHO FCTC Article 19.

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Promoting addiction enticing adolescents: The role of retail design in marketing electronic tobacco and nicotine products

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BACKGROUND: The Pakistani market witnessed a sharp increase in the availability and popularity of unregulated electronic nicotine products. A key marketing strategy of these products is the deliberate design of retail environments, incorporating elements like 'power walls', 'maximalism', and 'calm'. This study explores how these retail designs entice adolescents, promote nicotine

addiction, and foster customer loyalty.

METHODS: This qualitative observational research is conducted in 119 outlets across five districts included in the Smokefree Project. Data was collected on the layout, placement, and ambiance, attending to experiential features such as seating areas, in-store time, and free product trials. Customer visit frequencies, store preference, and engagement with free trials were also recorded through forty-one unstructured interviews.

RESULTS: The findings reveal that electronic nicotine product stores showcase sleek, modern, and maximalist designs especially catering to younger demographics. The stores feature power walls – commanding, visually dominant displays, and calm ambiances created by controlled lighting and music, fostering a sense of relation and belonging. These features promote prolonged/repeated engagement occasionally leading to impulsive purchasing. The design builds a sense of identity and peer acceptance tied to these products. Further, a significant deviation from the advertising ban in Pakistan (SRO 72(I)/2020), and Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 13 was observed, alongside a marked increase in the density of such outlets.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the manipulative marketing strategies employed for electronic products, emphasizing modern retail design. It also underscores an urgent need for policy intervention to address the unregulated sale and promotion of these products in Pakistan and other jurisdictions. By raising awareness of design practices, this research aims to inform policy development to protect vulnerable populations.

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Development and validation of a multidimensional tool for Tobacco Dependence Screening (Hindi) in Indian adults

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use causes 1.35 million deaths annually in India, with diverse and dominant non-cigarette tobacco products complicating dependence assessment. Existing tools, like the Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence, lack cultural adaptability for India. This study aimed to develop and validate the Tobacco Dependence Scale in Hindi (TDS-Hindi), specifically tailored to Indian users.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted with 300 adult tobacco users (re-test among 60 users) in Ranchi, India. Phase-I involved tool development through literature review and expert consultation, while Phase-II included translation, pre-testing, and data collection through a community survey. The six-item TDS-Hindi was evaluated using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), reliability testing, and validation against International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) criteria.

RESULTS: Content validation showed an S-CVI of 0.945 and I-CVR ranging from 0.67 to 1.00, indicating strong expert agreement. Scree plot and EFA revealed a two-factor structure capturing nicotine dependence's multidimensionality. The tool achieved high test-retest reliability (0.88) and moderate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: 0.55). Six-item scale (minimum score '0' and maximum score '12') high accuracy in classifying nicotine dependence, with an Area Under Curve of 0.901 (95%CI: 0.858,0.943, p<0.001), sensitivity of 84.5%, and specificity of 82.8%. Dependence levels were categorized as low (0-4), moderate (5-7), and high (8-12), with 86% of high-dependence cases showing concordance with ICD-11 criteria.

CONCLUSIONS: TDS-Hindi is a reliable, valid, and culturally adapted tool for assessing tobacco dependence in India. It can be a valuable resource for healthcare professionals to assess both cigarette and non-cigarette tobacco users in India, where Hindi is commonly spoken. Longitudinal evaluations with biomarkers across larger populations is essential to confirm its clinical applicability.

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The impact of tobacco sponsorship in Formula One: Subverting TAPS bans and reaching young audiences

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BACKGROUND: In 2001 Formula One's (F1) regulator vowed to end tobacco sponsorships, yet 2019 saw a resurgence. F1 has a significant global presence and industry involvement undermines tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship bans (TAPS). STOP sought to quantify tobacco industry spending, identify the size and composition of audiences being exposed to industry brands and messages, and describe how British American Tobacco (BAT) and Philip Morris International (PMI) exploit their sponsorships.

METHODS: STOP worked with F1 experts to obtain data and analysis of estimated sponsorship spend, brand exposure, media and social media and demographics. Desk research was used to identify evidence of industry marketing linked to F1, TAPS regulations in countries hosting F1 races or with large TV audiences, and potential regulatory breaches. Findings were synthesised into a series of reports.

RESULTS: By 2019, industry spending surged to 2006 levels and now totals $4.6bn throughout F1's history. F1's owners have secured a younger, more global, diverse and gender-balanced audience-an ideal match for tobacco companies seeking to grow their customer base. Alongside race broadcasts, social media activity and other activations, over a billion minutes of streamed footage of Netflix's Drive to Survive has included industry brands and

messages. New marketing initiatives like e-gaming and F1 Kids expose young audiences to industry messaging. BAT-sponsored McLaren is popular among younger fans and delivers significant exposure for BAT's Vuse and Velo brands. PMI uses F1 hospitality and events to host policymakers, media and other influencers and directly promoted its products with a booth at one 2024 race.

CONCLUSIONS: F1 and tobacco companies' interests appear aligned, with BAT and PMI spending an estimated $40m on sponsorship in 2024. There is an urgent need for governments to hold F1 and broadcasters accountable for breaches of national laws and international collaboration to stop F1 driving cross-border advertising.

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Congruence of self-report and exhaled carbon monoxide in a sample of people with HIV participating in cessation intervention trial

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BACKGROUND: People Living with HIV (PLHIV) have higher smoking rates than the general population, making it essential that tobacco cessation interventions be integrated into HIV care. This study describes the congruence between self-report cessation rates and exhaled carbon monoxide (CO) at 1, 3, 6 and 12 months from the start of the intervention

METHODS: A cluster randomized superiority trial with participants randomized 1:1 to receiving brief intervention (5As and referral to quitline) and intensive intervention, (5As, NRT, Bupropion and text messages for 12 weeks). At 1, 3, 6 and 12 months after enrollment, participants were asked to self-report cessation (answering 'not at all' when asked about tobacco use) and had exhaled CO measured. Descriptive statistics, and chi-square were used to compare self-report with measured CO, with <5 ppm used as the cut-off for cessation and > 5 ppm as continuing smoking.

RESULTS: We enrolled 580 participants, 290 in each arm, median age 47 years and 98% male. Congruence of self reported smoking cessation was 81.4%, 67.4%, 77.1%, 72.7% and 57.5%, 64.1%, 66.7%, 60.6% at 1-, 3-, 6-, and 12-months time points in the brief intervention arm and intensive intervention arm respectively. At month 1, self reported smoking cessation was more likely to be congruent with exhaled CO in the brief arm compared to the intensive arm (p=0.009) with no statistically significant differences in congruence between the arms in the subsequent months.

CONCLUSIONS: This is the first study to assess smoking cessation among PWH in Kenya. We found some congruence between self-reported cessation and exhaled CO levels. The differences between arms should be explored through qualitative methods to understand the challenges and limitations of self-report. Biochemically verification through exhaled CO was an important factor to determine cessation. It also served to provide participants with feedback on their status and encourage participants to stay quit.

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Cigarette filters in UN plastics treaty

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BACKGROUND: The inclusion of cigarette filters in the future UN treaty to curb plastic pollution presents an opportunity to address a significant source of plastic waste. Cigarette filters, primarily made of cellulose acetate, are a major contributor to plastic pollution and pose environmental and public health risks. Despite being marketed as a safety feature, these filters offer no proven health benefits and are linked to more harmful cancers. Their elimination under international agreements could serve both environmental and public health goals; however, it may invite tobacco industry interference, as plastics policies adopt an inclusive stakeholder approach.

METHODS: This research examines the relevant negotiating texts for the UN Plastics Treaty, particularly the Compilation Text and the Chair's texts. We explore provisions related to cigarette filters, potential conflicts with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), and the challenges posed by provisions that invite tobacco industry involvement in policy-making. The analysis also reviews FCTC Article 5.3, which prohibits tobacco industry influence in policymaking.

RESULTS: The Compilation Text includes cigarette filters for elimination, while the Chair's Non-Paper and latest text, omits them. However, both texts contain several provisions related to plastic products/alternatives, product design, private sector inclusions/ participation in sections like Emissions, Existing Pollution, Waste Management, and Financial Mechanism that could encourage tobacco industry involvement in treaty negotiations, conflicting with FCTC guidelines, and undermining Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. All texts have provisions on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which could be implemented as a form of CSR.

CONCLUSIONS: To align with the WHO FCTC, provisions regarding plastic pollution and tobacco products must include safeguards to protect public health from tobacco industry interference. The UN plastics treaty could reference the WHO FCTC to strengthen policy coherence and prevent conflicts between environmental and public health goals.

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Empowering communities through advocacy: Mexico's campaign for smoke-free environments and TAPS ban

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In January 2023, Mexico enacted a landmark comprehensive law banning tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) and extending smoke-free environments to include all public spaces, such as stadiums and beaches. Despite its significance, the law faced challenges, including limited public knowledge and business resistance. The campaign 'Cero Humo Aquí No Fumo' was launched in collaboration with the National Commission on Mental Health and Addictions to address this. The goal was twofold: inform the public about their rights under the new law and empower them to report violations through mexicosinhumo.org.mx and the Quit Line.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The campaign utilized a multi-platform approach, with Social Media as the primary vehicle for engagement and ads in public transportation. Four key video messages addressed the law's scope, the right to smoke-free spaces, and the reporting process for non-compliance. Strategic targeting ensured the campaign reached diverse audiences across major urban centers, prioritizing individuals aged 18–45 interested in health, outdoor activities, and family-friendly environments. Paid ads amplified visibility, achieving over 24 million impressions and reaching 10.7 million people and more than 35 million impacts in public transportation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: TikTok emerged as the most effective platform, generating 15.9 million views and driving significant traffic to the reporting website. User feedback revealed that 75% of viewers supported the law, with many sharing personal stories or reporting non-compliant venues. The campaign's success lies in its ability to simplify complex regulations into relatable, actionable messages, inspiring collective advocacy and accountability.

CONCLUSIONS: Mexico's campaign demonstrates the power of digital advocacy in advancing tobacco control policies. By leveraging social media to bridge the gap between legislation and public engagement, the initiative provides a scalable model for other nations. Future campaigns should expand the use of localized insights and interactive formats to enhance impact and foster sustainable behavior change globally.

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Assessing tobacco industry cleanup costs: A cross-regional analysis of EU and global policies

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BACKGROUND: The Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties of the WHO FCTC Decision cautions against tobacco CSR disguised as tobacco Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and recognizes the potential of using liability to address the environmental consequences of tobacco. In jurisdictions with tobacco EPR schemes, it is crucial to ensure they do not become publicity tools but instead hold the tobacco industry financially accountable for the damages caused. Cleanup is just one aspect of the cost, yet tobacco EPR policies vary significantly across regions. For instance, in the European Union (EU), tobacco manufacturers must contribute to the collection and management of tobacco-related waste, including cigarette butts and plastic packaging. However, there is a lack of global policy harmonization, resulting in inconsistent enforcement and cost structures.

METHODS: Data from a combination of sources, including legislative data, news reports, and policy documents, is collated to assess variations in EPR implementation as to costs producers are required to pay. Case studies are used to illustrate EPR schemes, and a comparative analysis is conducted to identify discrepancies

RESULTS: The findings reveal significant disparities in the cost structures imposed on tobacco manufacturers for waste management across the EU. A table summarizing the differences in cost structures highlights the challenges faced in achieving consistency across the region. The research also compares tobacco waste management with other sectors, such as plastics and electronics, identifying best practices for policy alignment.

CONCLUSIONS: The paper concludes that there is an urgent need to harmonize EPR costs to ensure effective tobacco waste management. Increased financial contributions from tobacco manufacturers are necessary to align these policies with measures on environment, liability, and price measures. Recommendations for policy reform include raising clean-up fees, enforcing stricter regulations, and preventing tobacco industry interference in EPR and related policies.

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Association between social media use and tobacco and nicotine products use

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BACKGROUND: Research on the association between social media use and the use of electronic vaping is on the rise, particularly in developed countries. The emergence of oral nicotine pouches and other nicotine-containing products on the market, along with their growing popularity, highlights the need for further studies on the link between the use of nicotine products and exposure

to social media, especially in low and middle income countries.

METHODS: Data were obtained from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children survey conducted in Serbia in 2022 on the sample 3962 adolescents aged 11, 13, and 15 years. Five multivariate logistic regression models were used to examine associations between intensive and problematic social media use and the lifetime use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, water pipes, oral nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products.

RESULTS: Data on lifetime prevalence reveal nicotine product use among Serbian youth aged 11, 13, and 15: cigarettes (15.1%), e-cigarettes (19.7%), waterpipes (7.1%), oral nicotine pouches (4.9%), and heated tobacco products (6.3%). Intensive social media use is reported by 51.6%, while 9.9% meet criteria for problematic use. Both intensive and problematic social media use were strongly associated with lifetime cigarette ($p < 0.001$) and e-cigarette use ($p < 0.001$), adjusting for age and sex. Waterpipe use was linked to intensive ($p < 0.001$) and problematic ($p = 0.001$) social media use. Oral nicotine pouch use showed associations with intensive ($p = 0.006$) and problematic use ($p < 0.001$). For heated tobacco products, only problematic social media use was significant ($p < 0.001$), with no link to intensive use ($p = 0.402$).

CONCLUSIONS: The results highlight the importance of identifying effective strategies to limit exposure to content promoting the use of nicotine-containing products and conducting both quantitative and qualitative studies to further investigate content that particularly appeals to youth.

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Increasing tobacco taxes can reduce socio-economic inequalities: Evidence from a modeling study in Argentina

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco tax increases are well known as the most cost-effective measure in reducing tobacco consumption and its associated health burden and costs. However, little is known about how these benefits are distributed across population groups. This study aims to measure the socioeconomic disparities in tobacco health burden and costs, and the impact of an increase in tobacco taxes in Argentina.

METHODS: An economic model based on a probabilistic Markov microsimulation model is performed to estimate the health and financial burdens associated with tobacco use and the impact of various tobacco control measures as tobacco tax increases. The model was adapted to include a distributional analysis by socioeconomic groups. Costs are calculated in dollars in 2023.

RESULTS: Over 10 years, the introduction of a 50% increase in the price of cigarettes through taxes generates savings of $5 billion in direct medical costs, $2.4 billion in informal care costs, and $2.5 billion in lost productivity costs, with these savings being significantly greater for the lowest-income group. In the first income quintile, these costs decrease from 35.2% to 30.1% of per capita income, while in the fifth quintile, they decline from 5.4% to 4.9%. Additionally, the tax increase is expected to prevent 46,161 deaths and 198,395 cases, resulting in a gain of 1,664,217 quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) among Argentina's population. The lowest income quintile is projected to experience nearly twice as many avoided deaths and disease cases as the highest quintile.

CONCLUSIONS: Implementing tobacco tax increases represents not only a cost-effective intervention but also a strategy with significant equity benefits in Argentina. Such policies have been observed to lead to greater health improvements among the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups while simultaneously alleviating the financial constraints faced by families.

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Monitoring and Alleviating tactics by Nicotine/Tobacco/Harm reduction industries, their Allies and Networks (MANTHAN): A novel approach

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BACKGROUND: Monitoring the tobacco industry, and holding it accountable, are essential for the success of tobacco control policies. Aligning with the principles of STOP, global tobacco industry watchdog, MANTHAN is a network of tobacco control experts, trained in industry monitoring on a mission to monitor and counter industry (nicotine/tobacco/harm reduction industries, their allies, and networks) behavior in India, that undermines public health, with a focus on grassroot level intels, that might be missed using online tools.

METHODS: Using the Delphi technique along with a set a four trained public health experts, the novel approach was validated, and a cohort of nine was secured. Employing the tobacco industry monitoring, research, and accountability (TIMRA) model, MANTHAN was trained through one induction and six catch-up sessions, intels were collected using online and offline channels, during January to September 2024. Sources of intels were local online investigation via Google search/alerts, news items, industry reports/documents, and social media handles, while ground-level informants flagged information using emails and telephone. The gathered evidence was stored in spreadsheets using Microsoft Excel (vs 2024), URLs: backup repository (Wayback machine) and image (.JPEG) files. Intel was categorized into themes: type of company, allies, type of tactic and sub-tactics, source and description of the information. Through persuasive discussions and critical thinking, MANTHAN network timely acted upon counteracting and mitigating TIIs by utilising existing

policy instruments (including subnational FCTC 5.3 policy guidelines) and regulatory instruments at national and subnational level.

RESULTS: Of the 74 collected TII instances, CSR and allies/front groups were the most common tactic, 25 (33%) were counteracted and 11 (14%) were mitigated.

CONCLUSIONS: Employing TIMRA's model, effective monitoring, and exposing TII in India has led to the creation of 'policy windows' aiding in pushing the implementation of the Ministry of Health's code of conduct and the existing sub-national article 5.3 policies.

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Tobacco industry's tactics in e-cigarette market expansion in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarette was introduced in Bangladesh just years after it was introduced in global market in 2006. The tobacco industry (TI) applies various tactics to rapidly expand its market. As a result, although the rate of smokers is declining in proportion to the population, the use of e-cigarettes has increased in the last couple of years. The objective of the study is to reveal unknown information about the presence of e-cigarettes, and to find out the tactics, plans and activities of leading TI's about expansion of the e-cigarette market. The desired outcome of the study is to reveal TI's tactics which may draw attention of the policymakers.

METHODS: Various publications and documents reviewed, while data collected from the fields, point of sales, e-cigarette users and experts. Visits paid to various vaping shops in Dhaka to get a general picture of e-cigarette sale. Tobacco-related laws and regulations were analyzed.

RESULTS: The study found online sites that spread e-cigarette among youths. Most students first heard about e-cigarettes from ads on social media. Previously, most e-cigarette shops were found in wealthy areas of Dhaka. Now, e-cigarette shops are found everywhere in Bangladesh. TI's have built countrywide organized networks to expand e-cigarettes. They try to convince policymakers and others by presenting its narrative that 'e-cigarettes, vaping and heated tobacco products as safer alternatives'. The legal weakness, especially the absence of e-cigarettes directly in the law, is identified and TI's taking advantage of it.

CONCLUSIONS: The government already bans the import of e-cigarettes, but it is not enough to control this product by allowing production, usage, and marketing. If TI's continue in e-cigarette expansion, Bangladesh may potentially face health and economic losses amid a huge increase of vapers. So, fully ban on e-cigarette should be brought in tobacco control law by amending it.

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Users' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of vaping

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry has marketed Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) as alternatives with 'reduced risk potential,' claiming they allow users to 'smoke anywhere.' However, academic research suggests that ENDS are not recommended for smoking cessation and highlight significant health risks. Brazil banned the commercialization, importation, and advertising of ENDS since 2009.

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of ENDS users regarding their motivations for adoption, the associated risks, and their consumption practices.

METHODS: Twenty focus groups were conducted across five cities in Brazil, with two groups in each city: one of young adults (18-28 years) and another of adults (29+ years). All participants were ENDS users, and 60 informants from social classes A and B1 were included. The analysis involved thematic coding, iterative refinement, member checks, and triangulation across groups and regions.

RESULTS: Participants cited various reasons for adopting ENDS, including the lack of unpleasant odors, which facilitated social interaction, and the variety of flavors that allowed for customized experiences. Many users considered themselves non-smokers and some felt a sense of social status from using a 'trendy' product, traditionally associated with conventional cigarettes.

Users believe that ENDS posed fewer health risks than conventional cigarettes. Practical benefits, such as portability, the absence of ash, and the ability to use ENDS in places where smoking is prohibited, were also highlighted.

CONCLUSIONS: This study revealed a significant lack of understanding about the harms of ENDS. Many users believed they were harmless and underestimated social risks, thinking they could use ENDS in places where smoking is prohibited. Among smokers, ENDS were seen as an alternative to quitting. This confusion could lead to harm, especially if smokers believe ENDS are a safer option or if young people adopt them as a trend.

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Global estimates: Marine accountability of the tobacco industry

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BACKGROUND: Cigarette filters, primarily composed of single-use plastics, are among the most prevalent sources of marine pollution and contribute significantly to environmental degradation. Filters are also implicated

in a decades long fraud to mislead consumers about safer smoking while actually leading them to a more aggressive form of cancer. This study evaluates the cost of environmental damage of the cigarette filters as single use plastic.

METHODS: Public data sources, including the World Bank's waste management cost estimates and the World Wildlife Fund's marine ecosystem loss metrics, Data on cigarette consumption, filter and packaging weights, and country-specific collection efficiencies were used to calculate waste management costs and ecosystem losses.

RESULTS: It is estimated that USD 20 Billion is lost every year in terms of loss of ecosystem services due to tobacco plastics for the duration of the lifetime of the plastics. For the past 10 years alone, the loss of ecosystem value would be around USD 186 Billion, accounting for inflation. The data on costs per country will be presented in tabular pie chart formats revealing higher overall losses in the Western Pacific Region (WPRO), but higher waste management costs in high-income countries (HICs).

CONCLUSIONS: The estimate is conservative, setting the minimum cost of the environmental damage arising from the plastic nature of cigarette butts, excluding their hazardous nature (i.e., marine life dying from heavy metal and chemical toxicity alongside plastic contamination). Downstream measures, such as ecotaxes and bans on single-use plastic can be immediately taken while working on upstream measures, such as eliminating cigarette filters. These findings indicate the importance of aligning tobacco control measures with environmental policies. Country level results are available in a digital tool: How Should Tobacco Companies Pay for their Pollution in Countries, produced for STOP by GGTC with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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Mobilization experiences: From the screens to the street and from the street to the screens

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: After the approval of the reform to the General Law for Tobacco Control and its regulations in 2024, which, among other measures, prohibited the display of tobacco products, the tobacco industry through self-service stores filed around 2,000 amparos* to be able to display your products.

Faced with this situation, we in civil society decided to symbolically close a self-service store.

*Amparo is a constitutional remedy in Mexican law to protect fundamental rights but the tobacco industry use this to evade de law.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Different civil society organizations dedicated to defending the right to health carried out a symbolic closing of an OXXO (a very common self-service store in Mexico). We called the press, we released a statement to the media to put the issue of amparos of tobaco industry at the political agenda.

After the street protest, we documented everything and made a videothat was uploaded to social networks and helped us give greater visibility to our issue.

Salud Justa Mx we created a methodology to generate online-ofline actions: from the screens to the street and from the street to the screens:

1. Planning
2. Call to media
3. Street action
4. Document the action
5. Press release
6. Publication on networks
7. Guided in networks
8. Evaluation

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This action contributed to positioning the issue on the media agenda and in the population in general, in addition, a national media outlet made a video that was broadcast on its networks.

CONCLUSIONS: - Street actions are not isolated elements, planning is necessary to spread them.

- All street actions must be disseminated through networks since they are elements that help generate empathy.
- Many resources are not always needed to carry out actions in the field.
- Street actions are a tool to document the work of civil society.

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Indian festivals as tools for tobacco prevention: Youth advocacy against tobacco advertising in India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco consumption remains a major public health challenge globally, contributing significantly to preventable diseases and deaths. In India, festivals like Ganpati Utsav, Durga Puja, Diwali, and Dahi Handi attract large crowds, making them ideal for raising awareness about the dangers of tobacco. Despite the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) prohibiting tobacco advertising, the tobacco industry continues to exploit such events to target minors. Salaam Bombay Foundation's Preventive Health Education program seeks to address this by empowering adolescents to use these cultural events as platforms for promoting tobacco control.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The program trains students in grades 7 to 9 as health advocates, equipping them with the skills to engage their communities during major festivals. During Ganpati Utsav, a 10-day long festival, students took an active role in counteracting tobacco-related advertising, which was once rampant in the form of event sponsorships and promotions. By decorating festival-related items with anti-tobacco messages, performing skits, and engaging in community activities, these youth advocates raised awareness about tobacco's harmful effects, while emphasizing healthier lifestyle choices.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The initiative reached over

100,000 community members, with more than 1,000 adolescents involved in campaigns. These youth-led efforts, particularly during Ganpati Utsav, contributed to a significant reduction in tobacco advertising during the festival. The program also led to increased community engagement and awareness, with many individuals committing to tobacco-free habits.

CONCLUSIONS: Integrating tobacco control initiatives into cultural events has proven effective in challenging tobacco industry practices, such as event sponsorships and advertising. This model has shown the power of youth-led advocacy in influencing community behaviors and can be expanded to other festivals and regions for greater impact. To further enhance the success of such campaigns, continued advocacy, stronger local partnerships, and media outreach will be crucial in amplifying public health messages.

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Reducing maternal smoking rates in the North East and North Cumbria, England through a high impact approach

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The North East and North Cumbria (NENC) had historically higher maternal smoking rates with Smoking at time of delivery (SATOD) rate of 19.8% in 2010 compared with 14% in England. Smoking is the single most modifiable risk factor associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes. Women who smoked during pregnancy are 2.6 times more likely to experience premature births, as well as lower birth weight and increased stillbirth rates. In NENC approximately 15% of admissions to Neonatal Units (NNU) were reported to be mother's tobacco dependent at time of pregnancy booking, around 1076 babies with an estimated cost of $29,000 per baby.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A comprehensive programme of work to improve the public health focus in maternity service delivery is now in place across NENC, complementing the national healthcare commitments. This has been as a result of more than a decade of work to increase the focus on maternal smoking as part of a whole systems approach to tobacco control to ensure that this is addressed as a clinical priority.

A robust tobacco use in pregnancy pathway has been embedded across all 8 maternity services, alongside changing the narrative from smoking as a lifestyle choice to treating tobacco dependency as part of routine clinical maternity care. A comprehensive training programme has been rolled out and other key drivers include the introduction of financial incentives in 2022 to complement the maternity tobacco dependency treatment pathway.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Through this whole systems approach, SATOD rates have declined from 12.3% in 2022 to 8.1% at present, accounting for an overall 4.2 % drop.

CONCLUSIONS: A collaborative approach to maternal smoking is having impact, and the key recommendations from the programme will be outlined with notable drivers for success. The ongoing challenges to ensure that this is embedded clinically will be highlighted and lessons for other programmes shared.

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Flavored ENDS: Motivations and perceptions: Findings from in-depth interviews with adolescents and young adults in Poland

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BACKGROUND: Flavored ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems) have gained significant popularity in Poland, especially among young people. Although the production of flavored tobacco cigarettes is banned, many flavored e-cigarettes, including disposable ones, have appeared on the market. It is crucial to study this trend to better understand the potential risks it poses to public health and take appropriate action. Our aim was to explore the reasons and motivations encouraging young people to use flavored nicotine products.

METHODS: We conducted in-depth interviews between September and October 2024 among 40 participants aged 12-25, differentiated by socio-demographic variables. Each interview followed a set script, was structured, lasted up to 30 minutes, and was recorded for later transcription and analysis. Qualitative analysis was done by identifying themes and subthemes using WEFT-QDA software. We divided participants into two groups: 12-17 (n=20) and 18-25 (n=20), to compare results between adolescents and young adults.

RESULTS: Flavored nicotine products are popular among both groups, mainly due to their pleasant taste and lower aversion compared to traditional cigarettes. Adolescents value these products for their discretion, lack of strong odor, and ease of concealment, while young adults emphasize their social acceptability and modern design reminiscent of trendy gadgets. Both groups perceive flavors as a factor that mitigates the negative image of smoking, though older users also emphasize convenience and less guilt. The differences between the groups are mainly due to visual and social aspects, which are more

important for young adults.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the widespread appeal of flavored nicotine products among young people, driven by factors such as taste, discretion, and perceived modernity. Regulatory measures, such as banning flavored e-cigarettes and restricting marketing strategies targeting youth, are crucial to reducing their appeal.
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Prevalence of exposure to secondhand smoke and attributable burden: An analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023

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BACKGROUND: Despite substantial advancements in tobacco control and declines in smoking rates, nonsmokers continue to suffer from the adverse impacts of secondhand smoke (SHS). Timely and comprehensive estimates of the prevalence of SHS and attributable disease burden are needed to guide tobacco control. We estimated trends in the prevalence of SHS and SHS-attributable burden for 204 countries and territories, by age and sex, from 1990 to 2023.
METHODS: In the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2023, we modeled the prevalence of exposure to SHS at home or work from 395 nationally representative surveys with data on workplace exposure, and 938 censuses and surveys with household composition information to calculate the probability of living with a smoker. We conducted systematic reviews and used the new Burden of Proof meta-analytic approach for nine outcomes causally linked to SHS. We employed a direct estimation method to calculate attributable burden.
RESULTS: In 2023, 2.7 billion (95% uncertainty interval 2.4-3.0) nonsmokers globally, including 766 million (687-857) children aged 0-14, were exposed to SHS, with the highest exposure rate observed in Southeast Asia, east Asia, and Oceania at 48.4% (44.0-53.4). Females experienced disproportionate exposure (37.2% [33.7-41.4]) compared to males (30.5% [27.4-34.2]), with notable regional variations. Since 1990, there has been a significant decrease in SHS prevalence among both females (26.4% reduction) and males (16.4% reduction). In 2023, SHS exposure accounted for 1.7 million (1.3-2.0) deaths and 44.7 million (35.9-55.8) disability-adjusted life years. Deaths and health loss were primarily due to ischemic heart disease among adults and lower respiratory infections among children. The largest disease burden attributable to SHS was observed in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania for females, and in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia for males.
CONCLUSIONS: SHS remains one of the most important risk factors for premature mortality and morbidity globally.
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Tobacco farming and the effect of tobacco subsidies in North Macedonia

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BACKGROUND: North Macedonia is a top global tobacco producer, with subsidies supporting 28,000 households. However, declining production trends and insufficient incomes challenge subsidy sustainability. As an EU candidate, the country must align with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), requiring diversification away from tobacco. This study examines the economic implications of tobacco subsidies and the crowding-out effect on other crops..
METHODS: A mixed-methods approach was used, analyzing data from the Ministry of Agriculture, national statistics, and a survey of 2,205 tobacco farmers. Trends in tobacco production, subsidy allocation, and trade balances were assessed, alongside modeling for potential crop diversification to peppers, fruit trees, and aromatic plants.
RESULTS: Tobacco subsidies, accounting for 25% of agricultural support, incentivize overproduction, creating market distortions and price declines. Cultivated land and buyer contracts have decreased since 2013. Tobacco farmers earn below the national average, with household incomes falling short of minimum living standards. Approximately 30% of surveyed farmers are ready to diversify, while trade deficits persist, driven by rising food imports that overshadow tobacco export inflows.
CONCLUSIONS: Current subsidy policies are unsustainable and hinder long-term development. Transitioning from tobacco farming to food crops and value-added agricultural activities can improve trade balances and align with CAP requirements. Targeted subsidies for high-value crops, infrastructure investment, and farmer education are needed to enable diversification. These measures will strengthen the agricultural sector and address economic and social disparities.
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Adopting a WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control-Based Law in Ethiopia: Transnational health advocacy and multi-sectoral institutionalized support

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BACKGROUND: The prevalence of smokers in WHO African Region is anticipated to rise from 15.8% to 21.9% by 2030 based on 2020 levels, the largest projected increase in the world. Nowhere is this more evident than in Ethiopia so the objective of this study was to document how Ethiopia adopted a WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)-based tobacco control law.
METHODS: We analyzed publicly available documents, including news media articles, advocacy reports, and government documents. We triangulated these findings by interviewing nine key stakeholders. Data were analyzed to construct a historical and thematic narrative and analyzed through a retrospective policy analysis.
RESULTS: Local and international health advocacy efforts helped introduce and support WHO FCTC-based legislation by (1) educating policymakers about the WHO FCTC, (2) providing legal assistance in drafting legislation, (3) generating local data to counter industry claims, and (4) producing media advocacy to expose industry activity. Health advocates worked closely with government officials to create a multi-sectoral tobacco committee to institutionalize efforts and insulate tobacco companies from the policymaking process. Japan Tobacco International bought majority shares of the government-owned tobacco company and attempted to participate in the process, using standard industry tactics to undermine legislative efforts. However, with health advocacy assistance, government officials were able to reject these attempts and adopt a WHO FCTC-based law in 2019 that included 100% smoke-free indoor places, a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, and large pictorial health warning labels, among other provisions.
CONCLUSIONS: Sustained local health advocacy efforts supported by international technical and financial assistance can help establish WHO FCTC-based tobacco control laws. Applying a standardized multi-sectoral approach can establish coordinating mechanisms to further institutionalize the WHO FCTC as a legal tool to build support with other government sectors and insulate the tobacco industry from the policymaking process.
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Minimum sales age of 21 for tobacco: Overview of global progress

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Increasing the minimum sales age for tobacco, including to age 21, is an important strategy to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction among youth. Research supports this as an effective measure. Given the significant proportion of tobacco consumers who begin underage, reducing youth tobacco use will have long-term benefits for public health. Age 21 places tobacco beyond secondary school, and sends a social message that tobacco is different. Age 21 also impedes tobacco industry promotion, given that adults 18-20 cannot be sold tobacco.
There is an encouraging global trend of increasing the minimum tobacco age. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control creates an obligation on Parties 'to prohibit the sales of tobacco products to persons under the age set by domestic law, national law or eighteen'.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The intervention is to adopt laws with a minimum sales age of 21 for tobacco products, and which can also be applied to e-cigarettes. Increasing the minimum age to 21 has little or no incremental enforcement or other cost to government.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: There are at least 16 countries with a tobacco sales age of 21: Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Palau, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United States and Uzbekistan. Botswana has a law awaiting implementation. Some subnational jurisdictions have age 21: Karnataka (state, India), Prince Edward Island (province, Canada), about 30 US states, D.C., and about 540 US municipalities. Japan, Taiwan and Thailand have minimum age 20.
Most tobacco age 21 laws also apply to e-cigarettes.
Regrettably, there are about 20 countries with no minimum age at all for tobacco sales.
CONCLUSIONS: A minimum tobacco sales age of 21 is showing positive global momentum. The measure is feasible, generally popular, effective, and with little or no incremental cost.
More countries can and should be expected to adopt age 21 laws.
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Canadian cost recovery fee: Requiring tobacco industry to reimburse Canadian Government for annual cost of National Tobacco Control Strategy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Canadian government's annual budget for its national tobacco control strategy is C$66 million (US$46 million), including for communication campaigns, cessation and other programs, regulatory development, enforcement, research and surveillance, and international.
There have been longstanding advocacy efforts to require tobacco companies to reimburse the Canadian Department of Health for this cost. The tobacco industry opposes the measure.
In US, a cost recovery fee has been in place since 2009 to recover the annual cost of the Food and Drug Administration's tobacco control budget. In Canada, a national cost recovery fee was implemented on the cannabis industry following cannabis legalization in 2018.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A multi-year advocacy campaign called for the measure. A cost recovery fee helps hold the tobacco industry accountable. The measure results in added government revenue. Opinion polls demonstrate overwhelming public support.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: In the 2021 Canadian national election, the three major national parties (Liberal, Conservative, New Democrats) included a cost recovery fee in their platforms. The Conservatives had also included

the measure in their 2019 platform. In 2021, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance recommended the measure.
Following the 2021 federal election, the Prime Minister's mandate letter to the Associate Minister of Health included the measure. Enabling legislation was introduced in Parliament in November 2023 and adopted in June 2024 with a unanimous vote supported by all political parties and all Members of Parliament. A public consultation was launched in August 2024 on a proposed implementing regulation, with a final regulation scheduled to be adopted in 2025, second quarter.
CONCLUSIONS: A cost recovery fee to recover from the tobacco industry the annual cost of the government's tobacco control strategy is an effective measure that could be implemented by national or subnational governments. The measure is publicly popular and generates revenue for government. Many countries should consider this measure.
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Tobacco Free Youth Campaign 2.0: Harnessing the power of social media

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Tobacco Free Youth Campaign (TFYC) 2.0, under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in Uttar Pradesh, leveraged social media as a vital tool to combat tobacco use among youth. Recognizing the influence of digital platforms on younger generations, the campaign aimed to create awareness, inspire behavior change, and promote tobacco-free lifestyles. Despite the vast potential of social media, challenges such as limited digital literacy in rural areas and combating misinformation posed significant hurdles.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: TFYC 2.0 embraced a robust digital media strategy, utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to amplify its message. A total of 1,233 Instagram posts, 4,381 Facebook posts, 1,886 Twitter posts, and 2,483 YouTube uploads were created to engage youth with visually appealing and informative content. Campaigns featured impactful visuals, real-life success stories, interactive quizzes, and short videos promoting the ill effects of tobacco. Hashtags and targeted ad campaigns were employed to reach diverse demographics, while partnerships with influencers amplified the message's reach.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign's social media presence achieved significant engagement, with thousands of likes, comments, and shares across platforms. Youth engagement was particularly high, with many individuals actively participating in discussions. The widespread digital outreach created a ripple effect, encouraging further conversations about tobacco control within families and communities. Social media analytics showed a substantial increase in campaign visibility, with targeted posts successfully reaching urban and semi-urban audiences.
CONCLUSIONS: By harnessing the power of social media, TFYC 2.0 successfully bridged the gap between traditional awareness campaigns and modern digital outreach. This innovative approach demonstrated the potential of social media in driving public health initiatives, paving the way for future campaigns to leverage technology for greater impact in combating tobacco use among youth.
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Industry interference in Latin America to undermine regulations on emerging products: The cases of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In recent years, several Latin American countries have introduced strong regulations on electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products. However, these efforts continue to face persistent challenges from the tobacco industry. In countries like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico, companies have used a mix of legal, political, and media strategies to undermine or delay policy implementation. This ongoing interference puts public health measures at risk and complicates efforts to enforce key provisions of the WHO FCTC, especially Article 5.3.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Civil society groups have played an essential role in pushing back. In Argentina, advocacy efforts have focused on sustaining national bans despite industry pressure. In Mexico, public health actors have supported recent regulatory reforms, including a constitutional ban, even as legal obstacles persist. Brazilian organizations have continued to monitor and defend ANVISA's longstanding restrictions. In Colombia, a broad coalition of actors helped pass Law 2354/2024, while in Guatemala, civil society has raised the alarm over industry influence in regional negotiations and called attention to aggressive marketing targeting young people.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: While outcomes vary by country, these efforts have generally helped strengthen tobacco control frameworks and raise awareness of industry tactics. In many cases, civil society's engagement has slowed or prevented regulatory rollbacks. Even so, the situation remains dynamic, and industry lobbying continues to pose a threat.
CONCLUSIONS: These five case studies show how civil society can effectively counter industry interference, even in complex or hostile environments. Continued collaboration, both within countries and across borders, is vital to protect gains and share strategies for addressing emerging nicotine and tobacco products.
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Documenting and resisting industry intimidation: Empowering advocates and researchers

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Intimidation from unhealthy commodity industries, including tobacco, remains a significant barrier to public health progress. Greater efforts are needed to empower and support advocates and researchers who are at risk of, or have experienced, intimidation.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: This poster will summarise the latest research on intimidatory tactics, explain country-level experiences and summarise key practical strategies to address these challenges.

A key part of the poster will be the description of a new website designed to inform and empower tobacco control advocates and researchers across the world who face or may face intimidation. This is the first such intervention in tobacco control.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The original research has allowed, for the first time, a more detailed understanding of the intimidation tactics deployed by the industry showing prevalence and favoured sources of pressure. In addition, advocate interviews have highlighted the impact of these tactics. This is an area that does not figure widely in the literature but the impact on researchers can be debilitating. The research has led to the development of a website to better inform researchers as well as training in digital safety. It has also generated discussions with researchers on other unhealthy commodities to share best practice.

CONCLUSIONS: That the tobacco industry has a playbook which includes threats to individuals or organisations who challenge its profit-making ability is known. What we did not have was a systematic understanding of such industry intimidation. Nor the voices of researchers. Having that has opened a discussion on how to be better at countering industry intimidation and therefore be more resilient and effective in our work. Organisations involved in tobaco control or funding that work can play their part in supporting researchers.

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E-Poster

Analysis of media discourse on smoke-free policy implementation in low- and middle-income countries

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BACKGROUND: Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face a disproportionate burden from second-hand smoke (SHS). Creating completely smoke-free indoor public places is a key MPOWER measure to protect against SHS. This study examines how online news outlets in LMICs discuss existing smoke-free policies and their implementation.

METHODS: In September 2023, we used Tobacco Watcher (www.tobaccowatcher.org), a tobacco news surveillance platform, to identify articles using search terms 'smoke-free policy' and 'implementation' or 'compliance' in 10 LMICs between March 2022 and September 2023. Two trained coders independently reviewed all articles to assess their relevance based on the inclusion criteria of either substantially discussing (defined as mentioned in multiple paragraphs) or holding a clear position on smoke-free policy implementation. A content analysis was conducted, with the coders independently coding each article for argument position, content of the argument, evaluation of current implementation efforts, and argument presenters until reaching 80% agreement or higher. Discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussion.

RESULTS: Among 622 articles retrieved, 345 met the inclusion criteria. Most of these articles (81%, n=278) supported implementation of existing smoke-free policies. 31% (n=107) considered current smoke-free policy implementation efforts unsuccessful, citing lack of enforcement, signage, and other violations, while 20% (n=70) considered implementation to be successful. 21% (n=74) suggested a need for stronger smoke-free policies, including the elimination of designated smoking areas. Common argument presenters included government agencies (84%, n=291), non-WHO organizations (e.g. civil society; 40%, n=139), WHO (19%, n=67), and researchers or experts (18%, n=62).

CONCLUSIONS: Discourse around smoke-free policy implementation in online news media of LMICs is generally supportive, praising complete bans and active implementation. Discussion also frequently calls for public mobilization in enforcement efforts. News media can be utilized as avenues for raising awareness surrounding tobacco control challenges, which also indicates the need for stronger policies and implementation.

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How tobacco giant uses its Vuse e-cigarette brand to capitalise on Formula 1 racing and youth-oriented influencers on social media

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BACKGROUND: Social media has been instrumental in the promotion of e-cigarette brands globally. Many jurisdictions and social media platforms have introduced policies to restrict certain aspects of digital vape marketing due to concerns about the insidious nature of social media marketing. This paper critiques the Instagram account of leading global e-cigarette brand 'Vuse', owned by British American Tobacco (BAT). Focusing on the global Instagram account, Vuse Worldwide, this study explores the strategies and techniques used by this account to promote the Vuse brand in the global context.

METHODS: Using content analysis methods, we extracted

images, videos and metadata for the posts made by the Vuse account between 1st August 2023 and 31st July 2024. We analysed the posts to identify the content with the highest audience engagement. We identified associated social media influencers and brand collaborations and assessed the potential reach of these strategies.

RESULTS: We identified 405 posts for the 12-month study period (128 images and 277 video reels). We found that the brand collaboration with the Formula 1 race team McLaren enabled the brand to cross-post content, extending the audience reach to almost 14 million McLaren account followers—other popular content linked to music festivals, DJs, art, and design.

CONCLUSIONS: The Vuse Worldwide Instagram account uses brand collaborations, such as Formula 1, to extend its global audience. Other collaborations focused on youth-oriented events and content, such as music festivals using stylish social media influencers. This study shows the company continues to deploy the same marketing strategies utilised in tobacco marketing for new nicotine products.

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A case for cessation: New cessation models to advocate for investment in tobacco control and cessation interventions

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BACKGROUND: National investment in tobacco control is necessary for the success of tobacco control initiatives and provide governments with advocacy tools for strengthened investment. They estimate the economic burden of tobacco and model the cost and ROI for scaling-up implementation of key tobacco control measures. Given an evolution of cessation strategies in the past decade - there is opportunity for strengthened focus on the impact of implementing specific cessation interventions. In partnership with the UN Development Programme, Vital Strategies supported the development investment cases for tobacco with expanded models for cessation interventions in four countries - Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico, VietNam.

METHODS: These investment cases follow two core methods. The first is an institutional context analysis, which includes a desk review and key stakeholder interviews to assess the national health system, map stakeholders and government arrangements. The second is economic modelling, which quantifies the economic burden of tobacco on the economy, and determines the benefits of scaled up actions. To complete this, national data is collected for the economic model. These investment cases also feature expanded cessation models, which consider quitlines, brief advice, mCessation, NRTs/medicines, and estimate the number of individuals who quit smoking, and the number of averted deaths and life-years saved due to quitting as a result of scale-up of cessation interventions. The methodology for the expanded cessation modelling was developed by UNDP and verified with global partners and an external review team.

RESULTS: The results include country specific investment cases and provide specific data for policy makers and governments to use to advocate for investment in tobacco control as a whole, and specifically in cessation, using a whole-of-government approach.

CONCLUSIONS: Investment in tobacco cessation services is critical to supporting healthy populations. Developing investment cases that showcase the impact of implementing cessation services can support advocacy and strengthen investment in such initiatives.

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Patterns of sex- specific socioeconomic inequalities in e-cigarettes, traditional cigarettes and dual use among young adults: A prospective descriptive study

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BACKGROUND: Traditional cigarette (TC) smoking is a leading cause of preventable death, contributing to chronic health issues worldwide. The rise of electronic cigarettes (EC) has introduced new smoking behaviours, including exclusive TC, EC, and dual use. While socioeconomic position (SEP) disparities in TC use are well-documented, less is known about their impact on EC and dual use. This study examines sex-specific associations between SEP and smoking-related behaviours in young adults.

METHODS: Data were drawn from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a birth cohort in southwest England. SEP indicators (maternal/paternal education, household social class, composite SEP) were collected at or near offspring birth. At age 24 years, participants reported their smoking behaviours, categorized as never-users, exclusive EC, exclusive TC, or dual users. Logistic regression models examined associations between SEP and smoking categories, stratified by sex.

RESULTS: Among participants, 33.0% were never-users, 2.2% exclusive EC users, 33.7% exclusive TC users, and 30.2% dual users. Mean initiation age was 15.75 years for TC and 22.39 years for EC. Lower SEP was associated with higher odds of TC and dual use, particularly among females. Higher maternal and paternal education was linked to lower dual use odds for both sexes but higher TC use among males. Professional household's females had higher odds of never-use, while males in the same class had higher odds of TC use. No significant SEP association with EC use was found, except males with degree-holding fathers had 71% reduced odds of EC use.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the complex relationship between SEP and smoking-related behaviours, with significant sex-specific disparities. These findings underscore the need for targeted public health interventions that consider both socioeconomic and sex differences in smoking-related behaviours. Public health policies must address the growing challenge of dual use

and tailor interventions to the unique needs of different demographic groups.

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Capturing changes in youth tobacco and nicotine use: A new composite measure

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco control landscape is rapidly evolving, particularly among young people. The tobacco industry drives this shift through complementary strategies of consolidation, and further development and promotion of emerging nicotine delivery products including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products (HTPs), and oral nicotine. While declining youth smoking rates have led to a focus on e-cigarettes, other alternatives receive less attention. This study examines 1. prevalence of individual tobacco/nicotine product use and 2. composite tobacco/nicotine use among teenagers in Ireland.

METHODS: Our sample comprised a nationally representative, stratified random school sample of 5,045 15- to 18-year-olds from 268 classes. Data were collected online in 2024. Analyses were performed using SPSS v27.

RESULTS: We measured ever and current (past 30-day) use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, water pipes, moist snuff, HTPs, and nicotine pouches. We computed a composite measure for the prevalence of 'any tobacco/nicotine product use'. Examining ever and current use, e-cigarette use was most prevalent at 39% (n=1,964) and 20.2% (n=1,016) respectively, followed by smoking at 30.4% (n=1,535) and 13.6% (n=684), moist snuff at 13.1% (n=646) and 5.8% (n=288), nicotine pouches at 8.9% (n=438) and 4.7% (n=230), HTPs at 7.5% (n=371) and 2.6% (n=131), and water pipes at 4.5% (n=227) and 0.8% (n=39). Using the composite measure, prevalence of any tobacco/nicotine product use was 43.3% (n=2,186) and 24.2% (n=1,219) for ever and current use, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS: The diversification of tobacco/nicotine products may disproportionately affect teenagers, with over 40% having used at least one product and 24% reporting current use. A focus on declining smoking rates may obscure the broader prevalence of tobacco/nicotine consumption. We propose the adoption of a comprehensive composite measure for tobacco and nicotine use, supported by standardized data collection and reporting frameworks. This approach would reduce fragmented, product-specific reporting and enable a more holistic assessment of the use of all tobacco and nicotine products.

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Compliance with regulations on the traceability of cigarettes: A survey in collaboration with municipalities in Sweden

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Public Health Agency of Sweden has mapped the traceability of cigarettes in Sweden, in collaboration with a large number of municipalities. The aim is to gain more knowledge about how the rules on traceability are being complied with, to identify any shortcomings in the recording of events and to determine if any supervisory efforts are needed.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Public Health Agency supervises that the rules regarding the traceability of tobacco products are followed. Together with about 60 municipalities, we have carried out a collaborative project with a focus on supervision and mapping the traceability of cigarettes. The municipalities have, within the scope of their ordinary supervision, visited a large number of first retail outlets and photographed the traceability markings on just over 1,000 unit packets of cigarettes that were available for sale to consumers. They then sent the pictures to the Public Health Agency and we have checked the traceability in the EU common database for traceability.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Of the photographed unit packets, 90 percent could be traced all the way to the first retail outlet in question. Deficiencies in the traceability of the remaining 10 percent are mainly due to the entering wrong facility identification code for the receiving facility in their registration of the dispatch message. Other regular deficiencies are that no dispatch message was registered, or that the dispatch message was rejected due to previous mistakes in the supply chain.

CONCLUSIONS: If the traceability database contains reliable information, it can be an important tool to see where in the supply chain there are deviations and to identify where enforcement efforts are needed to stop illegal trade. Through the mapping, we have obtained data for some ongoing supervision cases, and we have also opened new supervision cases against wholesalers.

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Factors associated with dual use of e-cigarettes and combustible cigarettes and implications for product regulation in South Africa

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BACKGROUND: Despite the increasing promotion of e-cigarettes as a cessation aid/less harmful alternative to smoking in low-and middle-income countries, only limited information is available outside of high-income countries on the pattern of e-cigarette use, especially in relation to combustible cigarette smoking. This study therefore sought to describe the pattern of e-cigarette use and its association with concurrent combustible cigarette smoking and quitting behaviour.

METHODS: Data was collected during 2021 via an online survey of adult South Africans aged ⩾ 18 years (N=10,587), including current/past-week e-cigarette users (n=764) and daily cigarette smokers (n=4,076). In addition to participants'

sociodemographic characteristics, information obtained included participants' use of other tobacco or nicotine products, motivation for initiating e-cigarette use, device type - refillable e-liquid (Tank/Mods/Vape pens/others) or pre-filled e-liquid (disposables or pre-filled pods), flavour used mostly in the past-year, attempt to quit smoking in past-year and intention to quit smoking and e-cigarette in next 6month. Data were weighted to match the South African population distribution. The analysis included chi-square statistics and multi-variable adjusted logistic regression (p<0.05).

RESULTS: Of the survey participants, 25.3% (22.8-28.1%) smoked cigarettes daily and 3.0% (2.4-3.7%) currently use e-cigarettes, of whom 46.5% also smoke daily (dual users). The most used device was refillable (67.5%); a majority (60.8%) had not consistently used a particular flavour, while 23.6% and 9.9% mainly used fruit and menthol flavours, respectively. However, as compared to exclusive e-cigarette users, dual users were more likely to use pre-filled devices (OR=4.34; 95%CI=1.67-11.24), less likely to be daily users (OR=0.19; 0.07-0.49), more likely to consistently use tobacco (OR=9.91; 1.40-70.11) and menthol (OR=4.05; 1.80-15.19) flavours than varying flavours and, more likely motivated by perceived less harm/quitting and promotions/social influence than by device's attractiveness/curiosity. Daily smokers' quit attempts and quit intent were not associated with e-cigarette use.

CONCLUSIONS: Regulating e-cigarette promotions, including flavour restriction may benefit public health.

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A forgotten episode in the history of tobacco control: How Australia achieved a ban on television advertising of cigarettes

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BACKGROUND: While Australia is now renowned for world-leading anti-tobacco measures, including being the first jurisdiction to introduce plain packaging of cigarettes in 2012,it was not always at the forefront of tobacco control. This presentation traces the history of the process by which cigarette advertising on radio and television was banned in Australia in the mid-1970s, several years after similar legislative measures were introduced in comparable countries.

METHODS: This research uses the archive of the Cancer Council Victoria and other anti-cancer advocacy organisations, such as the Australian Council on Smoking and Health, along with official government records, and newspaper archives. It applies the innovative methodology of public health humanities to an historical case study. Public health humanities is a novel interdisciplinary framework in which historical studies are integrated with health promotion disciplines in order to solve complex health problems, such as tobacco control (Kehoe, Holbrook et al., 2023). It recognises that current health issues are shaped by past policies and socio-cultural contexts and uses insights into past successes and failures of health promotion campaigns, to better inform the development of future efforts.

RESULTS: This case study finds that an important milestone in cancer control was achieved over a process of several years using a combination of strategies, which included a highly innovative advertising campaign that targeted tobacco companies, pressured government to act and activated popular opinion, intense political lobbying and the repeated presentation of irrefutable scientific evidence.

CONCLUSIONS: The success of an innovative, persistent and multi-pronged campaign, which satirised Big Tobacco, applied pressure to politicians to enact regulatory legislation, appealed to public anxiety about youth smoking and was underpinned by compelling scientific evidence, offers insights for tackling contemporary tobacco control issues.

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Perspectives of African tobacco control stakeholders on endgame approaches: Results from a web-based survey involving stakeholders from 28 African countries

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco 'endgame' proposes moving beyond traditional tobacco control measures towards a tobacco-free future where commercial tobacco products are phased out or their use and availability significantly restricted. This study investigated the perceptions of tobacco control stakeholders in Africa on a range of endgame approaches that could be suited for the region.

METHODS: A web-based cross-sectional survey was hosted on Redcap. Participants were from the Africa Tobacco Control Alliance database of stakeholders and rated agreement with 11 proposed endgame approaches on a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive analysis explored level of agreement with each approach while bivariate (chi-square and Fishers exact tests) and logistic regression analyses examined association between agreement/disagreement to endgame approaches and demographic factors. Data were analyzed using STATA v17 with p<.05.

RESULTS: Total participants were 146 from 28 African countries. There was strong support for endgame approaches in Africa. All participants agreed with an integrated endgame approach while six measures (having

non-addictive cigarettes, making cigarette unappealing, tobacco-free generation, regulated market model, quota/sinking lid and specific approaches for Africa) received over 90% agreement. Agreement ranged from 70-85% for price caps, performance-based regulation, and considering non-combustible nicotine products, while only 35% supported government takeover of tobacco companies. Males and participants with <10 years' experience working in tobacco control were more likely to favor price caps and tobacco-free generation. Regression results show that stakeholders from Central Africa and those with >20 years experience working in tobacco control were less likely to support tobacco-free generation and price caps while females were less likely to support price caps and making cigarettes unappealing. Stakeholders from Southern Africa were less likely to support state takeover of tobacco companies and performance-based regulation.

CONCLUSIONS: There is widespread support for endgame approaches in the African region. Advocates should work with policymakers to implement new and multifaceted approaches to eliminate commercial tobacco use in Africa.

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Tax evasion strategies of smokeless tobacco (SLT) industries in Bangladesh: Gaps and the prevention policies

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BACKGROUND: Globally, smokeless tobacco (SLT) poses significant health risks. In Bangladesh, 22 million adults use SLT (mainly Zarda, Gul, and Sadapata), contributing to serious health concerns. Despite generating BDT 51.64 crore in the 2020-21 fiscal year, SLT revenue is much lower compared to smoking tobacco's BDT 30,294 crore. Given higher number of SLT users, tax revenue from SLT should be proportionately higher, but tax evasion remains rampant in this unregulated market. This study explores tax challenges and evasion strategies in Bangladesh's SLT market, focusing on market dynamics, tax hurdles, and methods employed by SLT companies for evasion.

METHODS: The study utilized qualitative techniques, and conducted during August to October 2023 in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Mymensingh, focusing on high SLT consumption and production rates. It included structured observations of 120 SLT packets and 50 points of sales, alongside 20 IDIs and eight KIIs with stakeholders and experts.

RESULTS: The study findings revealed several significant challenges, including the prevalence of unregulated SLT companies and the apparent indifference from NBR. Duplicate companies and lack of valid addresses were also noted as contributing factors to market irregularities. Newer tactics for tax evasion, particularly involving small and poly packaging further complicate regulatory efforts. Inadequate monitoring mechanisms and regulatory gaps, combined with absence of a comprehensive list of NBR-registered companies, exacerbate the problem. The interviews highlighted additional concerns, including the use of false BIN numbers, misuse of licenses, and reliance on self-declaration for tax obligations. Participants also noted significant coordination gaps among authorities, which hinder effective oversight and enforcement in the sector.

CONCLUSIONS: To mitigate SLT tax evasion, implement standard packaging, enforce tobacco-selling licenses, and include Sadapata and loose-tobacco in taxation. National Tobacco Control Policy, digital taxation and tracking system, online VAT implementation, and specific company registration are essential to protect SLT tax evasion, promote public health, and revenue growth.

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Differential responsiveness to cigarette prices among adults who use cannabis and those who do not in the U.S.

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BACKGROUND: Cigarettes and cannabis are commonly co-used, but few studies have examined the relationship between cigarette demand and cannabis use. This study compared the price-responsiveness of cigarette demand for current vs. non-current adult cannabis users in the U.S.

METHODS: We used cross-sectional data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2004-2019; annual mean unweighted sample size=50,000) to estimate a two-part econometric model of cigarette demand separately for current and non-current cannabis users among U.S. adults. Multivariable logistic regression estimated the impact of cigarette price on the probability of being a current smoker (smoking participation). Multivariable linear regression estimated the impact of cigarette price on the number of cigarettes smoked per day (smoking intensity).

RESULTS: From 2004 to 2019, current smoking prevalence decreased from 24.5% to 16.6%, current cannabis use increased from 5.8% to 11.6%, and dual use of cigarettes and cannabis increased from 3.6% to 4.5% among U.S. adults. For current cannabis users, a 1% increase in cigarette prices would reduce smoking participation by 0.20%, smoking intensity by 0.27%, and total cigarette demand by 0.47%. For non-current cannabis users, a 1% increase in cigarette prices would reduce smoking participation by 0.23%, smoking intensity by 0.13%, and total cigarette demand by 0.36%. Among current cigarette smokers, those who co-use cannabis were significantly more price-responsive (P=0.001) in reducing smoking intensity than those who do not concurrently use cannabis.

CONCLUSIONS: Our findings suggest that increasing cigarette prices reduce smoking prevalence, intensity, and total demand for both cannabis and non-cannabis users. Additionally, increasing cigarette prices would be more effective in reducing cigarette consumption among adult cannabis users than non-cannabis users. Considering the rising prevalence of cannabis consumption and the frequent concurrent use of tobacco and cannabis, policymakers should consider individuals' cannabis use status and dual use of cigarettes and cannabis when formulating tobacco control programs.

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Community based approaches to counteract electronic cigarette among Thai youths

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Electronic cigarettes are spread wide range among Thai youths. They are not recognized the harmfulness and no intention to quit. Early identification and intention is essential to control the epidermic and impaction.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Nurses design active mobile services to youth in community in 5 provinces in Thailand. They were designed appropriate services to reach youth both risk and smoker group. For risk group, nurses and team apply edutainment integrate electronic cigarette harmfulness on holistic health. Then post learning evaluation regarding electronic cigarette harmful and how to quit. Among smoker group, nurses persuade them to join with individual, group, or family counseling. some group may allow teacher to involve and to be a part of counseling, empowerment and 6 months follow up.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The 15 communities in 5 provinces were participated in community based approach. Nurses, health care team, community volunteers and teachers were joined as team. About 10,000 youth were screened by history taking. All were educated to counter marketing strategies of electronic cigarette include harmfulness, cigarette impact on economic, social life health and cognitive function, etc. For smoker youth, they were persuaded to join 5As cessation services program. At assessing process, After persuading process, smoker youths were consented and paricipated cessation services, Nurses assess will power, empower them to quit. They would periodically support and follow up at least 6 months.

CONCLUSIONS: Youths who participated in edutainment program, gained hugh recognition on negative impact of e-cigarette at posttest. For smoker youths more than 20 % were successfully quitting after 6 months follow up. More than 15 community alliances were strengthening and be a part of continuing community based program later. Recommendation, In Thailand, nurses should apply communities based approach program for early detection the new smokers especially e-cigarettes. Then design appropriate program to help them successfully quit as soon as possible.

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Factors influencing e-cigarette use among nursing students in Thailand: A national survey

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BACKGROUND: The use of e-cigarettes among youths in Thailand has significantly increased over the past decade, mirroring the unprecedented rise in e-cigarette use among healthcare professional students. This study aimed to investigate e-cigarette use and associated factors among nursing students in Thailand.

METHODS: A classroom-based survey was conducted using a modified standard questionnaire from the Global Health Professions Student Survey (GHPS) with third- and fourth-year nursing students from 50 nursing schools across both public and private universities in Thailand.

RESULTS: A total of 6,823 students participated in the survey. Among them, 0.4% were current users of traditional cigarettes, while 1.5% used e-cigarettes. Attitudes towards e-cigarettes revealed that 36.7% of students agreed that e-cigarettes were fashionable among teenagers and 24.3% agreed that the modern design of e-cigarettes encourages students to try using them. Factors significantly associated with e-cigarette use among nursing students included gender (male) (OR = 2.070, 95% CI: 1.209–3.545, p = 0.008), having close friends who use tobacco products (OR = 6.370, 95% CI: 4.377–9.270, p < 0.001), and studying at public universities (OR = 1.920, 95% CI: 1.110–3.323, p = 0.020). Additionally, attitudes that e-cigarettes were safer than traditional cigarettes, fashionable, modern, lower in health risks, and promote social engagement were significantly related to e-cigarette use (p < 0.001). Protective factors of e-cigarette use among students included studying at college of nursing under Ministry of Public Health, receiving education on tobacco marketing strategies and participating in tobacco control campaigns.

CONCLUSIONS: E-cigarette use among nursing students in Thailand is on the rise, surpassing traditional tobacco use. To address this, nursing students should receive education on tobacco marketing tactics, and university-based tobacco control campaigns should be strengthened.

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Global cooperation to raise youth awareness of tobacco industry interference tactics: A project from WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: One of the main obstacles to the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the interference of the tobacco industry (TI), which undermines the development and enforcement of effective tobacco control policies worldwide. This interference allows the TI to target new consumers, especially young people, fostering lifelong addiction. In this context, international cooperation and concerted global efforts are crucial to counter TI strategies and protect public health. This presentation will focus specifically on the value of communication strategies and the importance of intersectoral collaboration, as promoted by the Article 12 of the WHO FCTC, in overcoming these obstacles.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2024, the WHO FCTC Knowledge hub for Article 5.3 and the WHO FCTC Knowledge hub for Public awareness gathered a group of six representatives of youth non-governmental organizations (NGO) from around the world to exchange perspectives on protecting young people from TI's harmful tactics. On the basis of this collaboration, a strategy to inform and empower youth against these practices was co-developped by producing communication material targeting young people. Pre-tests will be conducted in different geographical areas to assess the understanding and usefulness of the produced assets. Finally, leveraging this global network, the materials will be broadcast internationally to inform and mobilize young people against TI's influence.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This project fosters intersectoral and international collaboration between different types of actors (public health agencies, laboratories and NGOs) from all regions of the world, to counter the global influence of TI. It could also empower young people to recognize and stand up against the harmful effects of TI's activities.

CONCLUSIONS: Aligned with the principles of FCTC, it illustrates a collective action that seek to produce greater impact and protect everyone's right to the highest standard of health.

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The interaction between environmental tobacco smoke exposure and physical activity on sleep-disordered breathing in school-aged children

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BACKGROUND: Although the detrimental effects of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure and the beneficial role of physical activity (PA) on sleep health are well recognized, their combined influence on sleep-disordered breathing (SDB) in children remains unclear. This study investigates whether PA can mitigate the adverse effects of ETS on SDB in Chinese school-aged children.

METHODS: This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Yangtze River Delta Region of China. Data were collected through parent-reported questionnaires, covering information on children's demographics, ETS exposure, PA levels and types, as well as the occurrence of SDB. The study compared PA levels between children exposed and unexposed to ETS and examined associations with doctor-diagnosed sleep apnea and weekly snoring.

RESULTS: A total of 275 children (mean age: 9.6±2.7 years; 56.7% boys) participated. Among them, 31.6% were exposed to ETS at home daily. While most children (95.6%) engaged in daily outdoor play, only 26.5% met the WHO's recommendation of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per day. Sleep apnea was reported in 6.9% of children, and weekly snoring in 32.0%. ETS exposure was significantly associated with an increased risk of SDB ($p<0.001$). However, regular outdoor activity reduced the likelihood of sleep apnea ($p=0.02$) and weekly snoring ($p=0.01$), with higher PA levels linked to lower risks. Logistic regression analysis also revealed a significant interaction between ETS and PA in relation to snoring prevalence ($p=0.03$).

CONCLUSIONS: Engaging in regular physical activity may help counteract some of the harmful effects of ETS on sleep and respiratory health in children. Identifying the optimal intensity and type of physical activity is essential to maximize its protective benefits.

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Smoking, human papilloma virus and cervical cancer: A colposcopy clinic partnership project

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BACKGROUND: Smoking increases the risk of having an active Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection. While most HPV infections are cleared within 1–2 years, smoking reduces the chance of clearing HPV. Smoking increases the risk that HPV will cause cell abnormalities in the cervix, that can lead to cervical cancer. Notification of abnormal tests is known to be a 'teachable moment' for stop smoking supports – i.e. a brief period in which motivation to stop smoking is enhanced. Approximately 41.5% of women who

attend colposcopy in Ireland are smokers. For them, the attendance can activate the 'relevance' element of the '5R's' model. This gives the opportunity for colposcopy services to provide the elements of the '5A's' model to support this activation – Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist and Arrange. This project explored how to enhance the '5A's' model of stop smoking interventions within a colposcopy setting.

METHODS:

• Engage with partners
• Conduct literature reviews & a survey of colposcopy clinics in Ireland
• Co-produce resources

RESULTS: All stakeholders viewed colposcopy as a suitable setting for smoking cessation services (100%). 36.5% of colposcopy patients who smoke are 'always' offered referral to quit smoking services, 45.5% are 'sometimes' referred and 18% are never referred.

Colposcopy staff felt that specific information for staff and patients on HPV, smoking and cervical cancer, staff training, and an e-referral system to Quit smoking services would enhance referrals to quit smoking services in their clinic. Co-produced resources.

CONCLUSIONS: Colposcopy clinics are a suitable setting for brief interventions about smoking. The availability of enhanced referral pathways to stop smoking services and a suite of educational materials on the relationship between smoking, HPV and cervical cancer will enable staff to practice their brief smoking intervention skills and patients to understand the risk of smoking and benefits of quitting on their cervical and general health.

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Trends and characteristics of hookah tobacco (waterpipe) use among US adults, 2010-2023

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BACKGROUND: Commercial waterpipe, or hookah, tobacco contains toxicants similar to cigarettes No studies to-date report rates for current U.S. hookah use since 2016. Research shows factors such as male gender, race and ethnic identity, age, college education, region, and other tobacco product use are associated with hookah use.

METHODS: The Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Survey (TUS-CPS) provides nationally representative data among the adult (18+), civilian, noninstitutionalized U.S. population. We analyzed data from 2010–2011, 2014–2015, 2018–2019, and 2022-2023 to assess changes in prevalence of hookah use (current 'some days/everyday', former, never use) over time, and whether being a current or former hookah user (vs never user) was associated with characteristics (age, sex/gender, race/ethnicity, education, cigarette smoking, geographical region, and metropolitan status) using multinomial logistic regression for each of the seven sociodemographic variables accounting for changes in trends over time.

RESULTS: Between 2010 and 2023, the weighted percentage of adults in the U.S. who report lifetime hookah use (current or former users) increased, from 2.7% to 5.5%. Current hookah ranged from 0.3% to 0.6% across time periods. Current hookah use was positively predicted by being male (vs female), aged 25-34 or aged 35-44 (vs 18-24), non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic (vs Non-Hispanic White), and college educated (v. less than HS or HS). Former hookah use was positively predicted by being male, aged 25-34 or aged 35-44, in the West, college educated, and income above $75000 (v. Any lower income level. Current and former cigarette smoking was associated with increased odds of current and former hookah use (2.45 <OR < 5.11, p < .001).

CONCLUSIONS: Differences among never, former, and current hookah users during this period suggest value in further assessment to identify both risk factors for hookah use and groups needing tailored/targeted intervention.

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Communicating tangible research findings to non-statisticians: A case study of Tanzania GATS-2018

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is one of the most common risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). 27% of all deaths in Tanzania are due to NCDs, Tanzania conducted the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) in 2018, this was the first and nationally representative survey on tobacco use in Tanzania that aimed at informing stakeholders and guiding evidence-based decision-making in tobacco control.

METHODS: 4976 households and 4797 individuals 15 years of age and older were interviewed. households were sampled, and one adult (defined as 15 years of age or older) was randomly selected from each participating household to complete the GATS individual questionnaire. The overall response rate was 91.7%, with a household response rate of 95.1% and an individual response rate of 96.4%.

RESULTS: 8.7% of adults currently use tobacco(smoking or smokeless), with a higher prevalence among men (14.6%) compared to women (3.2%). Rural populations exhibit a higher tobacco use rate than urban areas, indicating regional disparities in consumption patterns. Additionally,13.8 % of adults are exposed to secondhand smoke at home, while 32.9% face exposure in workplaces, highlighting the widespread health risks of involuntary smoke exposure. Despite these challenges, the survey indicates that 76.8% of smokers are interested in quitting, yet access to cessation programs remains limited.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings call for strengthened

tobacco control policies, enhanced public education, and improved cessation support to reduce tobacco use and its associated respiratory disease burden eg. Tuberculosis in Tanzania however the findings have not been effectively disseminated locally and internationally. This abstract aims to communicate Findings and suggest innovative counseling and quitline to a wide community through this conference to inform policymakers, public health practitioners, and activists with actionable insights to help invest and advance tobacco control initiatives in the developing world especially in Tanzania.

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Exploring stakeholder perspectives on preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth: A health literacy approach

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarette use among early adolescents in Thailand is rising. Despite efforts by tobacco control agencies, preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth remains a challenge. This study aimed to explore stakeholder perspectives on preventing e-cigarette use among at-risk youth, applying the Health Literacy (HL) framework.

METHODS: This descriptive qualitative study was conducted through in-depth interviews and focus groups with youth at risk (n=9), parents (n=9), and teachers involved in tobacco control (n=8). The research took place in a northern province of Thailand from September to November 2024. Purposive sampling was employed until data saturation was achieved. Interview questions, grounded in the HL framework, were validated for content. Data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically, with investigator triangulation to enhance reliability.

RESULTS: Six main themes with 20 subthemes emerged, most of which were consistent across participant groups. Stakeholders' perspectives on e-cigarette prevention were categorized into three levels of HL. At the functional literacy level, participants understood the health risks of e-cigarettes but lacked detailed knowledge about the substances in e-cigarettes and their specific health consequences. In terms of communication literacy, parents and teachers acknowledged the significant influence of online advertising on youth e-cigarette use, and vulnerable adolescents struggled to resist peer pressure. At the critical literacy level, stakeholders suggested that prevention could be achieved by helping youth evaluate the consequences of e-cigarette use and encouraging the setting of personal life goals through contemporary, accessible methods.

CONCLUSIONS: Stakeholders recognize the health risks of e-cigarettes but feel less confident in effectively communicating these risks to others. Online e-cigarette advertising plays a significant role in shaping youth behavior. Enhancing health literacy, decision-making skills, and self-management among at-risk youth—using modern tools such as mobile apps and online platforms—could help prevent e-cigarette use. Additionally, stricter regulations on online e-cigarette advertising are essential.

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Determinants of tobacco use intention among Filipino adolescents: Insights from the 2015 Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND: Smoking remains a significant global health issue, contributing to millions of preventable deaths annually. It is the leading cause of preventable mortality worldwide. This study aims to examine the characteristics of Filipino adolescent smokers aged 13–15 years and identify the factors influencing their intention to continue tobacco use over the next 12 months.

METHODS: This study utilized a secondary analysis of the 2015 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) conducted in the Philippines. It investigated the association of key factors with the intention of current adolescent smokers to continue using tobacco within the next 12 months. The factors examined included: (1) exposure to anti-tobacco media campaigns, (2) awareness of health warnings on cigarette packaging, and (3) education on the dangers of tobacco use in school settings.

RESULTS: The adjusted odds of intending to continue using any form of tobacco in the next 12 months were significantly higher among adolescents who had not seen health warnings on cigarette packages (AOR = 1.24; 95% CI: 0.62–2.49) and those not taught about the dangers of tobacco in any class (AOR = 1.32; 95% CI: 0.71–2.45). Furthermore, adolescents who had not been exposed to anti-tobacco messages through television, radio, internet, billboards, posters, newspapers, magazines, or movies were substantially more likely to report an intention to continue using tobacco (AOR = 2.19; 95% CI: 1.14–4.21).

CONCLUSIONS: Understanding the impact of various tobacco control strategies on adolescents' intention to continue using tobacco is vital for enhancing policies and programs aimed at effective youth tobacco control. A well-designed anti-tobacco campaign leveraging both traditional and digital media should be integral to a comprehensive tobacco control strategy. Additionally, health warnings on cigarette packaging should be reinforced by policies that prohibit the sale of single-stick cigarettes, addressing a key driver of youth tobacco consumption.

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Strengthening tobacco control through subnational initiatives: Lessons from the Philippines

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Philippines faces significant challenges in tobacco control due to industry resistance, limited local resources, and variability in enforcement capacity among local government units (LGUs). These challenges hinder the effective implementation of smoke-free policies and bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS). Addressing these barriers is crucial to protecting public health and advancing the country's compliance with the WHO MPOWER framework.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address these challenges, subnational initiatives were strengthened through community engagement, capacity-building, and proactive enforcement measures. Comprehensive smoke-free ordinances were implemented in Baguio City, Mandaluyong City, Benguet, and Aklan provinces, supported by local enforcement teams trained to monitor and reduce public exposure to tobacco smoke and TAPS. More than 6000 individuals, including government officials and community members, were trained in tobacco control policy enforcement and implementation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The interventions led to significant progress in tobacco control at the subnational level. Smoke-free environments expanded, and proactive enforcement of TAPS bans significantly reduced public exposure to tobacco advertisements. In Baguio City, the prevalence of tobacco use decreased substantially from 2014 to 2022, showcasing the effectiveness of these local measures. Community awareness campaigns further enhanced compliance with smoke-free ordinances, demonstrating the critical role of engaging local stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS: The success of these initiatives highlights the critical importance of subnational actions in advancing tobacco control. By addressing local challenges through targeted capacity-building, legal support, and community engagement, these efforts provide a model for other regions. Strengthening local enforcement capacity and aligning subnational actions with national and global tobacco control strategies is essential to sustaining progress and protecting public health.

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Comparative analysis of the impact of cigarette taxation on consumption, revenue and mortality in Jordan

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BACKGROUND: This study aimed to analyse the potential effects of tax increases on cigarette consumption, tax revenues, and mortality from smoking in Jordan in 2024 by administering hypothetical price increases.

METHODS: The general Tobacconomics model developed by the Tobacconomics team (at the University of Illinois, Chicago) was used. The model simulates the increase in government revenues and public health benefits, due to changes in cigarettes taxes.

RESULTS: Raising both taxes by 20% seems to be the best policy scenario in Jordan as it significantly will decrease both cigarette consumption and future deaths and simultaneously increase government revenue. Raising tier tax by 20% could lead to a reduction in consumption and population death, raising both taxes by 20% will result in a more significant, desirable impact on consumption, mortality and government revenue. This scenario suggests a reduction in total government revenue. Although the suggested scenario of raising specific excise taxes by 20% is expected to reduce consumption and total deaths, it still has less impact on these outcomes when compared to raising both taxes by 20%.

CONCLUSIONS: The current modelling analysis indicates that a strategy of increased specific excise taxes, alongside a tiered tax structure, would not only reduce tobacco consumption but also augment government revenue significantly. This dual effect underpins the critical role of tax policy as an instrument of public health and fiscal strategy. This research posits that the pursuit of tobacco control in Jordan through taxation reforms is a testament to the country's commitment to public health. The intricate balance between health objectives and revenue generation is a hallmark of Jordan's tobacco taxation policy. As we move forward, the implications of our findings suggest a continued aggressive stance on tobacco taxation as a means to a healthier populace and improved public health outcomes.

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Fighting for our lives: African Americans, menthol cigarettes, the tobacco industry, and US tobacco control policy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2009, the United States passed the Family Smoking and Tobacco Prevention Act (Act). This historic legislation brought the regulation of tobacco products and the tobacco industry under the auspices of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). When the Act was signed into law, all flavors in combustible cigarettes were banned all except for menthol. The tobacco industry has racistly and perniciously targeted the African American/Black community with mentholated tobacco products for decades. Resulting in more that 85% of Black people who smoke using mentholated tobacco products. Tobacco industry tactics included cultivating and manipulating the Black press, elected officials, and leadership groups. The industry has given away free cigarettes to Black children as young as nine years old. They have seeded multi

generational addiction in the Black community, causing 45000 tobacco-induced deaths each year.
Since the passage of the ACT, a mounting and national effort spearheaded by African Americans has been underway to ban the sale of mentholated tobacco products. But the tobacco industry has managed to block national efforts by exploiting the legitimate civil and human rights of African Americans and undermine efforts to enact public health policies that would protect Black people and ban these products.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In an attempt to compel the US FDA to ban menthol, the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council, Action on Smoking and Health, the American Medical Association, and the National Medical Association have brought (2) lawsuits against the US FDA.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Through community education and engagement community and leadership groups, voluntary organizations, and foundations have mounted a national response to ban these products.
CONCLUSIONS: This case is currently being heard by the US federal judicial system. Coordinated local and state efforts have resulted in over 190 U.S. local municipalities enacting legislation to restrict or ban the sale of mentholated tobacco products.
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Characteristics, health perceptions, and risks of capsule cigarette use among Korean adults

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BACKGROUND: This study examines the characteristics of adult capsule cigarette users in Korea and explores the perceived health impacts of their use, providing foundational data for future regulation of flavoured tobacco products.
METHODS: An online survey was conducted with 4345 participants from a panel of 22844 individuals managed by Gallup Korea, yielding 1064 valid responses. Data collection occurred between October 5 and October 20, 2023, with SPSS 21.0 used for statistical analysis.
RESULTS: The study found that 45% of respondents were capsule cigarette users, with usage significantly higher among young adults aged 19–29 (68.9%) compared to other age groups (p<.001). Dual- or triple-product tobacco users reported a higher rate of capsule cigarette use (70.4%) than single-product users (p<.001). Commonly reported symptoms among capsule cigarette users included dizziness (58.3%), nausea (56.5%), and shortness of breath (31.8%), which were more frequent than in non-smokers (p<.005). Logistic regression analysis identified age as a significant factor, with those aged 19–29 more likely to use capsule cigarettes than other age groups (AOR, 4.52; 95% CI, 2.45–8.34). White-collar workers were more likely to use capsule cigarettes than unemployed individuals (AOR, 2.37; 95% CI, 1.29–4.35), while blue-collar workers showed lower usage rates. Multi-tobacco product users were significantly more likely to use capsule cigarettes, with triple-product users (AOR, 3.69) and dual-product users (AOR, 2.13) showing higher odds compared to single-product users. Smokers consuming fewer than 10 cigarettes per day had a higher likelihood of capsule cigarette use than heavy smokers. Shortness of breath was significantly associated with capsule cigarette use (AOR, 2.60; 95% CI, 1.60–4.23).
CONCLUSIONS: These findings highlight the popularity of capsule cigarettes among young adults and multi-product users and emphasize the need for regulatory action to mitigate associated health risks.
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Illicit cigarette trade and tax evasion: Empty pack survey in Zambia

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BACKGROUND: Illicit cigarette trade has significant economic and public health implications. It leads to governments tax revenue losses due to the evasion of tobacco taxes, and often these cigarettes are cheaper ones therefore increasing cigarette consumption. The objective is to estimate the Illicit cigarette trade and tax evasion in Zambia and establish its associated factors.
METHODS: A cross sectional survey was used to collect empty cigarette packs from the retailers and street/bins in 25 districts covering 10 Provinces of Zambia. We used a descriptive analysis to calculate the proportion of illicit cigarette packs and other specific criteria. Logistic regression was used to model the factors associated with the prevalence of the illicit cigarette market in Zambia.
RESULTS: Of the 118, 344 empty cigarette packs collected (82.0% from the retailers and 18.0% the street/bins), 343 (0.3%) packs did not have a textual health warning in english, 1490 (1.3%) had duty-free stamps even though they were purchased from retail outlets that were not duty-free shops and, 11939 (10.1%) did not have a ZRA stamp. Factors associated with reduced odds of illicit cigarettes sales were non-boarder [AOR 0.17 (CI; 0.13 – 0.23)] and local manufactured [AOR 0.44 (CI; 0.37 – 0.53)].
CONCLUSIONS: Our study demonstrated that 12.2% of the cigarettes sold on the Zambian market is illicit, with 10.1% evading tax. We found that cigarettes from Lusaka province, urban regions, border towns, and those that are imported had higher odds of being illicit. This finding underscores the fact that Zambia should ratify and implement the WHO Protocol on Illicit Tobacco Trade (ITP) to counter the supply of illicit cigarettes.
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Efficacy of team-based smoking cessation counselling by accredited pharmacists on quit rates for hospitalised patients: A single-centre study

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: There is currently lack of local and overseas studies to support any model of care for inpatient smoking cessation program that will improve quit rates.

The primary objective of the study was to compare the quit rates of patients receiving counselling from a dedicated team of accredited pharmacists versus their non-accredited peers. Patient's variables were also analyzed for positive predictors of better quit rates.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Patients admitted into Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore, between 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2020 who expressed interest in quitting smoking and provided verbal consent for counselling and follow-up were reviewed. They were referred to a common pool of inpatient pharmacists. From 1 June 2019, patients were seen by the newly formed smoking cessation team (accredited pharmacists certified as Quit Smoking Consultants by the Singapore Health Promotion Board, equipped with advanced knowledge and counselling skills).

Follow up phone calls were conducted at 3 and 6 months after the initial counselling session to assess smoking status.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A total of 778 patients were identified for smoking cessation counselling, of which 357 (45.9%) were counselled by the smoking cessation team. Most patients were male (91%) with a median age of 59 years of age. Quit rates were higher by the smoking cessation team at 3 months (33.6% vs 26.8%,p<0.05). However, quit rates did not differ significantly at 6 months (30% vs 25.4%,p=0.156). Patients of Chinese descent (OR 1.83,95% CI:1.182 – 2.838,p=0.007), underwent cold turkey treatment (OR 1.63,95% CI:1.022 – 2.604,p=0.040) and received full counselling (OR 1.47,95% CI:1.018 – 2.117, p=0.040) were associated with a significant higher likelihood to quit.

CONCLUSIONS: A dedicated team of accredited pharmacists can improve quit rates at 3 months. Though the 6 months quit rate did not reach statistical significance, there was still a clinically meaningful difference and supports the need for further investigation into sustained benefits.

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Social change for long term tobacco control: 50-year perspective of Finland

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Already in 1976 Finnish Parliament passed the first Tobacco Act, at that time quite pioneering. For nearly 50 years there has been no tobacco advertising or sales promotion in the country. After that the law has been amended eight times and it matches well with the best global and WHO recommendations.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: After the success in smoking control Finnish Parliament added in 2010 to the law the goal of tobacco free Finland. With the emergence of new nicotine products, the Parliament expanded this goal in 2016 to encompass a 'tobacco- and nicotine-free Finland.' E-cigarettes are currently regulated under the Tobacco Act, and nicotine pouches will soon be included. Strong advocacy efforts are underway to push for stricter regulation of these products, to counteract the industry pressure through many channels. A ministerial working group has proposed further amendments to the Tobacco Act, including, among other measures, raising the minimum age for purchasing tobacco and nicotine products to 20 years.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The prevalence of daily smoking among adults is currently around 10 % and among youth (14-20 years) 5 %. The goal of the Tobacco Act enjoys broad public support.

CONCLUSIONS: The reasons for success in tobacco control in Finland have been the active work and co-operation among researchers, health advocates and NGO`s, together with good monitoring and engagement with media. Tobacco and nicotine policies for the endgame goal, following the FCTC principles, calls for social change supported by sustained strong leadership and broad collaboration. It is not sufficient to merely understand what needs to be done; good understanding and close involvement in the political decision-making process are essential. The future challenges include maintaining political support for tobacco and nicotine policies, as well as resisting interference from nicotine companies, which is currently evident.

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Communicating risk: Compliance assessment of health warning labels on tobacco products in Goa, India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is associated with mortality in low- and middle-income countries including India. Article 11 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) requires parties to display rotated health warnings on tobacco product packaging. Health warnings on packaging are one of the most cost-effective ways to warn the consumers about the health risks of tobacco. Hence the study aimed to assess its compliance for understanding the current status of implementation of packaging law.

METHODS: The cross-sectional study was conducted to assess tobacco product packs collected from different Point of Sale (PoS) in both districts of Goa. An observational

structured checklist was prepared for the analysis of the Tobacco Product packaging as per the section 7, 8 and 9 of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2022. Compliance was assessed using various indicators such as pictorial and textual health warning location, content, coverage, clarity. The surface area occupied by these warnings was measured using a calibrated scale. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 23.

RESULTS: Among the 42 tobacco product packs analyzed, 69% were smoked form and 31% were smokeless form respectively. Out of 25 cigarette packs, 21 complied with the indicators. However, none of the beedi, foreign cigarette packs and smokeless form were fully compliant. Pictorial Health warning was present on 95.2% products. Only 64.3% of the products had 85% health warning coverage. Other compliance issues included distorted and blurred images, split warnings.

CONCLUSIONS: Smoked Tobacco packs showed higher compliance as compared to smokeless form. The compliance was least for beedi, foreign cigarettes and smokeless tobacco packs. The findings highlight the urgent need for strict enforcement of the COTPA to ensure compliance with health warning requirements.

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Adult awareness and attitudes toward cigarette card gaming among Chinese children in Shenzhen, China: A population-based cross-sectional study

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BACKGROUND: Cigarette packs in China are visually appealing and feature limited text health warnings. Since 2023, these packs have become increasingly popular among children, who repurpose them into cards for flip-and-win games, known as the cigarette card (CC) game. We examined Chinese adults' awareness and attitudes toward this phenomenon.

METHODS: We conducted a population-based survey in Shenzhen, China, from September to October 2023. 4525 adult respondents reported their awareness of the CC game. Among those who were aware and lived with children aged 7–12 years (n=349), we assessed whether the children had played the CC game in the past week, perceived reasons for participation, and sources of CCs. Those aware of the game (n=706) were asked about their perception of smoking initiation risk and their tolerance of the CC game. Factors associated with low-risk perception and tolerance were analyzed using multivariable logistic regression.

RESULTS: Overall, 15.6% (95% CI: 14.6%–16.7%) of respondents were aware of the CC game. Among those aware and living with children, 6.1% (4.8%–7.4%) reported that the children had played the game, mainly due to peer influence (76.8%) and curiosity (20.7%). Primary sources of CCs included peers (73.2%), trash bins/ground (46.3%), and parents who smoke (18.3%). Among those aware of the game, 19.1% perceived it as posing a low risk for smoking initiation, whereas 39.5% expressed tolerance toward it. Low-risk perception was associated with living with children (adjusted odds ratio 2.10, 95% CI: 1.35–3.23), tobacco advertising exposure (2.10, 1.35–3.29), and tolerance (2.91, 1.95–4.34). Tolerance was associated with being male (1.61, 1.13–2.29) and having a low-risk perception (2.86, 1.92–4.28).

CONCLUSIONS: The low awareness of the CC game, coupled with high tolerance, highlights the need for public health initiatives to address the game's potential risks in renormalizing and initiating smoking in children.

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Exploring environmental epigenetics in cross-generational effects of grandparents' smoking behaviour on grandchildren's development

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BACKGROUND: Research on the impact of smoking behavior across generations has primarily focused on grandmaternal smoking during pregnancy, while the broader environmental transmission of smoking behaviors remains underexplored. This study aims to evaluate the possibilities of ecological transmission, other than in-utero transmission, regarding the effects of grandparental smoking behavior on their offspring

METHODS: A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple online databases, including PubMed, Embase, Web of Science, and Scopus. There were no restrictions on publication dates, study locations, or language to ensure a broad scope of relevant studies. From the 4133 identified articles, 3916 remained after duplicates were removed. Based on predefined eligibility criteria, 38 articles were selected for full-text assessment. The selection process involved multiple reviewers and the data were independently extracted by multiple reviewers using a standardized protocol. The JBI critical appraisal tool was employed to assess the quality of included studies, with inter-rater reliability tests indicating moderate-to-high

agreement.

RESULTS: Seven articles were included in the analysis, measuring grandchildren's behavior, BMI, fat mass, lean mass, and IQ related to grandparents' smoking. All studies were conducted in American and European settings. No records were found evaluating the cross-generational effects of grandparents' smoking on grandchildren's development in Asian countries, despite relatively high smoking rates in the region. Indirect relationships occurred in the environmental transmission between grandparents' and grandchildren's smoking behavior with parental smoking as the mediator. Results suggested indirect environmental transmission between grandparents' smoking and grandchildren's outcomes. Significant associations were observed between grandparents' smoking status and grandchildren's physical and cognitive outcomes, with notable sex differences.

CONCLUSIONS: This review highlights the potential environmental pathways through which grandparents' smoking behaviour may influence grandchildren's behavioural, physical, and cognitive development. While the findings underscore the importance of intergenerational environmental factors, further research is needed to address existing gaps and clarify mechanisms.

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Spatio-temporal distribution of cigarette providers (retail and electronic) in three Indonesian cities, 2015–2022

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BACKGROUND: Living near tobacco retailers (both conventional and electronic) is associated with smoking initiation and prolonged smoking behavior. While data on conventional tobacco retailer density exists, but there is limited evidence on electronic cigarette providers. Evidence on the spatial-temporal density of both conventional and electronic cigarette providers is crucial to strengthen tobacco control efforts at national and regional levels in Indonesia. This study examines tobacco retailer density, trends in their spatial distribution, and spatial factors influencing this density.

METHODS: This study employed a mixed-method approach, analyzing neighborhood-level data from Medan, Bogor, and Malang between 2015 and 2022. Retailer locations were identified through a virtual Google Street View survey, and data were analyzed using the Spatial Autoregressive Random Effect Model (SARREM). Additionally, in-depth interviews with health officials and store owners provided qualitative insights.

RESULTS: The findings indicate a significant increase in both traditional and electronic tobacco retailers from 2015 to 2022. Spatial dependency was observed for traditional retailers in all three cities in both years ($p<0.001$), while electronic cigarette retailers showed spatial dependency in 2022 ($p<0.001$). The number of schools positively correlated with tobacco retailer density in Bogor (Coef: 0.034, $p<0.001$), Medan (Coef: 0.015, $p<0.001$), and Malang (Coef: 0.047, $p<0.001$). Interviews confirmed that minors frequently purchase cigarettes at local stores, including near health facilities. Health offices reported challenges in enforcing sales restrictions, particularly in border areas compared to city centers.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the importance of spatial factors in the increasing density of tobacco retailers in three Indonesian cities. Retailers were found to have spatial dependency, and proximity to schools is associated with the rise in the number of retailers. Local governments in Indonesia can use spatial mapping to prioritize enforcing cigarette sales restrictions especially near schools.

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Address tobacco industry tactics in university campuses in Iraq and EMR

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry's persistent efforts to delay or weaken the implementation of smoke-free policies under FCTC Article 8 pose a significant challenge to public health in Iraq. By normalizing smoking in outdoor areas such as university campuses and public spaces, the industry strategically targets young adults, shaping perceptions and behaviors to sustain tobacco use.

CHALLENGES: Efforts to combat tobacco use face numerous challenges. A significant gap exists in exposing and countering tobacco industry tactics, leaving their strategies unchallenged.

METHODS: The paper addresses the tobacco industry's tactics that undermine policy efforts to combat tobacco use in Iraq by proposing a multifaceted response strategy. This includes Education and Awareness campaigns to inform the public and stakeholders about the industry's harmful practices and their impact on health. Comprehensive Data Collection and Reporting mechanisms will monitor tobacco-related activities and policy compliance. Advocacy and Capacity Building will empower policymakers, civil society, and healthcare professionals to resist industry pressure.

RESULTS: The research paper yielded significant results and impactful outcomes by addressing the tactics of the tobacco industry in Iraq through a comprehensive approach. Data Collection and Reporting systems provided actionable insights to guide interventions. Advocacy and Capacity Building empowered stakeholders, including policymakers and civil society, to counter industry influence effectively. By promoting Public Accountability,

the research fostered transparency and community involvement.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the critical need to counteract tobacco industry tactics in Iraq by aligning interventions with global, national, and developmental priorities. The proposed strategies uphold the principles of the WHO FCTC, particularly Article 8, Article 12, and Article 13. They also resonate with Iraq's National Tobacco Control Strategies, emphasizing youth-focused interventions and integrating tobacco control into broader efforts to combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Furthermore, the study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals(3,4,11). the findings underscore the potential for sustainable progress in tobacco control and health advocacy.

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A milestone in tobacco control: Protecting Jordanian schoolchildren from tobacco advertising tactics

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: About 44% of Jordan's population is younger than 20y, and the country has a high prevalence of tobacco use , high tobacco industry interference, and public resistance to tobacco control measures. Despite laws banning the sale of tobacco products within 250m of educational facilities, there are many observations of shops violating the laws, and selling tobacco and vaping products to children. However, lack of documented evidence hindered stronger law enforcement.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Tobacco Free Jordan and KHCC/CCO reframed Jordan's tobacco issue as a child protection concern by (1) gathering evidence on tobacco and vape sales near schools in 2 densely populated areas of the capital, (2) produce action oriented advocacy tools that expose tobacco advertising tactics (3) created government momentum to discuss the tobacco problem in Jordan as a child protection one.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Mapping retailer violation in a sample around schools produced evidence on the potential scale of children's exposure to tobacco and vaping products. A very high level launch and media engagement raised the attention of stakeholders, and contributed to pressuring the government to do more. This led to an investigation by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to clarify how the tobacco sales licenses were obtained, and halt issuance of new licenses. Ultimately, when time came for the MoH to engage the government at the highest levels (His Majesty the King), our data was available to demonstrate the situation. It was also used as the premise for inclusion of specific measures in Jordan's subsequent national tobacco control plan.

CONCLUSIONS: Reframing the tobacco control problem in Jordan was needed to prompt more attention to the issue. Child protection was a perspective few could disagree to, and led to engagement of more stakeholders. Focusing on a specific area to evaluate(tobacco sales near schools) enabled targeted advocacy messages to be produced and amplified.

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State of the evidence of economic impacts on the tourism sector following the implementation of a smoke-free policy

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BACKGROUND: Article 8 of the WHO FCTC obligates its Parties to enact policies that create 100% smoke-free (SF) enclosed workplaces, public places and public transport. In some jurisdictions, the tourism sector has requested exemptions citing concerns that these policies could have negative economic impacts. This narrative literature review identified studies that reported economic impacts of SF policies on the tourism sector including hotels, casinos/gambling venues, and sporting events.

METHODS: The search included peer reviewed and gray literature, published between January 1, 2004 and June 18, 2024. Scopus, Embase, and JSTOR databases were used. Search terms included variations of 'smoke-free' AND 'tourism,' OR 'hospitality,' OR 'beach' OR 'casino,' OR 'hotel,' and other related terms. Articles were included in the study if they reported economic impacts of SF policies on a tourism sector. Studies were initially screened by title and abstract, then full text.

RESULTS: Database searching identified 692 articles. 37 studies met inclusion criteria. Nearly all identified studies (95%) focused on economic impacts in high-income countries. Most studies (73%) reported neutral or positive economic impacts from SF policies. There is evidence that hotels experienced stable or improved revenues, increased customer satisfaction, and enhanced employee health outcomes after going SF. There is evidence that some casinos experienced short-term revenue declines, but these were often temporary. Comprehensive SF policies were more likely to yield positive economic benefits compared to partial policies, commonly attributed to enforcement challenges.

CONCLUSIONS: This review supports the argument that comprehensive SF policies provide both health and economic benefits. Findings can help policymakers counter tobacco industry claims and build political support for stronger SF policies, especially in jurisdictions that have robust tourism sectors. It is also noted that there are few studies from low- and middle-income countries, highlighting the need for further research in these jurisdictions.

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Trends and correlates of current untaxed tobacco use between 2013 and 2022-2023 in

Australia: A repeated cross-sectional study

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco tax increases are a cost-effective method to reduce smoking prevalence, particularly among low socioeconomic groups. However, in response to tax increases, price-sensitive individuals may turn to cheaper, untaxed alternatives, including illicit tobacco, rather than quitting. This study estimates the use of untaxed tobacco, including unbranded and non-plain-packaged (PP) cigarettes among Australian adults who smoked between 2013 and 2022-2023. It also explores the associations between sociodemographic and smoking characteristics, and untaxed tobacco use.

METHODS: Weighted multinomial logistic regression was applied to combined data from Australia's National Drug Strategy Survey, a nationally representative triennial survey conducted in 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022-2023. The sample were 12596 adults who smoked at least monthly.

RESULTS: Untaxed tobacco use decreased from 12.2% in 2013 to 8.6% in 2016 but rose to 9.9% in 2019 and 16.5% in 2022-2023, including 7.6% using exclusive non-PP packs, 6.5% using unbranded tobacco, and 2.4% using both. Compared to 2013, exclusive unbranded tobacco use and dual use with non-PP packs significantly doubled in 2022-2023. Factors associated with unbranded tobacco use included being outside the labour force (aRRR=2.00, 95% CI=1.47–2.74, vs. currently employed), high psychological distress (AOR=1.95, 95% CI=1.41 to 2.7, vs. low), past-year illicit substance use (aRRR=1.71, 95% CI=1.08 to 2.71), heavy smoking (aRRR=2.61, 95% CI=1.56 to 4.36, vs. non-daily), and exclusive roll-your-own tobacco use (aRRR=2.57, 95% CI=1.83 to 3.62, vs. exclusive factory-made cigarette use). Exclusive non-PP pack use was associated with past-year illicit substance use (aRRR=1.54, 95% CI=1.11 to 2.14) and no intention to quit (aRRR=0.75, 95% CI=0.59 to 0.96).

CONCLUSIONS: The rise in unbranded tobacco use and dual use with non-PP packs highlights the need to implement targeted interventions to address untaxed tobacco consumption and to monitor trends in untaxed tobacco use following the 2023–2025 5% tobacco tax increases.

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Evaluation of compliance with smoke-free regulations in a multi-ethnic city in Western China: A mixed-methods study

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BACKGROUND: China has enacted subnational smoke-free legislations, which requires compliance evaluations to provide data for future implementation planning. This study comprehensively assessed smoke-free regulation compliance in Xining in Western China.

METHODS: Conducted in November and December 2023, the study used a mixed-methods design. Quantitative surveys of observing the existence of 'no evidence of smoking' were completed by trained investigators in 993 venues and 14 public transportation vehicles. PM2.5 concentration assessments of evidence of smoking were performed in 48 venues. Staff interviews on perceptions and implementation of the smoke-free regulation were conducted in 94 venues. Descriptive analyses were utilized for quantitative data and thematic analysis was performed for qualitative data.

RESULTS: In the quantitative observational survey, 84.5% of the venues were in compliance with the regulations, with schools/educational institutions having the highest compliance rate (90.0%) and leisure/entertainment/accommodation venues having the lowest rate (65.2%). The PM2.5 monitoring found 6 out of 48 monitored venues (1 hospital and 5 leisure/entertainment/accommodation services venues) had an average PM2.5 concentration level exceeding China's air quality standard, which were highly likely caused by people smoking in the venues. The qualitative interviews revealed that lack of awareness and understanding of the regulations and related penalty and rewarding strategies and non-cooperation of their smoking clients might be the main reasons contributing to unsatisfactory compliance.

CONCLUSIONS: The study suggests a relatively optimal compliance with the local smoke-free regulations in Xining and also identifies a room for improvement. Efforts should be made to raise public awareness of smoke-free regulations and strengthen regulations' enforcement and supervision.

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Parental migration, tobacco sales exposure, loneliness and tobacco use among adolescents in Western China

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among adolescents remains an important public health issue.This study investigated the association between parental migration and adolescents' tobacco use among adolescents in western China, including its mediating and moderating mechanism.

METHODS: This study was conducted among adolescents in Qinghai Province, China from April 1 to May 31, 2023. The

participants were recruited via stratified random sampling. The cross-sectional study measured adolescents' tobacco use (including cigarettes and e-cigarettes use) and social environment factors. Pathway analysis was used to examine the moderation effect of tobacco products sales exposure and mediation effect of loneliness in the relationship between parental migration and tobacco use.
RESULTS: A total of 2811 adolescents involved. The mean age of the sample was 14,53 years (SD = 1.99), and 49.5% were girls. The prevalence of current cigarettes use and e-cigarettes use among adolescents were 10.4% and 3.3%, respectively. Parental migration was directly associated with cigarettes use (b=0.18, 95%CI 0.04, 0.32) and e-cigarettes use (b=0.24, 95%CI 0.09, 0.38) for adolescents who were exposure to tobacco products sales. While loneliness was serving as a mediator in the association between parental migration and cigarettes use (b =0.014, 95%CI 0.01, 0.02) and e-cigarettes use (b =0.02, 95%CI 0.01, 0.03) for adolescents who were not exposure to tobacco products sales.
CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco control strategies and surveillance should be strengthened in school neighborhood. Health education and interventions are warranted for adolescents, especially who were with parental migration in underdeveloped areas in China.
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Factors associated with smoke-free rules at home among adult workers in 10 sub-Saharan African countries: Global Adult Tobacco Survey, 2012-2021

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BACKGROUND: Exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) contribute to numerous health problems, including heart disease and certain types of respiratory diseases and cancers. We examined factors associated with adoption of smoke-free rules at home among adults who work outside their home in 10 Sub-Saharan African countries.
METHODS: We analyzed Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) data collected between 2012-2021 in 10 African countries. Smoke-free rule at home was defined as any rules that do not allow smoking inside the home among adults who work outside their home. The analytic sample size ranged from 630 in Tanzania to 3289 in Ethiopia. Response rate ranged from 80.0% in Botswana to 97.0% in Senegal. Descriptive and multivariable logistic regression were conducted to calculate the adjusted odds ratios (AOR), accounting for covariates such as gender, age group, marital status, employment type, education status, residence, workplace smokefree policy and smoking status.
RESULTS: The prevalence of smoke-free rules at home ranged from 60.2% (95% CI: 56.0%,64.3%) in Mauritania to 85.9% (95% CI: 83.2%, 88.3%) in Nigeria. Smoke-free rules at home were associated with being aged 15-24 years old (45 years and above) in Uganda, Nigeria, and Senegal (AOR ranging from 0.36 to 2.64). Other associated factors in select countries was being a non-government/private employee (Uganda AOR=3.37), married (AOR of 1.98 in Cameroon and 0.44 in Tanzania), and urban residence (AOR ranging from 1.77 to 2.13). For all countries, workplace smoke-free policy was significantly associated with smoke-free rules at home, with AOR ranging from 1.77 (95% CI: 1.05,2.97) in South Africa to 13.4 (95% CI: 8.86, 20.02) in Ethiopia.
CONCLUSIONS: Factors associated with smoke-free rules at home varied across the countries examined. We found significant associations between smoke-free workplace policy and smoke-free rules at home across countries examined. Smoke-free workplaces policies can encourage individuals to adopt smoke-free rules at home.
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Not on display! Low availability of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products across seven Mexican cities

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BACKGROUND: Successful challenges to bans of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) in Mexico resulted in injunctions allowing selected sellers to sell HTPs and Philip Morris Mexico to import HTPs. The 2023 Global Adult Tobacco Survey reports low current use of e-cigarettes (2.1%) and HTPs (0.2%). This study describes the availability of these products across seven Mexican cities.
METHODS: Data were collected in April 2024 across Cancun, Guadalajara, La Paz, Mexico City, Monterrey, Toluca and Tuxtla Gutiérrez. A representative sample of 553 POS (i.e., grocery stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, pharmacies, liquor stores, department stores, tobacco/vape shops) was selected across 12 basic geostatistical areas in each city, stratified by socioeconomic level. Data collectors visited each POS to document e-cigarette and HTP display and any advertising or promotion. All statistics reported are weighted.
RESULTS: Overall, e-cigarettes (1%) and HTPs (3%) were rarely observed with variation across cities (non-significant, p<.001, respectively) and POS types (p<.05, p<.001, respectively). E-cigarettes were only observed in Guadalajara (4%) and Mexico City (1%), primarily displayed by cashiers. HTPs were observed in Guadalajara (5%), Mexico City (4%), and Cancun (1%), also mostly near cashiers. E-cigarettes were observed in tobacco stores (50%), convenience stores (11%), drug stores (4%), department stores (2%) and liquor stores (1%). HTPs were observed in tobacco stores (50%), convenience stores

(32%), and drug stores (7%). Both products were only found in high socioeconomic areas. Promotion was not observed for either product. HTP advertising appeared as part of the product display.

CONCLUSIONS: E-cigarettes and HTPs are concentrated in specific POS types and in certain Mexican cities. Where legal exceptions exist, enforcing the bans will remain challenging. Nevertheless, even with the exceptions, displaying these products is prohibited and should be strictly enforced, with special attention given to enforcement by the states and municipalities, considering the differences found across cities.

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Mapping the conflict-of-interest legal regime towards countermeasures against tobacco industry interference in the Philippines

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco industry interference (TII) in Philippine tobacco control policies is well-documented and has been implicated for gaps in WHO FCTC implementation and recession in public health gains. The push for 'pro-tobacco' legislation, measures aimed at protecting the industry's commercial interests, has been especially active in the last decade, following the popularity of electronic smoking devices. Anti-TII policies are not sufficiently set up to the level of preventing or mitigating 'pro-tobacco' legislation due, in part, to a lack of understanding of the contemporary conflict-of-interest (COI) regime—its scope, gaps, and ideal state.

METHODS: Policy mapping was conducted to determine the normative definition of 'conflict of interest' under Philippine laws, as applicable to public officials, utilizing a survey of laws (e.g., Republic Acts, Presidential Decrees) and jurisprudence (Supreme Court decisions) from 1900-2024, as well as administrative issuances of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). Legal remedies operationalizing COI were determined from three levels: civil, administrative, and criminal proceedings.

RESULTS: Philippine COI regime imposes obligations against certain 'substantial' commercial interests relative to public positions, with stricter prohibitions for high-level officials (e.g., President, Secretaries) and relatively homogenous for other public officers. For the latter set, the 65-year old Republic Act No. 3019 and 36-year old Republic Act No. 6713 apply. These laws are not congruent with Article 5.3 standards, thereby facilitating TII. CSC guidelines fill the gap to a limited extent, but the lack of disciplinary jurisdiction over congressional members challenges enforcement.

CONCLUSIONS: Aligning the Philippine COI regime with Article 5.3 requires statutory amendments, specifically capturing the tobacco lobby and front-groups, which may be justified by the sui generis nature of tobacco trade to address pro-tobacco arguments on competition/restraint of trade. Public health discourse should be amplified to foster an enabling policy environment for advocacy. Any legislative amendment must integrate enforcement mechanisms that address TI's circumvention tactics.

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Development of tobacco pack inserts in Israel – qualitative and quantitative research: Opportunity to reach people who smoke with motivational messages

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BACKGROUND: In Canada, research on tobacco pack inserts has yielded evidence regarding their impact on smokers' knowledge and behaviors. Israel legislated for pack inserts in 2018 but has yet to implement them. Qualitative research showed preference for information on harm to others, quitting tips and success stories. We developed 16 pack inserts using an informative, motivational approach, and tested smokers' responses.

METHODS: In May 2023, 809 adult Israeli smokers (56% male; mean age 41±14; range 18-79) completed an online panel survey and were randomly assigned to rate 4 inserts on novelty, importance, and thoughts about quitting/seeking support.

RESULTS: 62% liked the positive messages very much (rated 4-5/5). Inserts with the highest mean composite score were about recovery and addiction, and messages concerning children (taking up smoking or being exposed to smoke). There was a significant association between the belief that inserts could encourage seeking cessation support with smoking intensity and previous quit attempt ($p<0.001$). In an ordinal regression, the strongest predictor was smoking intensity ($b=1.143$, $p<0.001$), where lighter smokers were more likely to give higher ratings. Furthermore, those who had tried to quit multiple times were more likely to rate the inserts higher ($p<0.001$). Regarding preferred topics, 70% chose quitting tips; 57% wanted information on health risks, with a higher proportion among light smokers (60% vs 45% in heavy smokers)($p=0.011$). More light smokers were interested in information on e-cigarettes (35% vs 18% heavy smokers) ($p<0.001$) and on secondhand smoke (47% vs 34%) ($p=0.028$).

CONCLUSIONS: Israeli adult smokers expressed positive attitudes towards tobacco pack inserts with motivational and cessation messages, and over a third thought they could help motivate them to quit. Messages about recovery and quitting had high ratings. Israel has the opportunity to be the second country to implement tobacco pack inserts to influence smokers' behavior and contribute to smoking cessation efforts.

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The role of social media platform 'Facebook' in promoting tobacco cessation in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Bangladesh is one of the top ten countries globally in terms of Facebook usage. Facebook plays a role in raising awareness about tobacco control in Bangladesh. Organizations involved in tobacco control increasingly use Facebook to disseminate tobacco-induced disease messages. This study aimed to evaluate the content and quality of tobacco control-related Facebook (TCFB) posts and assess their impact on tobacco users in Bangladesh.

METHODS: Cross-sectional mixed-method study was conducted from April to November 2019. Sixteen TCFB pages active in Bangladesh were identified, and their posts from July 2018 to June 2019 were analyzed. Content analysis was performed on a randomly selected month's posts to assess message quality. An online survey with 601 page followers was conducted to measure user engagement and behavior. Additionally, page administrators were interviewed to explore challenges and potential improvements.

RESULTS: The sixteen pages had a combined 624569 followers and published 2118 posts, averaging one post per week. Posts offering tobacco cessation services generated the highest user engagement, with 1336 interactions per post. Among survey respondents, 92% were male, 85% aged 18–35, and 64% had followed TCFB pages for over two years. 98% of respondents were aware of tobacco-related diseases, 80% of tobacco users planned to quit, and 74% had attempted quitting. Health hazard awareness significantly increased quitting attempts (OR: 2.8, 95% CI: 1.2–6.5, $p<0.05$) and advice given to others. Administrators highlighted challenges, including limited funding and a lack of dedicated page managers and training.

CONCLUSIONS: Social media Facebook offers significant potential for tobacco control campaigns. Innovative, visually appealing, and specific posts, supported by funding for skill development and promotion, can enhance the dissemination of tobacco control messages in the digital age.

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Construction of a 'civilised smoking environment': A novel strategy undermining tobacco control efforts in China

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BACKGROUND: The Chinese government faces challenges in tobacco control due to its dual role as both regulator and owner of the tobacco industry. The State Tobacco Monopoly Administration is still part of the Leading Group coordinating the implementation of the WHO FCTC. In 2018, the Chinese tobacco industry initiated the nationwide 'civilised smoking environment' campaign via a five-year action plan. The goal of this study was to analyse content of reports regarding this topic as evidence to policy-makers to prevent interference from the tobacco industry.

METHODS: A search of Wisenews, a Chinese media information service provider, for reports regarding the 'civilised smoking environment' between January 2018 and December 2022, yielded an initial 2308 reports. After excluding duplicate reports or reports lacking details, 1062 reports were finally coded separately by two trained researchers using a codebook developed by the team, including 4 sections with 19 items.

RESULTS: Most reports (66.5%) were from general media. There were 635 reports (59.8%) mentioned approaches to promote the civilised smoking environment, primarily by establishing civilised smoking areas (86.1%). The 774 reports (72.9%) disclosing key promoters of these initiatives mentioned the Tobacco Monopoly Administration (69.5%), Tobacco Corporation (52.3%), and other government agencies (20.4%). Regarding funding details, mentioned in 252 reports (23.7%), the Tobacco Monopoly Administration (60.3%) and Tobacco Corporation (50.8%) contributed largely, and many funds were used to establish civilised smoking areas. Most reports (92.8%) supported these initiatives, while only 45 (4.2%) opposed it.

CONCLUSIONS: Civilised smoking environment in China was promoted and financed primarily by tobacco industry and was widely supported by media. This undermines the smoke-free environment and violates the key article (5.3, 8 and 13) of WHO FCTC. China's government should cease its involvement in these initiatives, and government agencies should refrain from agreeing, supporting, cooperating, or participating in these activities.

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Understanding sources of regional disparities in cigarette smoking prevalence: An Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition analysis

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BACKGROUND: The public health gain from the dramatic reduction in cigarette smoking prevalence in the United States in recent decades has not been evenly distributed geographically. This study examines major socio-demographic and economic factors underlying these disparities.

METHODS: Data came from an online survey of a probability sample of 12300 adults (18+) in 13 high-tobacco burden states (Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia), and 4 low-tobacco

burden states (California, Illinois, Maryland, Virginia), collected in two cross-sectional waves in April-May 2023 and April-May 2024 by the American Cancer Society. We used threefold Oaxaca-Blinder linear decomposition analysis to examine sources of difference in cigarette smoking prevalence between high- and low-tobacco burden states.

RESULTS: Differences in smoking propensities by population characteristics, holding the population composition constant, accounted for 70.7% of the difference in smoking prevalence between high- and low-tobacco burden states (19.4% vs. 13.4%). The difference was largely driven by significantly higher smoking rates in high-tobacco burden states among adults aged ≥40 years and individuals with <high school degree. Convergence of smoking rates of college graduates, residents of own/rented house, and 18-24-year-olds partially offset the difference.

Variation in the population composition, holding smoking propensities constant, contributed 11.5% of the difference in smoking prevalence between the two groups of states, driven by the larger proportion of individuals in the lowest income group with a significantly higher smoking rate (28.2% vs. 17.9%) in high-tobacco burden states.

The residual 17.8% is attributable to unmeasured macro-level differences affecting cigarette smoking propensities among population sub-groups, mainly at varying levels of educational attainment.

CONCLUSIONS: Regional disparities in smoking prevalence may be reduced through increased cessation support for adults aged ≥40 years and have less education, as well as income growth at the bottom income stratum and advancement in educational attainment beyond high school.

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Tobacco industry marketing on Instagram: A comparative analysis using data from Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Despite the controversy over e-cigarettes' safety and long-term health impact, e-cigarettes have a rapid penetration into the Indonesian market. High exposure to e-cigarette marketing, particularly through social media, has become a key factor influencing young people to initiate e-cigarette use. In 2024, Indonesia had 191.4 million social media users, constituting 68.9% of the total population. Of these, 173.59 million (84.80%) were on Instagram, making it the country's leading platform. This study aims to compare e-cigarette and cigarette marketing on Instagram in Indonesia during 2022 to identify differences in marketer types, marketing tactics, message framing, and user engagement.

METHODS: Content analysis was employed to analyze publicly available Instagram posts collected through the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) initiative by Vital Strategies. Data encompassed posts from January 1, 2022, to December 14, 2022 where a total of 14040 marketing posts related to tobacco products were extracted for analysis.

RESULTS: Cigarette marketing dominated on Instagram, comprising 84.8% (n = 11909) of the total posts compared to e-cigarettes (15.2%, n = 2131). E-cigarette marketing primarily originated from brand accounts (86.72%), while cigarette marketing leveraged brand-affiliated community groups (94.14%). Interestingly, e-cigarette marketing heavily relied on product features (60.44%) as a framing strategy, while cigarette marketing used an informational approach (90.82%). The primary tactic employed in e-cigarette marketing was direct advertising (93.43%). In contrast, cigarette marketing primarily focused on utilizing community-based marketing tactics (86,73%). Despite higher promotion, user engagement was significantly lower ($p < 0.001$) for e-cigarette marketing compared to cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: The lack of regulations on online tobacco advertising in Indonesia allows for unrestricted marketing of both cigarettes and e-cigarettes. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers and public health officials in Indonesia to develop strategies for curbing the influence of tobacco marketing, particularly e-cigarettes, on social media platforms.

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From data to policy: Lessons from Australia's generation vape research collaboration

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In July 2021, Australia faced a surge in youth vaping, with easy access and growing public concern highlighting the ineffectiveness of existing legislation. To drive evidence-led policy change, a coalition of government, academic, and non-government organisations launched 'Generation Vape', Australia's first and largest vaping research collaboration.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Led by Cancer Council in collaboration with the University of Sydney and the Daffodil Centre and supported by Australian government agencies, Generation Vape investigates the awareness, perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours related to vape use among Australians aged 14-24 years, parents, and teachers.

Since its inception in July 2021, the project has collected data biannually through national cross-sectional surveys and annually through focus groups and interviews. The

aim was to build a robust evidence base to inform policy, programs, and education initiatives and advocate to comprehensively address vaping in Australia.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Generation Vape's extensive translation activities were pivotal in achieving Australia's landmark total ban on vape sales outside of pharmacies in July 2024.

Results have been instrumental in shaping Australian vaping laws, campaigns, enforcement, cessation initiatives, and school curriculum. Findings were cited in both state and federal inquiries into vaping from numerous public health organisations and featured heavily in media reporting.

To date, Generation Vape has gathered data from >25000 young people, 16000 parents, and 2500 teachers across Australia. The findings revealed how easily youth accessed illicit nicotine vapes from both retailers and social sources due to policy loopholes that failed to include non-nicotine vapes.

CONCLUSIONS: Australia's evolving vaping regulatory landscape offers valuable lessons for the global community. Research collaborations like Generation Vape underscore the importance of cross-sector partnerships, leadership and the critical role of research and knowledge translation in shaping policy. This work is a practical blueprint for international advocates and policymakers to achieve evidence-led policy change.

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A lopsided global health equation: The case of tobacco industry

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BACKGROUND: Four industries producing unhealthy commodities, namely, tobacco, ultra-processed food, fossil fuel, and alcohol, account for at least a third of global annual deaths that are avoidable. The aim of this research is to delineate the global health equation focusing on the tobacco industry.

METHODS: We use country-level estimates of the years of life lost due to tobacco-attributable diseases and deaths in 2021 from the Global Burden of Disease study to measure the annual cost-of-illnesses attributable to smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. Then, based on existing estimates from a U.S. study of the elasticity of per capita income with respect to the smoking status of the population and the coefficient of lagged income representing the effect of past income on future income trajectory, we generate country-level estimates of the cumulative aggregate economic loss attributable to smoking. Finally, we construct a global health equation by presenting the above estimates against the market value generated by the tobacco industry globally.

RESULTS: The global estimate of the annual cost-of-illnesses attributable to smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke is USD 1.7 trillion in 2021 (2.4 trillion in international purchasing power parity dollars, PPP$)—USD 656.5 billion due to excess healthcare expenses to treat the illnesses and USD 1.1 trillion from productivity losses due to smoking-related morbidity and premature mortality—equivalent to 1.7% of global Gross Domestic Product of USD 100.6 trillion. The cumulative aggregate economic loss is estimated at USD 18.5 trillion in 2022. The global tobacco industry generated a total market value of USD 886.1 billion in 2023, which can barely compensate 5% of the loss they cause to the global economies.

CONCLUSIONS: It is not enough to balance the lopsided global health equation by making the tobacco industry pay for the excess cost. The way forward is to eliminate the industry through end game strategies.

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Monitoring the violations of tobacco advertising, promotion and sales on the internet in Vietnam and policy recommendations

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BACKGROUND: In Vietnam, tobacco advertising and promotion (TAP) and direct marketing to the users are completely banned by law. By 2024, 74.44 million people are internet users (79.1% total population). Most popular platforms are Facebook (89.7%), TikTok (77.8%). The study aimed to monitor the TAP and sales violations on the internet, disclose industry tactics to the youth, and measure public opinion about tobacco topics.

METHODS: Retrospective study, data collection from November 2022 – December 2023 published on the internet (websites, social networks, online news, blogs, Google...). Using the tool 'Social Beat,' formally accredited by the Local Department of Information and Communication.

RESULTS: There were intensive and sophisticated industry tactics for tobacco marketing and sales [LT1] on the Internet. Tobacco advertising and sales were dominant, comprising 38.8% of 2.5 million discussions on tobacco topics. TikTok and Facebook are the most popular platforms to advertise tobacco products and E-cigarettes (ENDS) (98%). ENDS were advertised the most (63.9%), followed by combustible tobacco (36%), and Heated Tobacco Products -HTPs (0.1%). Young people (under 35) are most exposed to ENDS advertising (72.6%). Major violations are: Viral posts and songs of celebrities and key opinion leaders (KOL) to advertise ENDS on YouTube and TikTok; Tobacco retailers re- phrase 'electronic toys, electric toothbrushes, electronic smoke inhalers...' in TikTok channels to pass censorships and further shipping. Discounts and vouchers for tobacco promotion attractive to new customers.

CONCLUSIONS: Young people have easy access to harmful tobacco products and are burdened with an addiction crisis. The urgent action to crack down and eliminate the TAP [LT1] violations in the internet is critically needed, including: Revision of current Law on Advertisement to include the KOL's definition, code of conduct; Routine monitoring, stronger enforcement by multi- sector

enforcers; Proactive alert and self-report by internet users; Stronger technical barriers by internet platform owners (esp. Facebook and TikTok).

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Industry tactics in tax policy and response: Lesson learnt from Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Vietnam ratified FCTC in 2004 though Article 5.3 has not been legalized in any tobacco control legislative documents. The industries utilize the current regulation requiring all effected entities by any policies will be consulted during its development process for spreading their narratives and policy proposals in any single tobacco control policies. The Excise Tax Law including tobacco tax revision was proposed to the Government in 2018 but only submitted to the National Assembly (NA) in Feb 2024. One of the key explained reasons is the industry interference in various platforms.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The daily media surveillance, industry website scanning, monitoring industry and its allies' speeches were conducted and circulating to the tobacco control network comprising of civil society organizations, academic institutions, WHO and selected Government ministries for preparing the countering arguments and the joint countering actions, journalism trainings.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Industry raising the fear of policy makers and public on increasing smuggling cigarettes, negative impact on employment, reducing the Government revenues through keeping flooding the media with articles, promoting and providing research support to the academic institutions, sending the letters to the relevant Government agencies besides highlighted its contribution to the nation economy. Exposing industry narratives, interference and countering arguments have been delivered to the policy makers through a series of media interviews, advocacy workshops, proper evidence based documentation. Finally, the tax proposal with moving to mix excise tax system with two very strong tax options currently being reviewed by the National Assembly. Defense for strong proposal was delivered by Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health in November 2024.

CONCLUSIONS: Data led action, monitoring and documenting the industry narratives in tobacco tax is crucial for preparing for the countering arguments. Joint actions and building trust among the health and finance ministries, specific stakeholders' roles helped to reduce the industry intervention.

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How do clinicians address vaping in an illegal context? A qualitative Singapore study

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BACKGROUND: Singapore, a high-income city-state in Southeast Asia, pre-emptively banned the sale, import, and marketing of e-cigarette and vaping products in 2010, and tightened the ban in 2017 to also include purchase, use and possession. Despite the strict ban, vaping has become more prevalent in Singapore since the COVID-19 pandemic. More countries seek to regulate vaping but, as in Singapore, lack tailored services or guidelines for vaping cessation. Clinicians may therefore face challenges in identifying or treating vaping cases due to stigma or patients' reluctance to disclose their vaping. Few studies have explored how clinicians identify or manage vaping cases in a context where vaping is heavily regulated or stigmatized.

METHODS: We conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 Singaporean clinical practitioners from pharmacy, psychology, respiratory medicine, smoking cessation or youth welfare settings, all of whom had encountered vaping cases in their practice. Interview questions explored how they manage vaping cases. We analysed data using inductive thematic methods.

RESULTS: According to clinicians, patients were reluctant to disclose their vaping for fear of being reported to authorities and some clinicians were unsure of their duty to report, making it challenging to identify vaping cases. Variability in usage patterns and inaccurate e-liquid labelling posed difficulties in estimating nicotine dependence, leaving practitioners to use trial and error methods or to adapt from smoking cessation guidelines when calculating nicotine replacement therapy or medication dosage. Tailored quit support for people who vape was lacking, especially in the form of subsidised nicotine replacement therapy.

CONCLUSIONS: Even in contexts where vaping is heavily regulated, given the rising incidence of vaping globally it is important to record patients' vaping history as part of routine practice and to provide services to help people quit vaping without facing stigma or legal repercussions because of their vaping.

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Unveiling the real market share of tobacco sticks in Sri Lanka: A ground-level analysis

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BACKGROUND: Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC), a subsidiary of BAT, frequently disseminates misleading or manipulated data to influence public perception and policymakers in Sri Lanka. This is a common strategy employed by the tobacco industry (TI) to weaken regulatory frameworks and resist effective tobacco taxation measures. TI has exaggerated claims about the prevalence of locally produced tobacco sticks (Beedi) and illicit trade. According to industry, Beedi purportedly occupies 67% of

the tobacco stick market, with illicit trade accounting for 9%, leaving only 24% of the market to the formal cigarette industry. In 2023, CTC has reported selling approximately 2.3 billion cigarette sticks. By these estimates, the total market for tobacco sticks in Sri Lanka would exceed 9.5 billion sticks annually.

Industry's front groups often support these exaggerated claims, fostering the narrative that high taxation and stringent regulations on legally manufactured cigarettes drive smokers toward Beedi and illicit alternatives.

METHODS: A ground-level study was conducted to determine the actual market share of tobacco products by collecting and analyzing discarded cigarette butts. Random sampling was carried out across diverse settings, including construction sites, taxi stands, bus stops, and betting centers. Over 3000 cigarette butts were collected from 37 locations and categorized based on their physical characteristics. These findings were compared with industry-reported data to evaluate the composition of the tobacco stick market.

RESULTS: The analysis revealed that 82% of the collected butts originated from cigarettes produced by CTC. In contrast, only 11% of the butts were identified as Beedi, and 9% were attributed to illicit cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: TI deliberately manipulates and exaggerates data on the prevalence of alternatives to undermine regulatory efforts. This study underscores the importance of conducting independent butt-collection studies to challenge industry misinformation and support evidence-based advocacy. Proactively addressing industry interference through robust research and targeted advocacy campaigns can significantly strengthen tobacco control measures.

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Assessment of the effectiveness of smoke-free policy through policy evaluation, compliance and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the Philippines

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BACKGROUND: The presence of policies does not alone guarantee a smoke-free environment. While policies are crucial, their implementation and more importantly, the effectiveness of compliance to them remain a challenge. This is the first research study in the Philippines that looks into the variations in the Local Government Unit's policies to determine effectiveness of enforcement of smoke-free policies through the evaluation of compliance and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke using standardized questionnaires in government, food establishments, and transport terminals.

METHODS: The study employs a cross-sectional design, utilizing observational checklists and structured questionnaires to evaluate adherence to smoke-free regulations in government offices, food establishments, and transportation terminals. Data were analyzed based on 1. Effectiveness of Policy measures using a compliance tool and environmental tobacco smoke 2. Stringency Score using adaptiveness to FCTC, presence of structure, funding, and products regulated.

RESULTS: Policies restricting smoking in public indoor areas like workplaces, food establishments and transportation terminals are increasing in more municipalities in Benguet Province and Baguio City. Results indicate that while overall compliance exceeds 60%, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure remains alarmingly high in homes, particularly in La Trinidad and Baguio City, where exposure rates are reported at 100% and 95.7%, respectively. The findings affirm that stricter smoke-free policies correlate with lower ETS exposure in public spaces, yet highlight the urgent need to extend these protections to residential environments.

CONCLUSIONS: This study shows that smoke-free policies in local government units varies in stringency specifically how these policies are financed, enforced, what products (Cigarette, Electronic Smoking Devices, Chewed tobacco) were regulated. This research provides vital insights for policymakers, emphasizing the necessity of enhancing smoke-free policies to effectively mitigate tobacco smoke exposure and protect public health. Recommendations include expanding the scope of smoke-free legislation to encompass homes and explore other areas for future studies to better understand compliance dynamics.

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Countering misinformation by pro - electronic cigarette groups in the House of Representatitves' committee in Thailand

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since 2014, Thailand has implemented banning policy on electronic cigarettes' importation, selling, and distribution. During the last few years, Thai parliament has appointed committees to study pros and cons of banning of electronic cigarettes. Tobacco control advocates in Thailand have not been actively working with politicians, even though knowing full well that trans-national tobacco industry and its allies are actively approaching policymakers to influence policy making process. Trans-national tobacco industry and its networks always lie to the public, deceive authorities, and undermine scientific evidences.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: As an advisor to the parliament's committee to study about the impact on banning of electronic cigarettes, the authors take this opportunity to provide the chairman with evidence-based documents on a weekly meetings. This helps in countering misinformation by the tobacco industry cronies, but it is

not enough. On several occasions, collaboration with representatives from youth groups, Parents and Teachers Association, Health Professional Alliance for Smoke-free Thailand, Tobacco Control Research and Knowledge Management Center (TRC), Action on Smoking or Health (ASH Thailand), and academic groups, are necessary. A rally to collect 1 million signatures supporting the e-cig ban policy was organized and presented to the leaders of political parties.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: On the National Children Day in 2024, the Thai Prime Minister met and accepted the request from the Medical Students Association's representatives, and youth groups, at the Government House, to maintain the e-cig ban policy. A few days after that, the prime minister issued an executive order for the related government ministries and agencies, to strictly and collaboratively implemented the e-cig ban measures.

CONCLUSIONS: Many politicians are willing to accept facts about e-cigarette from researchers, academicians, and health professionals, if health advocates are actively working with them to provide the facts on harmful health effects of tobacco and innovative nicotine products.

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Environmental degradation linked to tobacco factories nearby the residential areas of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco production has notable environmental and health impacts, particularly in residential areas. Emissions from tobacco processing plants, the use of harmful chemicals in cultivation, and poor waste management lead to environmental harm and health risks for nearby residents. In Bangladesh, the tobacco industry's impact on residential areas is a critical issue that is often been overlooked. The close proximity of British American Tobacco Bangladesh's (BATB) tobacco processing factories near residential neighborhoods heightens the exposure of local communities to harmful pollutants, deteriorating air and water quality and causing various health issues.

METHODS: This study analyzes the environmental impact of the tobacco industry in Bangladesh's residential areas, focusing on regulatory frameworks. Using mixed methods, it examines government reports, academic studies, environmental assessments, laws, and interviews. The BATB factory in Mohakhali area is analyzed for its environmental effects on the surrounding residential area.

RESULTS: BATB's Mohakhali factory, registered as a bidi factory despite not producing bidi, has faced multiple violations warning. In 2021, the Department of Environment (DoE) warned it for sound pollution and toxic effluents. In 2022, air samples revealed Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) levels at 288, exceeding the acceptable limit of 200. Water tests from the sewage treatment plant showed 1670 Coliform per 100ml, surpassing the standard 1000. The DoE also recorded noise levels above the permissible 60 decibels. Although previously classified as a red category factory, posing high risks, a recent amendment of the rules of Environment Conservation Act shifted tobacco factories to the less risky orange category.

CONCLUSIONS: To reduce the environmental impact of the tobacco industry in residential areas, Bangladesh must enhance its environmental regulations. This involves stricter controls on air and water pollution, regulating harmful tobacco processing specially around residential area, and ensuring proper waste disposal. The government should implement penalties for violations and strengthen monitoring and enforcement.

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Successful cases of a National Inpatient Smoking Cessation Programme in Korea: A qualitative study

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BACKGROUND: This qualitative study delves into successful cases of a National Inpatient Smoking Cessation Program to further examine individual experiences and compounding factors that weren't explored in a quantitative result that showed a 70% success rate of the six-month smoking cessation among participants of the program.

METHODS: This study uses qualitative research methods, including conducting in-depth interviews of 10 male smokers who came out of the smoking cessation program successfully quitting smoking for six months. The study uses within-case and cross-case analyses of the interviews with the subjects.

RESULTS: Interviews with the subjects showed different attitudes toward smoking before, during and after the cessation treatment program. As well as across the cases, resulting in three large periods and 11 sub categories. According to the analysis, prior to participating in the program, subjects largely perceived smoking as something that they need to quit at some point – frequent topics including 1)seeing quit smoking as a task, 2)resorting to occasional heavy smoking and 3)being trapped in the never ending cycle of attempting to quit smoking and heavy smoking. During the program, subjects associated the effort to quit smoking as a community effort and a fresh beginning – frequent topics including an emphasis on the 1)can-do spirit, 2)health score cards, 3)the quit smoking community, 4)perseverance and 5)the beginning of a start. Post program perception could largely be described as freedom with restraints – subtopics including 1)freedom from smoking, 2)occasional cravings and 3)helper's high.

CONCLUSIONS: The in-depth examination of successful cases of quitting smoking presents three recommendations for National Inpatient Smoking Cessation Program in Korea. Firstly, to find participants through smokers, their friends, family and others close to them; secondly

to organize programs that reflect successful cases of quitting smoking; and lastly to provide post-program care focused on curbing cravings and to expand the programs through helper's high.

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Progress, gaps, and tobacco industry opposition to tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship bans in the WHO African Region

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The WHO African Region's (WHO AFRO) smoking prevalence rates have been projected to grow from 15.8% in 2010 to 21.9% in 2030- the largest projected increase in the world. A key reason for the increase in prevalence is the tobacco industry's aggressive marketing tactics. To combat this, the WHO FCTC Article 13 and its Implementing Guidelines recommends banning all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS).

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Reviewed the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK)'s Tobacco Control Laws database (analysis completed Jan. 2023), which provides legal analysis of adopted tobacco control laws around the world. Assess 27 types of TAPS based on the Implementing Guidelines of WHO FCTC Article 13.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: TAPS bans at the point-of-sale (POS), including POS advertising/promotion (22/44), POS product display (10/44) and advertising/promotion on tobacco packaging (2/44) are under-adopted by countries in the WHO AFRO region.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Most countries in the WHO AFRO region ban traditional forms of TAPS, including: domestic TV and radio (33/44), outdoor advertising (32/44), domestic newspapers/magazines (31/44) and other domestic print media (31/44)
- TAPS bans at the point-of-sale (POS), including POS advertising/promotion (22/44), POS product display (10/44) and advertising/promotion on tobacco packaging (2/44) are under-adopted by countries in the WHO AFRO region
- To have a complete TAPS ban, Senegal must ban advertising and promotion on packaging and sale of tobacco products via the internet
- Tobacco Industry is potentially biggest barrier to adopting and implementing TAPS bans
- Tobacco advertising via the internet increasingly used to circumvent restrictions.

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Building effective and sustainable MPOWER-based programs in Chinese cities through global collaboration: An evaluation of the Tobacco Free Cities Initiative

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BACKGROUND: China is the epicenter for tobacco production and consumption in the world, making it a priority target for tobacco control interventions. The Emory Global Health Institute, Georgia State University and China's Think Tank Research Center for Health, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, launched the China Tobacco Free Cities (TFC) (2008-2018) to establish effective and sustainable tobacco control programs. Funding, targeted MPOWER-based trainings and technical assistance was provided to 22 selected large and influential cities. In 2023, the program was evaluated to assess the status of smoke-free policies, social norm change, program sustainability and leadership development.

METHODS: In 2023, ten cities were selected based on cohort, type of smoke-free policy, location, economics and population. Seventeen in-depth online interviews were conducted with TFC program staff and current government staff. A semi-structured interview guide was used, and topics included: city smokefree policies, sustainability post implementation, and leadership and capacity building among TFC program staff.

RESULTS: The evaluation indicated cities with comprehensive smoke-free policies had a high degree of public support, while cities with partial bans faced barriers such as lack of leadership support and tobacco industry influence. Interventions including media campaigns, policy enforcement, cessation programs and monitoring activities were sustained in almost all cities. Challenges to sustainability included reduced financial and personnel resources and weakened policy enforcement. Positive changes in smoke-free social norms were detected. Finally, TFC staff reported their skills in developing and implementing smoke-free policies and leadership increased.

CONCLUSIONS: The collaborative TFC initiative between US and China provides an effective model to develop and enforce effective and sustainable tobacco control policies and initiatives at the city level. Cities can effectively implement and sustain tobacco control programs and media campaigns, adopt and enforce smoke-free policies and monitor and evaluate tobacco measures when there is sufficient funding, training, technical support and leadership.

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Smoke free campus: Prevalence of active smoking, e-cigarette and exposure to secondhand smoke after implementing smoke and tobacco-free policies

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BACKGROUND: The World Health Organization estimates that 1.3 billion people worldwide use tobacco products,

resulting in 8 million annual deaths globally. Current Irish data from 2024 highlights a smoking prevalence rate of 17% and an 8% prevalence for e-cigarette use. Despite legislative developments in limiting the tobacco industry's influence, the impact on the university setting level is underreported despite the growth of national and international student registrations. In 2023, one Irish university reported occasional smoking prevalence rates of 21% and e-cigarette use at 55%. Despite national tobacco control policy developments, limited data exists on this health-promoting setting. This study aimed to establish tobacco control baseline data to progress healthy campus developments.

METHODS: Following ethical approval (LS-C-24-235-Segurado), a cross-sectional survey was undertaken from October 2024 to January 2025 to measure rates of active smoking, e-cigarette use and exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) among students attending a large urban university. A convenience sample of students was recruited to complete an in-person electronic survey instrument via scanning a QR code on their phones.

RESULTS: Preliminary results are reported from a sample of N= 278 respondents. Smoking prevalence was 20.8% (n= 58), comprising 4.3% daily smoking, 13.3% social smoking, and 3.2% occasional smoking. E-cigarette use was 7.2% (n=20). 24.1% of students (n=70) report exposure to SHS at least once per week. 20.8% of participants were actively trying to quit, with 18.7% in the contemplative stage.

CONCLUSIONS: University campuses are not only spaces for learning but are essential ecosystems that can promote health and empower diverse communities, including students, visitors, and employees. Despite prohibitive tobacco control policies locally [indoors and outdoors smoke free bans on campus] these results indicate opportunities to enhance initiatives. Consistent activities are required if Ireland is to achieve a 5% target for smoking prevalence rates by 2030 and leave no one behind.

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Evaluating the impact of illicit tobacco trade on health and economic gains from tax policies in Latin America

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BACKGROUND: Robust evidence supports the cost-effectiveness of increasing tobacco taxes as a control measure. However, some decision-makers express concerns that higher taxes could incentivize illicit trade, potentially diminishing the positive outcomes of such policies. This study evaluates the role of the illicit tobacco trade in the effects of increased tobacco taxes on economic and health impacts in eight Latin American countries.

METHODS: The effect of a 50% increase in cigarette prices through taxes on disease burden, healthy years of life gained, and economic benefits in terms of direct costs, productivity, and informal care avoided, and change in tax revenue, was estimated. The model analyzes an scenario where a portion of tobacco consumption shifts from the licit to the illicit market, assessing how this transition impacts the projected health and economic benefits, and from a Markov probability microsimulation, the health and economic outcomes are obtained.

RESULTS: Even in the presence of illicit trade tobacco tax increases could avoid over 200000 deaths and more than seven million years of life lost from 2020 to 2030 in the eight countries analysed. Indeed in this scenario, which allows for substitution effects in consumption between the licit and illicit markets, the tax collection remains unaffected, and 69% of the health and economic benefits derived from taxes are retained. Economic benefits were US$12954, US$6433, US$10803 from savings in direct medical costs, productivity costs, and informal care, respectively. These represent between 0.35% - 1.04% of the countries' gross domestic product.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite potential concerns regarding illicit trade, our findings reveal that the net impact of increased tobacco taxes is positive and substantial in reducing the health and economic burden associated with smoking. Countries must redouble their efforts to build institutional and security frameworks to make tobacco control policies even more effective.

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Contract, credit and tobacco farming efficiency among smallholder tobacco farmers in Kenya and Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Despite being capital intensive, tobacco farming, internationally, has been shifting to lower-income countries. In these countries, many smallholder farmers struggle to obtain financing to farm, but they produce tobacco leaf. The tobacco industry often fills this financing gap through contractual arrangements with farmers. It is unclear, however, how these contracts complement other credit avenues or affect smallholder farmers' production efficiency. This study investigates smallholder tobacco farmers' technical efficiency (TE), or the ratio of observed output to optimal output (0 to 1), and how (1) contracts and (2) reception of loans affects it in Indonesia and Kenya, two

established tobacco leaf producing countries.

METHODS: This study uses longitudinal household-level economic survey data from Kenya (2016, 2019) and Indonesia (2016, 2017, 2019) from the Political Economy of Tobacco Farming Study and stochastic frontier analysis to estimate the technical efficiency of smallholder tobacco farming and how access to credit and/or contracts affect it. Smallholder farmers from 216 households in Kenya and 310 households from Indonesia were included for the analysis.

RESULTS: 72.2% and 77.1% smallholder tobacco farmers in Kenya and Indonesia respectively farm at low efficiency level (i.e., TE<0.7). Farming tobacco under a contract, compared to no tobacco contracts, is associated with lower technical efficiency in both countries. Reception of loans is associated with a lower technical efficiency among Kenyan farmers but a higher technical efficiency among Indonesia farmers. In both countries, reception of loans only improved technical efficiency of non-contract farmers.

CONCLUSIONS: Most smallholder tobacco farmers are farming at objectively low technical efficiency in both countries compared to their potential. Smallholder tobacco farmers should seek alternative livelihoods to more efficiently use their scarce resources. Tobacco farming contracts do not complement other credit avenues and can reduce farming efficiency. Governments must intervene more as a provider of credit at least until more robust credit markets develop.

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Public health in peril: The rising threat of tobacco industry interference in the Philippines

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BACKGROUND: The Philippines' tobacco industry interference score has been consistently climbing at an upward trend over the years. The tobacco industry did not waver in their agenda to influence the public governance setting during the periods covered in the 2022 and 2023 Tobacco Industry Interference Reports, when the Philippines was undergoing significant changes. These included transitioning to a new normal post-Covid-19 and adapting to shifts in national leadership.

METHODS: This report covers incidents of tobacco industry interference that took place from July 2022 to March 2023. This assessment is based on the Tobacco Industry Interference Index Questionnaire, which was formulated to monitor country progress in implementing WHO FCTC Article 5.3 in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

All information in this report was obtained from publicly accessible and verifiable sources, which include official websites of government agencies and private corporations, online news platforms, among others. The entire report was circulated to civil society groups and experts for review and validation.

RESULTS: The key findings of the study are as follows: (1) The tobacco industry actively participated in Congress deliberations and succeeded in lobbying for provisions in their favor under the Vape Regulation Law of 2022. (2) Tobacco companies were relentless at conducting numerous CSR activities, many of which were related to the Covid-19 pandemic. They worked behind layers of partnerships with other organizations to make their intent to influence the government seem subtle.

CONCLUSIONS: The study concluded that there is a need to align laws and policies with WHO FCTC, which likewise needs greater recognition as part of the national legal system. A stricter compliance of FCTC 5.3 related policies such as the Civil Service Commission-Department of Health Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2010-01 is key to preventing the industry from influencing national and local policies.

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Association between the use of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products and asthma prevalence in adolescents: A five or tenfold increase

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BACKGROUND: Adolescent tobacco use poses significant health risks, particularly in relation to respiratory conditions such as asthma, making it a critical public health issue. This study investigates the association between tobacco use behaviors and asthma prevalence among Korean adolescents

METHODS: We analyzed data from the 2022–2024 Korea Youth Risk Behavior Survey (KYRBS), encompassing 159383 middle and high school students. The study examined the relationship between asthma diagnosis within the past 12 months and patterns of tobacco use, including non-use, exclusive use of conventional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or heated tobacco products (HTPs), and dual or triple product use. A complex sampling design and weighting were applied, and multivariate logistic regression analysis was conducted to calculate adjusted odds ratios (AORs) for asthma prevalence, controlling for gender, age, academic performance, socioeconomic status, and alcohol use.

RESULTS: The proportion of adolescents using at least one tobacco product declined from 5.3% in 2022 to 4.4% in 2024. Among the 159383 participants, 2715 (1.7%) reported an asthma diagnosis in the past year. Compared to non-users, adolescents who exclusively used conventional cigarettes had an AOR of 1.37 (95% CI: 1.31–1.43) for asthma. The AOR was 4.57 (95% CI: 4.40–4.76) for exclusive e-cigarette use and 10.57 (95% CI: 9.97–11.21) for exclusive HTP use. Dual users of conventional cigarettes and e-cigarettes showed an AOR of 2.38, while dual users of conventional cigarettes and HTPs had an AOR of 3.78. Adolescents using both e-cigarettes and HTPs had an AOR of 16.1, and triple users had an AOR of 5.54.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use in any form was positively associated with asthma prevalence among adolescents, with e-cigarettes and HTPs showing particularly strong links. Regulatory efforts targeting these emerging tobacco

products are urgently needed to protect adolescent health.
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Socio-political determinants of tobacco industry interference: Analyzing the role of development, civil liberties, and gender equality

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco industry interference (TII) remains a significant challenge to global health policies, undermining efforts to reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality. This study aims to examine whether socio-political and developmental factors, specifically the Human Development Index (HDI), Freedom Status (FS), and Social Institution and Gender Index (SIGI), are significantly associated with countries' TII Index scores.
METHODS: We conducted a quantitative analysis using multiple linear regression models to assess the relationship between TII and several socio-economic and governance indicators, including HDI, FS, and SIGI. Other key indicators such as population size, adult smoking prevalence, health spending, FCTC ratification status, trade openness index, and foreign direct investment were controlled for to account for potential confounding factors. Statistical significance was assessed through p-values, and the strength of the relationships was evaluated using regression coefficients.
RESULTS: The analysis revealed a statistically significant correlation between SIGI and the TII Index. Specifically, lower SIGI scores, indicating reduced gender discrimination, are associated with lower levels of tobacco industry interference. This suggests that countries with more gender-equal social institutions tend to have more robust regulatory frameworks that resist tobacco industry influence, resulting in stronger public health policies. However, no significant relationship was found between TII and HDI or between TII and FS, indicating that human development and political freedom alone do not appear to influence tobacco industry interference in public health policies.
CONCLUSIONS: This study underscores the importance of gender equality in reducing tobacco industry interference in public health policy. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need for gender-sensitive policies to strengthen tobacco control and mitigate industry interference, highlighting the role of social institutions in shaping public health outcomes.
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Indoor exposure to tobacco smoking and childhood stunting: An analysis of DHS surveys of 414,232 women from 29 countries, SSA

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is a significant public health problem worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Tobacco exposure during pregnancy and childhood can have detrimental effects on maternal and child health and development. However, the extent and impact of tobacco use and its consequences on childhood outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are poorly documented and understood.
METHODS: We conducted a pooled analysis of the latest available demographic and health surveys from SSA countries within the past 10 years (2014-2024). We used descriptive statistics to summarise the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure among women and children and multivariable logistic regression models to examine the relationship between manufactured tobacco use by mothers as well as someone smoking inside the house and malnutrition in children, adjusting for individual, household, and country-level factors.
RESULTS: Maternal smoking and in-house tobacco smoking were both statistically associated with increased odds of stunted growth in children in SSA, with adjusted odds ratios (AOR) of 1.24 (95% CI: 1.08–1.43) and 1.11 (95% CI: 1.07–1.15), respectively. Mother's age, employment status, marital status, education level, as well as father's employment and education, number of siblings in the household, location, and socioeconomic status were significant predictors of a child's exposure to in-house tobacco smoke and maternal smoking.
CONCLUSIONS: Most interventions that are conducted in SSA and LMICs rarely consider smoking as a risk factor for childhood stunting. This study confirms the presence of a significant relationship between the two and highlights a need to include tobacco smoke exposure reduction in the management and control of childhood chronic malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa.
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Leveraging youth sport to control tobacco: A strategic approach

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The use of tobacco among adolescents and young adults continue to remain on the rise. Smoking is major cause of morbidity and mortality across the globe. This calls for a youth- centric approach to tobacco control, one platform that can be harnessed is sport, Sport possesses an unparalleled potential to transcend cultural and socio-economic barriers, therefore making it an optimal tool for raising awareness and promoting social change. This initiative sought to combine sports with effective tobacco control measures.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: An Independence

soccer tournament was held with the theme: Kicking out Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and drug abuse. Before the commencement of each game awareness was created around the need for adolescents to lead healthy lifestyles, build resilience and advocate for the passing of the Tobacco control bill in Zambia. Consequently, IEC materials and Action plans were distributed to each team captain to pledge what each team would commit to contributing towards tobacco control in various communities. One lesson learned during the sensitization was the need to create platforms for young people to engage in constructive dialogue and act on social issues beyond sports tournaments that promote accountability and sustainability to maintain the gains scored.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Overall, 152 adolescents were sensitized, 7 out of the 7 team captains developed action plans which they committed to achieve by December 2025. A youth technical working group was established to educate and mobilize young people to counter pro-tobacco narratives and tobacco industry tactics.

CONCLUSIONS: Many tools and platforms have been leveraged to mitigate and control the use of Tobacco. However, this initiative focusses on the importance of sport as an entry point to youth led advocacy activities that combat tobacco industry tactics. Harnessing the power of sport can make a meaningful contribution to reducing tobacco related harm and ultimately promoting a healthier future for young people.

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Effectiveness of information campaigns in Kyiv schools: Outcomes of tobacco and nicotine-free schools project in Ukraine

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BACKGROUND: Most people who use tobacco start smoking in adolescence, in particular, 90% of smokers start smoking before the age of 18. This leads to the rapid development of nicotine addiction and complicates attempts to give up this habit. In recent years, alternative methods of tobacco consumption have been gaining popularity in Ukraine, in particular, electronic cigarettes and devices for heating tobacco. The study examined, in particular, the attitude of schoolchildren to smoking, and the effectiveness of information activities in educational institutions.

METHODS: Number of respondents surveyed: 769 students 13-14 years old. Data collection method: self-filling of a formalized questionnaire by students, conducted in an online format, using the RatingBot software https://ratingbot.ua, at the place of study, i.e. offline in the classrooms. A link to the survey was developed for each school and class, which the interviewer provided to the respondents before the survey.

RESULTS:

- 79–80% of students (depending on the type of tobacco or nicotine products) believe that the use of traditional tobacco products, electrically heated products, electronic cigarettes and nicotine pads in schools is prohibited by law.
- 8–9% of respondents (depending on the type of tobacco or nicotine products) believe that these products are permitted.
- From 12 to 14% of students hesitated to answer this question.

More than half of students (51%) support increased enforcement of the ban on the sale of tobacco or nicotine products, while a significant proportion (49%) either do not support it or have no clear opinion. This indicates the need for a better explanation and justification of the need for such measures.

CONCLUSIONS: More than half of students (51%) support increased enforcement of bans on the use of tobacco or nicotine products in educational institutions. At the same time, 27% are against such an increase, and 22% have no definite opinion on the matter.

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The impact of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on policy implementation, tobacco use, and health: A systematic review

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BACKGROUND: The need to address the tobacco epidemic from an international approach had been acknowledged for some time, but it was not until 1996 that the World Health Organization initiated preparations for what would become the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Adopted in May 2003 by the World Health Assembly, the FCTC gained 168 signatories and later entered into force in February 2005. As of January 2025, the FCTC had 183 Parties, covering more than 90% of the world's population. The FCTC has often been lauded as a success story but its impact has not been systematically assessed.

METHODS: We conducted a systematic review of studies that examined the impact of the FCTC on policy implementation, tobacco use, and health. We searched three electronic databases, two grey literature databases, and two working paper repositories. At least three reviewers independently screened studies for inclusion, extracted characteristics, and assessed risk of bias.

RESULTS: Thirteen studies met our inclusion criteria. The number of years since FCTC ratification was generally associated with higher odds of having enacted advertising bans, smoking bans in pubs and indoor workplaces, mandated FCTC-compliant and graphic warning labels, but not with having higher taxes. On the whole, existing studies provided mixed and contradictory evidence that the FCTC affected cigarette use.

CONCLUSIONS: Most studies reviewed have important methodological limitations; all included studies were assessed at serious or critical risk of bias. Important limitations included the lack of sufficiently sharp discontinuity in policy, the possibility that other important changes occurred at the boundary, the lack of comparison group or differences in their characteristics, and the assumption that FCTC membership (or its timing) impacted all countries equally. On the whole, existing studies do not provide strong evidence that the FCTC affected policy implementation or tobacco use.

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Analysing trends in litigation related to heated tobacco products

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco companies have a history of manipulating facts to achieve their objectives. This includes deceiving the public for decades about the health risks and harms associated with the use of their products. To, in part, rebrand itself as 'part of the solution' to the global tobacco epidemic, the tobacco industry has commercialized a new generation of products, distancing itself from the negative connotations associated with producing and marketing its most profitable product globally – conventional cigarettes. With the introduction of emerging tobacco and nicotine products, including heated tobacco products (HTPs), the industry has introduced a new set of tactics to obtain favorable regulation. When the regulation is unfavorable to its interests, the industry has used litigation to establish regulatory pathways that benefit it.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: An analysis of judicial findings available from court decisions on Tobacco Control Laws (www.tobaccocontrollaws.org) that are both favorable and unfavorable to public health were considered and comparisons were made between cases to analyze how different courts reached different outcomes.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: This presentation will summarize and analyze litigation involving HTPs filed in several countries, in which courts have grappled with questions directly related to tobacco companies' claims about their products, including whether HTPs are smokeless tobacco products and whether advertising of HTP devices constitutes tobacco product advertising under domestic measures.

CONCLUSIONS: Ultimately, it is clear that tobacco companies are willing and able to challenge existing laws to obtain favorable legislation. Therefore, the adoption of legislation that is comprehensive and adaptive to include all tobacco and nicotine products is critical for the protection of public health.

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The phenomenon of tobacco disinformation as a tobacco industry intervention tactic: A case study in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry seeks to undermine health policies, negatively impact the environment, use its financial resources to purchase influence, promote misleading narratives, exploit legal loopholes, and fund tactics aimed at undermining tobacco control. One form of intervention by the tobacco industry is the widespread dissemination of disinformation to influence public opinion and policymakers. As a result, this complicates tobacco control efforts by creating confusion, leading to potential economic losses, and posing a health risk.

METHODS: This research is descriptive in nature, collecting false information or hoaxes and developing prebunking and debunking materials to counter the disinformation spread by the tobacco industry in the public domain.

RESULTS: Tobacco disinformation collected from partner organizations, social media, and public statements revealed that most disinformation relates to health issues (61%), economics (20%), and legal concerns (4%) that cast doubt on smoke-free zone regulations. Additionally, agricultural-related disinformation (2%) was found, which could lead to misinformation about public welfare, particularly concerning farmers. The actors involved in the spread of disinformation were primarily industry supporters, including affiliations with the Indonesian Parliament , the central and local governments, researchers, professors, doctors, and comedians. The majority of disinformation originated from verified media outlets that are considered to be the most trusted.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the importance of efforts to counter tobacco disinformation. The research findings indicate that disinformation is used as a tactic by the industry to obstruct tobacco control efforts in this country. It is crucial to provide facts and perspectives to both the public and the government, demonstrating that disinformation is a deliberate strategy to hinder tobacco control initiatives.

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Current situation and monitoring analysis of tobacco marketing on mainstream social media platforms targeting Chinese youths from 2021 to 2023

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies increasingly exploit social media platforms to attract young users and circumvent traditional marketing restrictions. Understanding the current trends in tobacco-related promotional content and the regulatory status on platforms popular among Chinese youth is crucial for developing effective public health interventions.

METHODS: We collected promotional posts related to tobacco products or e-cigarettes published on over 100 Chinese social media platforms between 2021 and 2023. Using 20 high-frequency keywords associated with tobacco and e-cigarettes, we conducted real-time and retrospective data scraping via web crawling, mass knowledge graphs, and graph citation technology. The posting volume from various platforms and the intensity of regulatory measures were analyzed.

RESULTS: In 2023, the total volume of posts related to tobacco products or e-cigarettes on Chinese social media platforms reached 71264. The top three platforms by posting volume were RedNote (44.2%), Weibo (27.9%), and WeChat (25.3%). Compared to 2022 (38016 posts) and 2021 (39210 posts), the growth rate of posting volume in 2023 exceeded 80%, with RedNote being the largest contributor. Between 2021 and 2022, platforms such as Weibo and Zhihu demonstrated higher post removal rates. In contrast, in 2023, RedNote had the highest post removal rate at 56.2%, followed by Weibo at 28.6%. Despite these removals, RedNote and Weibo continued to host more tobacco-related posts than other platforms. Posts deleted on RedNote in 2023 were predominantly categorized as 'smokers' discussions.' Notably, RedNote recorded no post removals in 2022 and in 2021.

CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco industry has significantly ramped up its marketing efforts across diverse social media platforms, with a growing emphasis on high-activity platforms, especially on RedNote. However, regulatory measures remain insufficient. Strengthened regulatory oversight and targeted interventions—such as social media monitoring, policy enforcement, and enhanced health education—are essential to protect Chinese youth from the harms of tobacco and e-cigarettes.

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Assessment of compliance with tobacco control legislation in 4 regions of Ukraine in 2024

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BACKGROUND: In line with WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and MPOWER recommendations, Ukraine implemented EU tobacco control directives, including package labelling, public places smoking ban, and a ban on advertising and sale of flavoured tobacco products (FTPs), except heated TPs. Effective compliance with these regulations remains challenging due to inspection restrictions and industry manipulations.

METHODS: In 2024, a cross-sectional monitoring study was conducted in Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Kirovohrad, and Khmelnytskyi regions surveying 1198 facilities: public catering establishments, educational, healthcare, public transport stops, children`s playgrounds, train and bus stations, and points of sale (POS). Data were collected using standardized questionnaires, analysing warning signs, cases of smoking, and compliance with advertising laws.

RESULTS: Violations were recorded at all types of facilities, mostly at public transport stops and playgrounds: smoking was recorded in 34.5% and 29.3% of cases, respectively; no-smoking signs were absent (100%). At train and bus stations, 83.7% of signs did not meet the legal requirements; smoking was recorded in 56.7% of cases.

In public catering venues, smoking was recorded in 3.4% of cases indoors and in 56.9% of cases on-the-premise terraces. In educational and healthcare facilities, no-smoking signs were absent (79.4% and 73.1%) and smoking was observed within the perimeter (10.3% and 43%, respectively). POS advertising of tobacco products was observed in 44.9% of cases, e-cigarettes in 13.7%, and heated TPs in 24.3%. FTPs, which are prohibited for sale in Ukraine, were sold in 65.7% of POS.

CONCLUSIONS: These data on violations were used to inform stakeholders, including authorities, and plan measures to strengthen control, including expanding smoke-free environments, placing no-smoking signs, banning tobacco advertising, and running educational campaigns. Using a uniform method and considering regional legislative markers allows accurate assessment of the problem's scale, making the proposed model a promising practice for monitoring compliance with tobacco control legislation in European region.

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Global youth tobacco survey in Senegal (GYTS)

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BACKGROUND: Young people are a vulnerable population and an important target for the tobacco industry. This national survey of epidemiological surveillance of smoking in schools, commonly called the 'Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), is the 4th of its kind in Senegal.The objective of this study is to evaluate tobacco use among students aged 13 to 15 through the GYTS, a global tobacco surveillance system (GTSS), monitor key tobacco control indicators.

METHODS: It's a national cross-sectional survey, conducted in schools in January 2020.The methodology is standardized and includes a two-stage sampling plan of schools and classes. Students in selected classes complete an anonymous questionnaire to measure key tobacco control indicators. A weighting factor was applied to reflect sampling probability. Statistical analysis was carried out with technical support from the CDC Foundation and WHO.

RESULTS: The school participation rate was 94%. A total of 4320 students responded to the survey, of whom 2524 were aged 13 to 15.9.2% of students use tobacco in various

forms, 11.6% of boys and 6.9% of girls. 7, 2% of students smoke cigarettes and 3.4% use other forms of tobacco. Compared with the last GYTS 2013 survey, there has been a significant drop in overall prevalence of 2.8% and cigarette use of 1.8%,2.6% among boys and girls respectively. 78.6% of students would like to quit smoking. 25.3% of students have been exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke in public places. 46.6% of them think that other people's smoking is harmful to their health and 53.8% are in favor of banning smoking in enclosed public places. Senegal's anti-smoking policy is beginning to bear fruit, with a downward trend in smoking prevalence, but the ban on smoking in public places is not always respected.

CONCLUSIONS: Senegal's anti-smoking policy is beginning to bear fruit, with a downward trend in smoking prevalence among young people.

KEYWORDS: epidemiology. Youth Tobacco- GYTS -Senegal
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Standardising smokeless tobacco packaging in South Asia: Lessons learned from focus group studies in Bangladesh and India

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BACKGROUND: Approximately 300 million people in over 120 countries use smokeless tobacco (SLT), with the highest burden concentrated in South Asia. In Bangladesh and India, variation in SLT pack shape, size, and material is associated with low compliance with health warning label (HWL) requirements, leaving room for attractive industry branding. Other countries may face similar challenges. Standardizing the shape, size, and material of SLT packs could improve HWL compliance and reduce pack attractiveness.

METHODS: We conducted 28 focus group discussions (FGDs) in Bangladesh in February 2021 and 24 FGDs in India in March 2023. Groups were stratified by SLT use status. Each participant was given a set of (a) current SLT packs and (b) standard SLT packs (tin cylinder in Bangladesh; paper sachet and tin cylinder in India). Trained facilitators led FGDs on the perceived attractiveness and harm of current versus standard packs. Data were collected in local languages, translated into English, and thematically analyzed.

RESULTS: Groups across both countries and SLT use status discussed the limited HWL visibility on existing packs, noting that images were missing, small, or distorted. These factors contributed to lower perceived harm of existing SLT packs. In contrast, all groups discussed how the standard packs appeared more harmful than existing packs due to the size and clarity of the standard pack HWLs, particularly the paper sachet in India. Several groups in both countries discussed how the standard cylinders seemed higher quality because of the 'durable' tin.

CONCLUSIONS: Results suggest that implementing a standard SLT pack may be an innovative strategy to reduce product attractiveness and increase perceived harm at a population level. Bangladesh, India, and other countries with high SLT use should consider implementing standard packs alongside complementary regulations that enhance HWL compliance and reduce appeal, such as requiring a lower quality standard pack material.

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Burning cheaper, eating pricier: How cigarettes became more affordable than food in Brazil (2012–2023)

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BACKGROUND: Implementing FCTC Article 6 is widely recognized as the most cost-effective strategy for reducing smoking prevalence and related health burdens. Despite Brazil's strong adherence to WHO recommendations on tobacco tax burdens, by 2023, the country had the second-lowest cigarette prices (CP) in the region. Since the minimum price (MP) policy was frozen in 2016, cigarettes have steadily become more affordable compared to 2012, undermining public health objectives. While healthy staple foods are vital for food security and must remain affordable, tobacco products, due to their harmful externalities, should increase in price at a faster rate.

METHODS: Data on inflation (IPCA-General), domestic food prices, and CP were collected. In 2012, Brazil introduced a MP policy for cigarettes, which increased by 0.50 BRL per year until 2015. However, from 2016 onward, the MP remained frozen. The minimum CP was also compared with the cost of a basic food basket.

RESULTS: Between 2012 and 2016, CP increased nearly three times faster than the IPCA-General. From that point until 2023, domestic food inflation surpassed the IPCA-General, while CP increased at a slower rate. Between 2016 and September 2023, the cost of the basic food basket increased by 64.6%, whereas the minimum CP remained unchanged. By 2018, one food basket could buy 72.2 packs of cigarettes, but by 2023, it could buy 133.8 packs—an increase of 73.3%.

CONCLUSIONS: These findings reveal that cigarettes have become increasingly affordable relative to essential goods, reflecting a failure of public policies to keep harmful products less accessible. This evidence played a pivotal role in Brazil's tax reform, finalized in 2024, which introduced selective taxes on health-harming products, including tobacco, alcohol, and sugary beverages, along with annual inflation-based price adjustments. This reform aligns with global best practices and aims to promote public health while reducing tobacco consumption.

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Changes in e-cigarette and snus use among adolescents who have never smoked between 2015 and 2024

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BACKGROUND: Smoking has decreased among Finnish adolescents while the use of other tobacco and nicotine products has increased, with some gender differences. Little is known about the changes in use of e-cigarettes and snus (Swedish type smokeless tobacco) among adolescents who have never smoked cigarettes (NS) over time. We aimed to fill this knowledge gap.
METHODS: European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) on two representative cross-sections of 15- to 16-year-old students between 2015 and 2024 in Finland was utilised. The participation rates of schools ranged from 93.8 % (n=4049 students) in 2015 to 82.7% (n=3294 students) in 2024. The dependent variables were lifetime use of e-cigarettes and lifetime use of snus, while the primary independent variable was time (survey year). Frequencies and adjusted logistic regression analyses were used. Adjusted odds ratios are reported, taking into account grade point average and parental monitoring which have been shown to be associated with the onset of tobacco use.
RESULTS: Lifetime use of e-cigarettes decreased among NS boys from 21% in 2015 to 14% in 2024 (corresponding adjusted odds ratios AOR=0.62; 95% CI 0.49–0.79), among NS girls it increased from 5% to 18% during the same period (AOR=4.08; 95% CI 2.98–5.57). Lifetime use of snus among NS boys decreased from 14% in 2015 to 5% in 2024 (AOR=0.29, 95% CI 0.19–0.41) while among girls it increased statistically non-significantly from 1% to 2% (AOR=1.12, 95% CI 0.55–2.29).
CONCLUSIONS: The use of e-cigarettes among girls who have never smoked has increased while both e-cigarette use and snus use have decreased among boys who have never smoked. Tobacco control policy measures should be enacted in Finland to prevent the use of any tobacco and nicotine product, such as raising the age limit of selling these products to 20 years.

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Identify, prevent, refer: A qualitative research to evaluate the role of primary healthcare workers in tobacco-related oral lesions

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is a major public health concern in India, contributing significantly to the burden of oral health conditions, including pre-cancerous and cancerous lesions. Primary Healthcare Workers (PHWs) serve as the first point of contact for healthcare in rural and underserved areas, positioning them as vital in the chain of early identification and management of tobacco-related oral lesions. Despite their pivotal role, there is a paucity of research on their knowledge, practices, and challenges in addressing these conditions. This study aims to explore the experiences, knowledge, attitudes, and challenges faced by PHWs in assessing and managing tobacco-related oral lesions in south India.
METHODS: A qualitative exploratory study was conducted using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 23 PHWs, including 8 Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), 9 Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers, and 6 Community Health Officers (CHOs) from 4 rural and 4 urban primary health centres in Mangalore, India. Participants were purposively sampled to ensure diversity in experience and geographic representation. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns.
RESULTS: Five major themes emerged from the analysis: knowledge gaps, barriers to identification, current practices, facilitators, and training and resource needs. Knowledge gaps highlighted limited awareness of early signs of tobacco-related oral lesions. Barriers to identification included inadequate training and lack of diagnostic tools. Current practices showed minimal routine screening. Facilitators included community trust in PHWs. Training and resource needs emphasized the demand for targeted training programs and visual aids.
CONCLUSIONS: Primary Healthcare Workers play a critical role in the early detection of tobacco-related oral lesions but are reflected with significant knowledge and resource constraints. Strengthening their capacity through targeted training programs, provision of diagnostic tools, and integration of oral health services into primary care can bridge the existing gaps.

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Business-to-business marketing: The relationship between tobacco companies and retailers in Jakarta, Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies (TCs) offer retailers incentives to advertise their products. Exposure to point-of-sale (POS) advertising is associated with increased smoking experimentation, initiation, and relapse. We sought to explore how TCs and retailers interact to advertise and promote tobacco products at the POS.
METHODS: We conducted 30 interviews with small-independent retail store owners/managers in Jakarta who engage with at least one TC representative. Interviewees were asked about their interactions and agreements with TC salespeople and how they make POS tobacco advertising decisions. Translated transcripts were thematically analyzed.
RESULTS: Most retailers described interacting with

salespeople from more than one TC regularly (weekly or bi-weekly). Visits by TC salespeople to retailers were mostly described as professional and short; engagement was typically limited to the sale and purchase of tobacco products. Retailers often described having relationships with specific TCs (e.g., purchasing directly from a TC, accepting incentives for advertising products) for many years, however specific TC salespeople assigned to retailers changed frequently. Retailers commonly described receiving cash, free products, or gifts (e.g., lighters, display cases) in exchange for actions like displaying a branded banner or stickers, collecting empty cigarette packs, or prominently displaying specific products. Strict enforcement of agreement terms was not typical, and paperwork was only signed by retailers as proof they received the incentive. Advantages retailers cited for having relationships with TCs included the convenience of purchasing products directly from TC salespeople and sometimes at a slightly cheaper price than wholesalers and the free replacement of expired products.

CONCLUSIONS: TCs engage small-independent retailers in Jakarta with limited time 'deals' that are mostly low effort in exchange for small incentives. Notably, TCs are incentivizing retailers to illegally display branded banners outside stores. TCs should be held accountable for incentivizing retailers to illegally advertise tobacco and for exposing consumers to tobacco advertising.

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Tobacco farming related health shocks and labor use among smallholder farmers in Kenya

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco farming has been shifting to lower-income countries for decades. Within this context, occupation-specific health shocks, especially green tobacco sickness (GTS), interact with fragile and/or poor health systems. These tobacco farming-related health shocks can impose economic costs on these farmers through out-of-pocket medical expenses and lost productivity. This paper investigates one important aspect of productivity by examining how GTS-related illnesses affect smallholder farmers' on-farm labor use, intra-household labor reallocation, and off-farm labor use (e.g. providing his/her labour to other farmers). The findings can be evidence to support implementation of WHO FCTC Article 17, which focuses on viable alternative livelihoods for those working in the tobacco sector, including farmers.

METHODS: This study uses 2016 and 2019 Kenyan household economic survey data from the Political Economy of Tobacco Farming Study and appropriate econometric techniques to study the relationship between health shocks and smallholder households' labor use. Farmers from 277 smallholder households are included in the analysis. These data allow us to investigate labor-use dynamics at both household and individual levels and to control for unobserved household heterogeneity.

RESULTS: We find that, at the household level, GTS-related illness did not affect aggregate on-farm labor use, but it reallocated the farm work within the household. It reduced the ability of the household to employ hired workers. In fact, each extra member getting a GTS-related illness reduced likelihood of the household hiring male and female labor by 3.5 and 4.7 percentage points respectively. Furthermore, for each person in the household getting a GTS-related illness, this reduced the likelihood of that household providing labor for off-farm activities by 3.3 percentage points.

CONCLUSIONS: GTS-related illnesses reduced hired labor likely through reduced household income. It also reduced participation in off-farm activities and implies a reduction in off-farm income. The off-farm income can supplement on-farm income and is important for smallholder farmers.

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Nurse-led interventions for tobacco control in Thailand: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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BACKGROUND: Thailand is recognized for its strong tobacco control measures, with Thai nurses playing a key role in tobacco control, particularly in preventing tobacco use and promoting smoking cessation. However, no systematic reviews have synthesized the effects of nurse-led interventions for tobacco control in Thailand. This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to assess the effectiveness of nurse-led interventions in tobacco control by Thai nurses.

METHODS: Following Cochrane Collaboration guidelines, this review included randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental studies published between 2005 and 2022. Nurse-led interventions were defined as initiatives where Thai nurses lead health interventions aimed at preventing or reducing smoking behavior. A comprehensive search of five electronic databases and grey literature was conducted. Two independent reviewers screened and extracted data using the Cochrane data extraction form. Meta-analysis was used to synthesize the findings.

RESULTS: Fourteen studies focused on tobacco use prevention, and 44 studies focused on smoking

cessation. Nurse-led interventions significantly improved participants' smoking-related knowledge, attitudes, and intentions not to smoke (MD = 4.04, 95% CI: 2.29 to 5.79; MD = 8.54, 95% CI: 2.10 to 14.98; MD = 3.31, 95% CI: 0.81 to 5.82). Compared to control or usual care, nurse-led interventions increased the likelihood of quitting (RR 2.27, 95% CI: 1.72 to 2.98). Most interventions were hospital-based and involved individual cessation counseling. Subgroup analyses showed that nurse-led smoking cessation interventions in the workplace were more effective than those in other settings.

CONCLUSIONS: Nurse-led interventions are effective in improving smoking-related knowledge, changing attitudes, increasing the intention not to smoke, and reducing smoking behavior. However, further methodologically rigorous research is needed in Thailand to strengthen the evidence base.

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Cigarette design: How do adolescents perceive warnings on cigarette sticks in Argentina?

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BACKGROUND: There is growing interest in a novel policy which would require a warning on each cigarette stick. To our knowledge, there is no study in Argentina or Latin America to have explored adolescent's perceptions of health messaging on cigarettes.

METHODS: Eight focus groups were conducted in four Argentine cities (Córdoba, Quilmes, San Salvador de Jujuy, Santa Rosa), with adolescents (n=51) stratified by sex, age (13-14, 15-17) and smoking susceptibility (susceptible, non-susceptible). Participants were shown cigarettes featuring five different warning messages, with one of these messages also including a toxic (skull and crossbones) symbol and another one presented in either black or red typography. Discussions were digitally recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using NVivo v20.

RESULTS: Most groups felt that cigarette sticks with warnings may help deter experimentation among non-smokers, but they would likely be ineffective for current smokers. They highlighted their potential utility for young people or new smokers, who often do not buy packs but instead buy or borrow single cigarettes, thus not necessarily being exposed to on-pack warnings. Some non-susceptible groups stated they would not try a cigarette, regardless of the presence or absence of a warning. Several participants mentioned that dissuasive cigarettes could help denormalize tobacco. In most groups the cigarette featuring a message and toxic symbol was viewed as the most dissuasive. 'Smoking a little also kills' was also seen as likely to have a deterrent effect, as it challenges the belief that only heavy smokers are at risk, but messages about environmental damage and cosmetic effects were generally regarded as less effective. 'Smoking controls you' received mixed reactions. Most groups considered red typography more deterrent. Adolescents suggested incorporating messages using strong and direct language about the harm smoking causes to others, and difficulty in quitting.

CONCLUSIONS: Warnings on cigarettes may be beneficial for deterring some younger, susceptible non-smokers.

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Building capacity with zero direct costs: 'Learning from the Experts' online course

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: People entering the tobacco control workforce face a steep learning curve and organizations that employ them can encounter costly onboarding expenses. A common baseline understanding about key topics and best practices in tobacco control can support enhanced efficiency and informed decision-making. Providing an introduction to these fundamentals for free can reduce the onboarding costs of organizations globally.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2018, the Institute for Global Tobacco Control at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health has offered free, online courses to establish foundational knowledge among people who are interested in or are already working in tobacco control. The 'Learning from the Experts' course (accessible in eight languages) covers topics like tobacco industry tactics, tobacco control interventions, and economics.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: From 2018–2024, 3765 participants from 72 countries successfully completed this free online course. Based on user-inputted data, 2380 people who completed the course (63%) had <1 year of experience working in tobacco control and took it as a requirement of their organization/supervisor.

During the period of January–December 2024, 975 people completed the free course, including 476 course users from low (1%, n=7) and middle-income (47%, n=469) countries. Among these users, 41% (n=197) had <1 year of experience working in tobacco control and were required by their place of work to take the course. The most common types of employers within this segment were academic/research (59%, n=116), hospital/health clinic (23%, n=46), other (11%, n=21), and non-profit organizations (7%, n=14).

CONCLUSIONS: By leveraging 'Learning from the Experts' as a free training tool, organizations of all types can ensure a consistent tobacco control knowledge base among their new recruits while also controlling or reducing direct onboarding costs. Periodic course updates and diversity of online teaching methods help to ensure relevancy among these stakeholders.

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Between lines and beyond the smoke: A comparative analysis of media and audience frames on tobacco taxation issue in China

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco taxation constitutes a pivotal strategy for mitigating this impact. A comprehensive understanding of how media frames tobacco taxation and how individuals perceive it can inform public health strategies, thereby enhancing social mobilization and public education efforts.
METHODS: This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating content analysis, framing analysis and in-depth interviews. A total of 1796 news articles and 761 Weibo posts from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023 using thematic coding. In-depth interviews were conducted with five key opinion leaders, including government officials, scholars, and journalists.
RESULTS: The topic of tobacco taxation reveals a discrepancy between news coverage and user-generated content on Weibo. Public discussions focus on Economic Impact (44.16% vs. 44.4% in news coverage), Health and Environmental Promotion (23.64% vs. 12.5% in news coverage), Policy Environment (16.88% vs. 43.1% in news coverage), and Rights and Obligations (15.32% vs. 0.0% in news coverage). Furthermore, according to framing analysis, three predominant frames were identified in news coverage: Economic Benefits, Social Protection, and Policy Comparisons. In contrast, the dominant frames on Weibo were Conflict, Fund Allocation, and Individual Obligations. Based on the in-depth Interviews, we identified two primary reasons for the discrepancy: (1) Tobacco taxes are often framed exclusively as either an economic or a health issue during news production. (2) The lack of transparency regarding tobacco profits and the allocation of tax revenue leaves both the media and the public uninformed.
CONCLUSIONS: By addressing public concerns and filling information gaps, media can better guide the public agenda and foster stronger societal backing for legislation. Integrating the efforts of economic news and health news departments in media organization can shift the narrative from conflict to dialogue, highlighting the complementary benefits of economic and health outcomes. Additionally, integrating tobacco tax discussions within broader health communication framing could improve public engagement and policy outcomes.

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Using an age-period-cohort model to explain the long-term trend in tobacco consumption in Chile (1994-2020)

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BACKGROUND: Chile has enacted laws and decrees to control tobacco consumption, achieving high compliance with the World Health Organization's (WHO) MPOWER measures. Despite the progress, the prevalence of tobacco use in Chile remains among the highest in the Americas. This study aims to identify the factors affecting tobacco consumption in Chile, especially considering the effects of age, period, cohort, and the impacts of laws implemented since 2006 and gender between 1994 and 2020.
METHODS: This study uses regularly collected public surveys with information on tobacco consumption prevalence for the general population (ages 12-64) with a total sample of 268123 individuals. The probability of tobacco consumption is estimated using an age-period-cohort (APC) model. Grouping variables into different age ranges addresses the identification problem inherent to APC models.
RESULTS: The results suggest a decrease in monthly tobacco consumption prevalence in Chile over time, particularly after 2006, when the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was ratified. Laws have had a negative effect on the probability of consuming tobacco, particularly among individuals aged 12 to 24 and 47 to 64. These laws have a limited impact on those aged 25 to 46 and women. Additionally, individuals born after 1990 show a lower prevalence of tobacco use compared to previous generations.
CONCLUSIONS: Chile has made significant progress in reducing tobacco consumption, especially among young people (12-24 years), due to early-life exposure to tobacco control laws. However, individuals aged 25 to 46 years and women have not seen the same results. To reduce new smokers and premature deaths, it is crucial to strengthen tobacco control policies, particularly by increasing tobacco taxes. These measures should target the entire population but focus specifically on individuals aged 25 to 46 and women, as they have proven to be the most cost-effective in reducing tobacco consumption.

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How tobacco companies use CSR to normalize their reputation: Unveiling their intentions

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies have long used Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to shape public perception, maintain market dominance, and influence policymaking (Fitzpatrick et al., 2022). In Vietnam, these companies leverage CSR activities to project a responsible image, gain media visibility, and strengthen ties with policymakers. However, these

strategical activities often mask their true intentions, creating obstacles to addressing tobacco-related public health issues.

METHODS: This study examines the underlying motives of CSR activities from three transnational tobacco companies (TTCs)—Philip Morris International (PMI), British American Tobacco (BAT), and Japan Tobacco International (JTI)—and the dominant domestic company, Vinataba. By analyzing their 2023 integrated reports and social media content, the research uncovers how CSR is strategically deployed to promote new tobacco products under the guise of responsibility.

RESULTS: TTCs emphasize transitioning to reduced-risk (JTI), smoke-free (PMI), or smokeless (BAT) products, branding them as socially responsible alternatives. For instance, PMI markets heated tobacco products as solutions for smokers unable to quit, while JTI includes reduced-risk products in its sustainability goals. TTCs also exploit ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) frameworks to align with societal expectations while maintaining profitability. BAT connects executive remuneration to ESG goals, promotes career programs like 'Battle of Mind,' and showcases workplace awards to attract young talent.

In contrast, Vinataba highlights financial contributions and supply chain responsibilities to present itself as a socially accountable company

CONCLUSIONS: These findings highlight the urgent need to expose CSR as a deceptive tool for reputation management and product promotion. Policymakers must enforce stricter regulations to ban CSR, while public health campaigns should prioritize uncovering and countering these narratives to protect public health and advance tobacco control efforts.

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Smoking cessation rate using a collaborative treatment system between dental personnel and the Quitline in Thailand

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BACKGROUND: Smoking cessation support through dental personnel represents a promising yet understudied approach in Thailand. This study aims to evaluate the 'Dentist Hero' project, a collaborative program between dental personnel and the Thailand National Quitline service for smoking cessation support. In this system, dental personnel screen patients for smoking, give advice, and refer them through a Line Official Account (Line OA) application for Quitline counselors to provide telephone consultations and long-term follow-up.

METHODS: This retrospective study analyzed secondary data from all patients in the Dentist Hero project database between January 2023 and July 2024. The analysis focused on two aspects: 1) patient referral patterns through the Line OA application, with data recorded by Line OA administrators, and 2) patient response rates to phone calls and smoking cessation outcomes, documented by Quitline counselors. Descriptive statistics were employed to explain patient characteristics, telephone response rates, and smoking cessation rates of the Dentist Hero project. Chi-square analysis examined the relationship between referral patterns and patient telephone response rates.

RESULTS: Of the 2270 project participants, 970 patients answered phone calls and agreed to participate in long-term treatment (representing 42.8% of all referred patients). Among these, 690 patients were able to follow up. The continuous abstinence rates at 3, 6, and 12 months were 28.3%, 29.2%, and 28.9% respectively. Using standardized forms with specific appointment times in the referral process significantly related to patient response rates ($p<0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS: The Dentist Hero project demonstrated satisfactory smoking cessation outcomes among engaged participants. However, significant challenges remain in establishing initial contact with patients. Implementing standardized referral processes and providing active pre-referral counseling may enhance the project's effectiveness.

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Khulna university's action against tobacco marketing: A successful model for public health protection

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco Industries (TI) are doing aggressive marketing to hook young people into deadly product cigarettes through various youthful events. In November 2024, Japan Tobacco International (JTI) organized musical concert with aim of selling 90 thousand cigarettes among Khulna University's students and setting up eight smoking booths. The University administration provided permission on-the-basis of a youthful event, but JTI targeted about 12000 teen-and-young students. While the tobacco control law banned smoking in education institutes, and tobacco advertisement-promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) and tobacco control guidelines for local government institutes (LGI) banned selling tobacco within 100 meters of education institutes.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA) and affiliated activists and

organizations acted quickly, bringing the issue of violation of TC law and LGI guidelines to policymakers and university administration. BATA sent letters to policymakers and university administration, and press statements to the media to stop this program. BATA also organized demonstrations and engaged journalists to expose this in the media and met with the Vice-Chancellor of the university. The BATA team exposed JTI's illegal activities, urging enforcement of the TC law and LGI guidelines that ensure a 100% smoke-free and TAPS-free environment, and prohibit selling tobacco near educational institutions.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The quick and active role of BATA, the university canceled smoking booths, patrolled the event venue, and ensured compliance with regulations including a smoke-free environment during the concert. This intervention prevented tobacco marketing to students and highlighted the importance of tobacco-free educational institutions.
CONCLUSIONS: This success story illustrates the effectiveness of coordinated actions of advocacy groups with the authorities and media is effective. To ensure a healthier future, all universities must remain vigilant and proactive in rejecting tobacco-related events. This experience offers valuable insights for other institutions facing similar challenges, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding public health and adhering to tobacco control laws.
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The profile of illegal advertisements for tobacco and nicotine products on social networks in Brazil

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BACKGROUND: Regulatory authorities face a major challenge regarding social media platforms, regarding the advertising of tobacco and nicotine products, especially on Instagram and Facebook. Facebook is preferably accessed by older users and Instagram is preferably accessed by younger users. In Brazil, the advertising and sale of tobacco and nicotine products on the internet is prohibited. Thus, the objective of this study is to evaluate the advertisements of these products on Instagram and Facebook.
METHODS: Data searches were conducted to verify the compliance, as part of ANVISA's monitoring routines, from July 1 to September 30, 2024, on Facebook and Instagram. The searches were done through social media search tools using keywords based on current regulations.
RESULTS: 6091 non-complying URLs were found. 6080 were found on INSTAGRAM and 11 on FACEBOOK. 2693 were related to conventional tobacco products and 3001 were related to electronic devices to smoke (that includes electronic cigarettes, htp and other devices). The type of noncompliance found were: 4368 related to sales on the internet, 104 to product use, 13 to social acceptance, 1 to film, 6 to cartoons, 11 to artists, and 5 to sports. All pages were removed by ANVISA's determination. The use of the Internet to sell products is the most common infraction. However, advertisements using cartoon characters are worrying as they can reach children more easily, and the association with artists can reach a teenage audience.
CONCLUSIONS: The results indicate that tobacco companies have been using the internet to circumvents the regulation. Due to the type of social network used and the nature of the advertisements, companies seem focus their efforts to target young and young-adult audience, both for conventional tobacco products and for products such as electronic cigarettes. This data also provides insights to defines new strategies for monitoring the networks.
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An analysis of the tobacco illicit market in Jordan: A household survey

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco market in Jordan poses significant public health and economic challenges, as highlighted by a national household smoker pack examination survey. With one of the highest smoking prevalence rates globally, Jordan faces a crisis exacerbated by the widespread availability of illicit cigarettes. This study aimed to assess the tobacco market comprehensively, focusing on socio-demographic factors, smoking behaviors, and the extent of illicit cigarette use.
METHODS: This study conducted a national household smoker pack examination survey across three governorates in Jordan using multistage cluster sampling. Data collection involved self-reports on smoking behaviors and cigarette characteristics, combined with physical pack examinations to validate compliance with local regulations. Packs were classified as illicit based on QR code absence, tax stamp violations, and missing health warnings.
RESULTS: Among the 463 participants (smokers), 22.2% reported purchasing illicit cigarettes in their most recent purchase. A higher proportion of males (24.4%) reported buying illicit cigarettes compared to females (10.8%). The results show significant differences in the proportion of smokers who purchase illicit cigarettes based on various socio-demographic factors. Males reported a significantly higher rate of illicit cigarette purchases (24.4%) compared to females (10.8%) (p = 0.010). Smokers aged 26-35 were the most likely to buy illicit cigarettes (30.0%), whereas those aged ⩽25 were the least likely (11.0%) (p <0.001). Married individuals had a higher tendency to purchase illicit cigarettes (28.0%) compared to single individuals (11.7%) (p <0.001). Only 12.6% of illicit cigarette packs

displayed proper health warning images (p=<0.001).
CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the need to tackle the high smoking prevalence and illicit cigarette trade in Jordan. With 22.2% of illicit cigarettes, regulatory lapses and socio-economic factors significantly contribute to the problem. The absence of health warnings and tax stamps on illicit packs undermines public health initiatives and results in substantial revenue loss for the government.
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Awareness of smoking risks and lung cancer signs in Irish travellers

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BACKGROUND: Irish Travellers are a minority ethnic group with 11-15 years' shorter life expectancy than the general population. The HSE National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) surveyed general population cancer awareness (2022). This study examined differences in smoking/vaping, awareness of smoking-related risk factors for cancer and cancer signs between Travellers and general population.
METHODS: A survey of Travellers, adapted from the NCCP's National Survey on Cancer Awareness, was conducted by Traveller Community Health workers in partnership with Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre; results were compared with the NCCP survey.
RESULTS: 483 Travellers /2874 general population participated. Daily/occasional smoking was higher in Travellers (35.4% vs 16.5%; p<0.001), higher in Traveller males than females (44% vs 32%; p<0.05). Similar numbers reported (unprompted) smoking as a risk factor for cancer (82.8% vs 87.8%), while higher proportions of Travellers unprompted identified passive smoking (38.5% vs 10.2%; p<0.001). Travellers agreed/strongly agreed that smoking can only cause cancer if you are a long-term heavy smoker (46.6% vs 25.5%; p<0.001), with similar rates by age. Fewer agreed/strongly agreed that a former smoker can get cancer even after long-term quitting (70.2% vs 83.8%; p<0.001); this belief was greater in older Travellers (≥35 years (73.7%) vs 18-34 years (64.9%; p=0.025) and in females (74.1% vs 62.6%; p=0.014). More Travellers vaped daily (12% vs 8%). Lower numbers of Travellers than general population recognised ongoing cough (31.2% vs 83%), shortness of breath (18.3% vs 74%), change in cough (48.4% vs 85%) and coughing blood (74.6% vs 97%) as signs of lung cancer.
CONCLUSIONS: The higher smoking/vaping rates in Travellers need targeted and tailored smoking cessation supports. Spontaneous recognition of passive smoking risk is high but other awareness is comparable to or lower than the general population; recognition of many lung cancer signs is low. Targeted strategies are required.
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Demographic profile, practices, nicotine dependence, and follow-up status of people who use tobacco: Findings from Tobacco Cessation Clinic in Maldives

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BACKGROUND: Identify tobacco use pattern and nicotine dependence is required to assist tobacco user in quitting. This study aimed to identify the demographic profiles, tobacco usage practices, nicotine dependence and follow up status of tobacco users attended to the tobacco cessation clinic at an Urban Primary Healthcare Center (Dhamanaveshi) in Malé, Maldives, spanning from 2017 through 2023.
METHODS: A retrospective, quantitative, descriptive survey was undertaken utilizing secondary data of tobacco cessation clinic in Maldives. The study employed a census sampling approach, resulting in a total sample size of 544 participants. The primary researcher developed a data transfer sheet based on a review of the assessment forms, facilitating the systematic transfer of required data. Descriptive statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 21.0 to summarize and interpret the collected data.
RESULTS: Out of 544 tobacco users, majority were male, married, employed, and most did not take any medication or have allergies. Most of the tobacco users started using tobacco before 18 years, used it for at least 10 years, most of them were smokers who exclusively used camel brand cigarettes and smoked more than 10 cigarettes daily or used tobacco more than 10 times daily. Less than half of the tobacco users had moderate nicotine dependence, majority used tobacco within half an hour of wake up, most of them did not use more tobacco during first hours of the day and majority used tobacco during their illness. Among 544 tobacco users, 90.8% were male, and Around 52.4% of tobacco users had no single follow up visit. About 30% of follow ups were via phone, and 17.6% were physical visits. Less than a quarter of users quit, and a smaller number relapsed.
CONCLUSIONS: It is crucial to enhance public awareness about the risks of tobacco use and train healthcare providers to assist smokers in quitting
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Young adults' support for tobacco endgame measures and e-cigarette regulations: Findings from an international survey

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BACKGROUND: While tobacco consumption has decreased in recent years, there has been a surge in e-cigarette usage, particularly among youth. E-cigarette regulation is highly variable across countries, from no regulation to complete bans. Additionally, countries are considering endgame strategies such as tobacco-free generation legislation. This survey of 18-34-year-olds evaluated opinions on tobacco endgame measures and e-cigarette regulations to guide policy development.

METHODS: An online survey, with input from the World Federation of Public Health Associations Tobacco Control Working Group and Tobacco Free Ireland, gauged support for 20 endgame measures and e-cigarette regulations. Convenience sampling was used for distribution through international networks.

RESULTS: There were 295 respondents from 34 countries, of whom 72% never smoked and 56% never used e-cigarettes. A third (31%) were aware of tobacco endgame measures. There was majority support for 14 of 20 endgame measures, including restricting tobacco use in public places (70%), increasing tobacco purchasing age to 21 (68%), banning retailer incentive programmes (75%), limiting nicotine content (73%), and mandating sales data publication by tobacco companies (69%). Nearly three-quarters (73%) would favour a tobacco-free generation law in their country, but only 31% expected it would be successful. E-cigarettes were seen as more desirable due to flavours (74%) and better taste/smell (72%), but 83% perceived them as an important health risk and 65% believed harms outweighed benefits. Preferred e-cigarette regulations included advertising restrictions (86%), higher taxation (70%), banning flavoured (73%) and disposable (76%) vapes, and point-of-sale display bans (72%).

CONCLUSIONS: Strong support was expressed for proposed endgame measures. Tobacco-free generation legislation was generally supported, albeit with feasibility concerns. Most young adults recognised health risks of e-cigarettes and favoured stricter regulation. Policymakers can use these findings to take firmer action in protecting populations from the health hazards of smoking and e-cigarettes.

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Global landscape of policies regulating additives in nicotine and tobacco products

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BACKGROUND: Product design is a key tobacco industry strategy to recruit consumers and hinder cessation. An important technology in tobacco product design is the use of additives including those that create characterising flavours, that is, flavours that are perceived by taste and or smell by the user. To curb youth use, many countries are implementing policies to limit the use of flavours and other additives in tobacco products. This paper reviews the global landscape of tobacco additives policies including those focusing only on flavouring additives, updating a previous review.

METHODS: We gathered additives policy data from available online sources of tobacco control policies including parties' reports to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (where WHO refers to World Health Organization), the website Tobacco Control Laws, government websites, searches with the Google search engine and consultations with the WHO to ensure comprehensiveness of the assessment. The policies were classified according to their objective and characteristics: Labelling regulations, sales bans and tobacco product design regulations. We classified and organised the regulations according to their stated intent.

RESULTS: We found that 62 countries had tobacco products' additives-related regulations at the regional, national or subnational levels. Most of these regulations focused on flavouring additives especially bans on the selling, importing and manufacturing tobacco products with characterizing flavours.

CONCLUSIONS: The data demonstrate various global policies addressing additives and/or flavours and a range of definitions of additives and flavours. Establishing common definitions and standards could facilitate cooperation between countries and regions.

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Effect of exposure to smoking hotspots on smoking behaviours: A real-world ecological momentary assessment in people who use tobacco

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BACKGROUND: Smoking ban at public areas leads to clustering of smoking behavior, particularly at smoking hotspots where ashtrays are available. However, the real-world impact of exposure to smoking hotspots on smoking behaviors in daily tobacco users remains unclear.

METHODS: A one-week ecological momentary assessment (EMA) was conducted among daily tobacco users (n=449) in Hong Kong. Participants completed five fixed-interval signal-contingent EMAs daily, reporting smoking behaviors including number of cigarettes consumed, craving, and purchases within past 3-hour in each EMA. Exposure to smoking hotspot was documented in the final EMA daily at evening. Daily aggregates of cigarettes

smoked, craving, and tobacco purchases were calculated. Two-part models including multilevel logistic and gamma regressions, analyzed within-person and between-person effects within the same day.

RESULTS: Participants (66.6% male, mean age 36.8 (SD 10.7)) completed 12091 EMAs (76.9% completion rate). Participants reported tobacco use in 81.8%, tobacco craving in 36.3%, and tobacco products purchase in 7.9% of all EMAs. Exposure to smoking hotspot was reported in 14.6% of the evening EMAs. At between-person level, exposure to smoking hotspot was associated with higher probability of reporting tobacco craving (adjusted odds ratio [AOR]=4.82, 95%CI 1.47-15.80), and purchases (AOR=4.02, 95%CI1.80-8.98), as well as more tobacco consumption (adjusted exp(B)=1.27, 95% CI 1.05-1.55) [m^2] at the same day. At within-person level, exposure to smoking hotspot was associated with higher probability of reporting tobacco craving (AOR=1.58, 95% CI 1.05-2.38) and purchases (AOR=2.30, 95%CI 1.56-3.40) at the same day.

CONCLUSIONS: Smokefree policy inevitably produces smoking clusters at public areas. Exposure to such smoking hotspots potentially normalizes smoking behavior and leads to more tobacco craving and consumption in daily tobacco users. Guidance in encountering such environmental cue of smoking should be included in craving management.

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In my data era: 25 years of the Global Tobacco Surveillance System

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS) is one of the largest public health surveillance systems in the world. This overview will describe the development of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), Tobacco Questions for Surveys (TQS) and Tobacco Questions for Surveys of Youth (TQS-Youth) and how these surveillance systems have adapted and expanded in order to provide data on tobacco use and tobacco control indicators for countries to fulfill their obligations for the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: GTSS began in 1999 with the launch of the GYTS. In the following 25 years, tobacco surveillance expanded to include GATS, Tobacco TQS and TQS-Youth. Tobacco indicators that are measured by these surveys include smoked and smokeless tobacco, secondhand smoke exposure at home and various public places, and tobacco advertisement and promotions.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: GTSS has supported over 185 countries in collecting and analyzing tobacco use data. GYTS has been conducted in over 185 countries. GATS has been conducted in 36 countries. TQS has been integrated in over 100 countries. TQS-Youth has been integrated 3 countries. Data from these surveys has helped member states meet their obligations outlined in the WHO FCTC. This data includes over 4 billion adults, including 70% of the world's adult population who smoke tobacco.

CONCLUSIONS: In the past 25 years, GTSS has grown and provided beneficial tobacco use data for countries around the world. Data from GTSS can be used by countries to monitor tobacco use and related indicators and to evaluate tobacco control policies and interventions.

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High prevalence and risk of heated tobacco product use among individuals who formerly smoked combustible cigarettes in South Korea

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BACKGROUND: As the smoking cessation rate of combustible cigarette (CC) users increases in South Korea, heated tobacco products (HTPs) are being promoted as less harmful alternatives and targeted at current CC smokers. However, the introduction of HTPs presents a new temptation for former CC smokers, potentially weakening their ability to sustain complete smoking cessation (abstinence from both CCs and HTPs) even after a prolonged CC cessation period. This trend poses significant challenges to long-term cessation efforts. This study aims to analyze the prevalence and risks of HTP current use among former CC smokers based on their cessation duration.

METHODS: We used data from the Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2019–2023) involving participants aged 19+ who answered HTP and CC ever-use questions. CC quit periods were categorized into pre- and post-2017 groups, as HTPs were first introduced in Korea in 2017. The latter were divided into subgroups by quit duration: 1, 6, 12, and 24 months. Weighted univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were conducted.

RESULTS: The prevalence of current HTP use among former CC smokers increased from 6.9% in 2019 to 9.8% in 2023. Among former CC smokers, the prevalence of HTP use was 11.6% for those who quit smoking for 0–1 month and 27.5% for those who quit for 12–24 months. Among the post-2017 group, individuals who quit CC smoking for 12–24 months had the highest OR for current HTP use (OR = 2.12, 95% CI: 1.53–2.84), followed by those who quit for 6–12 months (OR = 1.73, 95% CI: 1.17–2.57).

CONCLUSIONS: CC Former smokers are experiencing an increasing prevalence of HTP use, alongside a growing risk of HTP use, even after a prolonged cessation period. Targeted interventions and continued surveillance are necessary to address the increasing HTP use among this population.

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Tobacco control law implementation scenario: Report card

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BACKGROUND: Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 bans tobacco advertisement completely; still, the companies flout the law in many ways. A review by Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance covering 8019 sales outlets in 944 locations across 45 districts found that almost 100% of the outlets had tobacco advertisements. British American Tobacco Bangladesh (96%) and Japan Tobacco International (87%) were found to be the worst offenders. Though the law was enacted long ago, its proper implementation is still poor due to lack of enforcement data. To address this, the status of banning smoking in public places, tobacco advertising, and pictorial health warnings was assessed under Sections 4, 5, and 10 of the Act. A report card was developed to highlight implementation gaps and propose actionable recommendations for policymakers.

METHODS: MPOWER policy of the World Health Organization has been adopted in this study, sans the 'Offer help to quit' portion. Data were collected from 30 districts using 60 questions divided into two questionnaires. Each contains 30 questions for interviews and observations. Questions were answered by two representatives of the task force of each district and six observation sites per district, including markets, hospitals, schools, malls, restaurants, and bus terminals. Scores ranged across the districts from risky (≤24%), unsatisfactory (25-34%), and average (35-44%) to satisfactory (45-60%) using the highest score of 300.

RESULTS: Among the 30 districts, 10% were satisfactory, 40% intermediate, 30% unsatisfactory, and 20% at risk. Jhenaidah was ranked highest with 50%, and Gaibandha was ranked lowest with 17%. While 73% of the districts satisfactorily implemented warning activities, 70% of them were at risk regarding advertising control.

CONCLUSIONS: Gaps in enforcement remain large, especially in tobacco advertising. These need regular mobile courts, training law enforcers, and effective surveillance. Public-private partnership and increased public awareness will help ensure better law enforcement for improved public health.

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Effectiveness of behavioural and/or pharmacological interventions for tobacco and alcohol co-use: A systematic review

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BACKGROUND: Co-use of tobacco and alcohol is common, with each substance triggering cravings that increase relapse risks when quitting either. Despite its prevalence, evidence on the effectiveness of interventions addressing both behaviours simultaneously remains unclear. We conducted a systematic review to evaluate the effectiveness of behavioural and/or pharmacological interventions targeting tobacco and alcohol co-use. This study was registered with PROSPERO (CRD42024553460) and followed PRISMA guidelines.

METHODS: We systematically searched PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, Web of Science, PsycINFO, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials databases and reference lists from inception to August 2024. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) examining behavioural and/or pharmacological interventions specifically designed to target both tobacco and alcohol co-use in concurrent users were included. Primary outcomes were both tobacco abstinence (e.g. self-reported/biochemically validated) and alcohol reduction (e.g. self-reported drinking quantity, frequency, or intensity). Two reviewers independently screened studies, extracted data, and assessed risk of bias using Cochrane Risk of Bias 2 tool.

RESULTS: A total of 18912 articles were identified, of which 79 underwent full-text screening, and 25 RCTs (N=7629 participants) were included. Daily smokers (20 studies) and heavy drinkers (15 studies) were the most commonly studied populations. Seven studies tested behavioural interventions only (e.g., counselling, self-help materials), 3 focused on pharmacological interventions only (e.g., varenicline, nicotine replacement therapy), and 15 tested the combined behavioural and pharmacological approaches, with follow-ups ranging from 2 to 52 weeks. Seven studies showed statistically significant effects on dual outcomes. Among these, the most effective intervention components were personalized feedback, self-monitoring, and achievable goal settings for quitting smoking and alcohol control.

CONCLUSIONS: Evidence on interventions targeting tobacco and alcohol co-use is mixed, with combined behavioural-pharmacological approaches showing promising effects. Future research should focus on populations with varying dependence levels, refine strategies, and examine mechanisms to improve dual outcomes. Rigorous, long-term trials are needed to establish clinical recommendations.

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Feasibility of the implementation of plain packaging of tobacco products in Ghana

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BACKGROUND: In Ghana, smoking remains a significant public health concern, with 7.3% of adults and 8.9% of youth using tobacco. Worryingly, the use of newer products like e-cigarettes (4.9%) and shisha (1.3%) is increasing, especially among girls. While the overall prevalence may seem low, it still impacts a substantial portion of the population, exposing them to the dangers of tobacco
The study aimed to comprehensively evaluate the feasibility and potential effects of implementing plain packaging of tobacco products in Ghana by assessing public perception and attitudes. This research potentially informs evidence-based tobacco control policies in Ghana, thereby enhancing public health, lowering the economic burden from tobacco-related illnesses, and reinforcing Ghana's adherence to global initiatives to control tobacco use.
METHODS: A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted across three ecological zones in Ghana to gather diverse perspectives on plain packaging for tobacco products. Using the modified EPI cluster sampling method, 30 clusters were randomly selected within each study district. From each cluster, 10 participants were purposively sampled from both households and smoking joints
RESULTS: The survey included 1819 individuals aged 18 to 69+ years and of sound mind. Most participants (65.2%) recognized that plain packaging would make tobacco less appealing. Over half (50.8%) believed it would reduce tobacco consumption, and nearly 60% thought it would deter young people from smoking initiation. However, 24.4% of smokers doubted its quitting effectiveness. Despite this, 75.9% supported implementation of plain packaging in Ghana, with only 19.9% opposed suggesting a widespread commitment to advancing tobacco control measures.
CONCLUSIONS: The study provides compelling evidence of the potential effectiveness of plain packaging in reducing tobacco use and promoting public health. This signifies the need for policymakers to prioritize and implement tobacco plain packaging as a comprehensive measure to reduce tobacco consumption, prevent initiation and protect the well-being of the population.

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Tobacco free neighborhood campaign: A best practice against tobacco company interference and product promotion-case study from Kerala

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Ernakulam district of Kerala, which known as the commercial capital of the state declared as tobacco free tourist destination in 2012. In 2015 the district declared as Tobacco advertisement free. Kerala Voluntary Health Services, and a coalition of civil society organizations who are instrumented by The Union supported district administration in the above efforts. The compliance study shows high level of compliance in the districts up to 2018. But thereafter the compliance on Tobacco Control laws was gradually reduced and in 2021 it reaches its ever time low of 65%.Point of sale advertisement rise up to 35%. This gives a learning that the effective and sustainable enforcement of Tobacco Control needs civil society support and ownership. This learning is the background of Tobacco Free Neighborhood campaign.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The jurisdiction of each residence association considered as a neighborhood and resolution of the residence association regarding self-comply of Tobacco Control laws by its members are the first step of the campaign. It was followed by awareness at point of sale against Tobacco Advertisement and schools regarding Tobacco Free School campaign of Government. One hundred and twenty residence associations passed the resolution and joined the campaign.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: In the jurisdiction of 40 neighborhood where the campaign started in 2022 undergone a compliance study recently. The study shows that all forty jurisdictions having high compliance of Indian TC Act. The study also revealed that the jurisdiction reported 80% cessation attempt. Home based smoking also reduced to 99%. The crime record of local police station and excise shows zero fine collection in these area.
CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco Industry always trying to interfere in government policies to promote their products. But in Tobacco Free neighborhood campaign the civil society itself making policies for themselves. Therefore no level of Tobacco Industry interference is possible here.

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A global study of the association between cigarette excise tax structure and the dispersion of cigarette prices

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BACKGROUND: The potential for cigarette tax increases to reduce consumption is dampened if people who smoke can avoid tax hikes by switching to a cheaper brand. The scope for such substitution is measured by the dispersion of cigarette prices: a wider gap between premium- and budget-priced cigarettes facilitates brand switching after a tax increase. Theory predicts that the structure of the excise tax affects the dispersion of cigarette prices. However, empirical studies examining the association are scarce and limited in geographical coverage. This study is the first to examine the link between cigarette excise tax structure and price dispersion using data from a global sample of countries.
METHODS: Using World Health Organization data on cigarette excise tax structures and price dispersion (ratio of cheapest to premium cigarette prices) in 170 countries from 2014-2022, results are estimated with mixed-effects panel models controlling for tax structure, corruption, advertising bans, GDP, unemployment, and region. In the

analysis, tax structures are categorised into 10 groups based on uniformity, type (ad valorem, specific, mixed), and the presence of a minimum specific tax (MST).
RESULTS: Relative to a uniform specific structure, any tiered system is associated with wider price dispersion. Tiered mixed structures are the extreme case: price dispersion is 45%-55% ($p<0.01$) wider than under a uniform specific system. The dispersion of cigarette prices is 25%-33% ($p<0.01$) wider under uniform ad valorem systems than under uniform specific systems. Adding an MST to a uniform ad valorem system does not significantly tighten the dispersion of prices. Among uniform mixed structures, the gap between premium- and budget-priced cigarette brands is lower, by 26% ($p<0.01$), under those with MSTs compared to those without.
CONCLUSIONS: Countries that adopt a uniform specific structure, or combine uniform mixed systems with MSTs, can reduce tax avoidance opportunities and more effectively leverage tax increases to reduce cigarette consumption.
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Scoping a stop smoking pilot programme for homeless emergency accommodation

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Using a partnership approach, this Stop Smoking Pilot Programme was initiated between HSE Tobacco Free Ireland, HSE Social Inclusion, HSE Quit Mid West and Midwest Simon in 2024, with an aim to explore stop smoking strategies within homeless services. Traditionally, little or no support has been provided to this population group, due to many challenges including the transient nature of this population, as well as high rates of polydrug use and mental health diagnoses, with smoking often used as a coping mechanism.
The project focused on two sites, in the Mid-West of Ireland. A baseline survey was completed among residents and staff with the goal of assessing smoking behaviours, readiness and confidence to quit smoking, knowledge of stop smoking supports, and attitudes to tobacco free spaces.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Baseline surveys were completed by 8 staff and 23 residents. All residents who responded were male, while all staff who responded, were female.
70% of residents and 4% of staff were current smokers. 63% of residents expressed a desire to quit smoking but reported low confidence to quit. There was mixed response on providing smoke free spaces in the residences. Both staff and residents had low levels of knowledge of the stop smoking services available to them.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Survey findings emphasise the need for a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to stop smoking support for this group with a focus on trauma-informed care and an individualized approach, using a tailored stop smoking programme and resources, given diverse preferences and needs.
CONCLUSIONS: The survey provided the project partners with a better understanding of the needs of this population group. Approaches to improving knowledge of and access to stop smoking supports need to be explored further.
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Crowding-out effect of tobacco consumption in North Macedonia

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BACKGROUND: This study investigates the crowding-out effect of tobacco expenditures on other household spending categories in North Macedonia, a country with one of the highest smoking prevalence rates in Europe. The research aims to quantify the economic trade-offs faced by households allocating significant portions of their income to tobacco products.
METHODS: Data from the Household Budget Survey (HBS) for the period 2018–2022 were analyzed using a Three-Stage Least Squares (3SLS) empirical approach. This methodology captures the interdependencies among various expenditure categories while addressing potential endogeneity issues. The analysis examines overall household spending patterns as well as differences across income groups.
RESULTS: The findings reveal that tobacco consumption significantly reduces household spending on essential goods and services such as clothing, health, and furniture, while simultaneously increasing spending on less productive items like alcohol and dining out. The impact varies by income group, with low-income households experiencing more pronounced effects on categories like health and clothing, whereas middle- and high-income households exhibit reductions in furniture and recreation spending.
CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights the adverse economic impact of tobacco consumption on household welfare in North Macedonia. Targeted policy interventions are recommended to mitigate these effects, including stricter enforcement of tobacco control measures, higher taxation on tobacco products, and increased access to smoking cessation programs. Public health campaigns should focus on raising awareness about the economic and social costs of tobacco use, particularly among low-income households and youth.

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Stillbirth in smoking mothers: A persistent problem despite reduced smoking prevalence in Ireland

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BACKGROUND: Cigarette smoking in pregnancy is associated with a significant risk of stillbirth. This risk is dose dependent, and heavier smokers in pregnancy are most susceptible. Uteroplacental insufficiency with growth restriction and placental abruption are the main pathological findings, primarily suggestive of a placental insult. Stopping smoking, particularly pre-pregnancy, reduces this risk of stillbirth. The number of women who continue to smoke in pregnancy is declining. This study examined patterns of stillbirth in pregnant smokers and correlated this with smoking prevalence over the study period.
METHODS: This is a retrospective case-series of all normally formed stillbirths delivered over sixteen years at a large tertiary referral hospital, delivering over 8000 women annually. Logistic regression was used to model smoking rates over time and weighted linear regression was used to compare against the background smoking prevalence.
RESULTS: From 2000 to 2016, 139532 women delivered infants weighing ≥500g at 24 weeks gestation or over. There were 437 normally formed stillbirths during this period, of whom 87 occurred in pregnancies affected by maternal smoking. The overall incidence of stillbirth declined over this period of time, from 6.6/1000 in 2000 to 2.5/1000 in 2016. The prevalence of maternal smoking fell from 28% of mothers in 2000 to 10%. The rates of smoking-associated stillbirth did not show any linear trend (p=0.880). The commonest cause of stillbirth in smokers was placental abruption. Smokers had a significantly higher rate of stillbirth by placental abruption that non-smokers, odds ratio 1.73 (1.01-2.96), p=0.04. The commonest cause of stillbirth in non-smokers was FGR.
CONCLUSIONS: Stillbirth incidence has decreased overall, however the proportion of stillbirths occurring in smokers remains unchanged despite a steady decline in the prevalence of maternal cigarette smoking. These findings suggest that interventions to reduce stillbirth have not altered outcomes in smokers. Women who continue to smoke in pregnancy remain at high risk.

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What do tobacco prices tell us about illicit trade penetration? The case of Chile

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry has often claimed that illicit trade is a consequence of tobacco taxes and that increases in tobacco taxes fuel such a trade. However, the literature has paid little attention to the prices of licit tobacco set by the licit tobacco industry. This can provide indirect information on how the industry perceives the market landscape and the competitive pressure that illicit trade may exert.
METHODS: We developed a theoretical model in which a monopolistic firm sets prices for two consumer segments: those purchasing 'expensive' cigarettes and those opting for 'cheap' ones. The firm maximises profits using second-degree price discrimination. Illicit cigarettes are perfect substitutes for legal 'cheap' products, and the monopolist knows the Illicit trade penetration. The model assumes a positively sloped supply curve for illicit cigarettes (i.e., the marginal cost of illicit supply increases with quantity). An alternative model assumes a price-inelastic illicit supply (a fixed quantity at a demand-determined price). Both models were calibrated to replicate the Chilean cigarette market between 2018 and 2020.
RESULTS: Both models indicate that an increase in illicit supply leads to price reductions for both 'expensive' and 'cheap' cigarettes. Additionally, a disproportionate decrease in 'cheap' cigarette smokers compared to 'expensive' cigarette smokers drives price increases. Despite industry claims, the tobacco industry's pricing behaviour in Chile between 2018 and 2020 aligns with a reduction in illicit trade during those years.
CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco industry's pricing strategies provide valuable insights into the significance the industry assigns to illicit trade within the market. The industry's profit-maximising behaviour through price increases is incompatible with claims of growing illicit trade. These results challenge the narrative that higher tobacco taxes drive illicit trade, particularly in contexts where the industry has implemented real price increases during the same period.

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2024 Surgeon General's Report on eliminating tobacco-related disease and death: Addressing disparities

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BACKGROUND: The 1998 U.S. Surgeon General's Report (SGR) was the first to address disparities with a focus on 'Tobacco Use Among U.S. Racial/Ethnic Minority Groups.' With greater attention on health equity in our field, the 2024 SGR provides an updated synthesis and recommendations for research, practice, and policy to reduce tobacco-related health inequities.
METHODS: Development of the 2024 SGR began in 2018,

with data analyses and evidence synthesis continuing through 2023. Preparation of this report was guided by core principles emerging from the theory of social justice, including knowledge and understanding, equal respect, and sharing power. This report acknowledges that multiple, multilevel social and commercial dynamics predispose, enable, and reinforce health disparities.

RESULTS: More than 490000 deaths attributable to cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke are estimated to occur in the United States each year—about one in five of all deaths. Disparities in tobacco use persist by race and ethnicity, income, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, occupation, geography, and behavioral health status. Exposure to secondhand smoke remains disproportionately higher among Black people, youth, and people living in poverty. Tobacco-related disparities have multilayered influences, including the tobacco industry's aggressive, targeted marketing.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco-related health disparities are a social injustice, in addition to an economic and health burden. Addressing disparities requires reflection on the complex history of the commercialization of tobacco and both past and present-day experiences of racism, discrimination, and targeted marketing by the tobacco industry. A comprehensive effort toward health equity must include a combination of complementary approaches to reduce the affordability, accessibility, appeal, and addictiveness of tobacco products. Interventions designed to reduce the use of tobacco products and the influences of the tobacco industry on society should accompany efforts to remove the underlying social, structural, commercial, and political drivers of health inequities.

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A systematic review and synthesis of qualitative research on stakeholder views on commercial tobacco endgame policies

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BACKGROUND: Several countries have set tobacco endgame goals and considered policies to rapidly reduce smoking to minimal levels. To anticipate endgame policy acceptability and feasibility, an increasing number of qualitative studies have explored stakeholders' knowledge and attitudes toward endgame goals and views on implementation barriers and enablers. This review synthesized the data from these studies to inform future research and policy.

METHODS: We systematically searched academic databases (PubMed, CINAHL, Embase, Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest). Eligible studies included interviews or focus groups with stakeholders. Descriptive analysis and thematic synthesis were conducted.

RESULTS: Thirty-four studies were included from seven countries, largely New Zealand/Aotearoa (n=15) and the US (n=13). The most frequently included stakeholders were tobacco control experts/policy makers, people who smoked, adolescents and young adults, and tobacco retailers. The most frequently explored policies were nicotine reduction (n=11), retail reduction (n=7), sales ban (n=7), and a smokefree generation (n=5). The primary themes identified were the perceived conflict between personal autonomy and protective regulation, concern about unintended consequences (illicit supply, switching to other harmful products, nicotine withdrawal), and practical barriers of enforcement and cost. Participants generally supported product-focused policies such as nicotine reduction, on the basis that they would increase quitting and protect children, but some who smoked felt such restrictions would exacerbate stress and deprive them of autonomy. Support for retail reduction was mixed; some felt this would reduce temptation to smoke, but others believed tobacco dependence would motivate people who smoked to just travel further for tobacco. Although participants felt the smokefree generation policy would denormalize tobacco, younger people thought it would be easy to circumvent by obtaining tobacco from their social network.

CONCLUSIONS: We identified common themes across stakeholders, as well as themes specific to stakeholder groups. Knowledge of perceived risks and benefits could inform endgame policy framing and communications.

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Canada's tobacco control endgame: Fits and starts and lost opportunities

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Canada's pursuit of a tobacco endgame began with a national summit held in October 2016. The endgame summit involved dozens of tobacco control leaders, researchers, and government officials across Canada. Summit participants agreed to propose a national endgame target of reducing tobacco use prevalence to less than 5% by 2035. Health Canada responded by formalizing the 'less than 5% by 2035' target in its renewed national tobacco reduction strategy in 2018. However, the updated strategy did not include a detailed plan of action, milestones or performance measures for achieving the target. The strategy also involved the legalization of nicotine vaping and its promotion as a primary means of tobacco use cessation.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Between 2017 and 2019, and in support of the 2035 target, Health Canada approved a ban on flavour additives in most tobacco products (including menthol) and mandated plain packaging. These initial measures represent significant early steps toward

an endgame. However, progress began to slow with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: At this point, Canada still has no clear action plan to achieve its 2035 target, although progress has not stalled. In 2021, renewed graphic warnings were approved for tobacco products. In 2023, Canada became the first country to require health warning messages on cigarettes. In 2024, Health Canada championed the 'endgame' decision (FCTC Article 2.1) at the tobacco control treaty summit (FCTC COP10) and introduced cross-government guidelines to comply with Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

CONCLUSIONS: The Canadian government's commitment to achieving its 2035 target remains in question despite Health Canada's global endgame advocacy efforts. A renewed national commitment with a detailed and robust action plan with concrete milestones and performance measures is needed to ensure this outcome.

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Tobacco and alcohol co-use in older adults In Hong Kong: A mixed-methods analysis from the Generations Connect Project

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco and alcohol co-use among older adults, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, poses significant health risks. This study examines factors associated with these behaviors to inform effective interventions. Underprivileged status was defined by income level and healthcare access.

METHODS: This mixed-methods study, conducted from January 2023 to August 2024 as part of the Generations Connect project. Quantitative data from 6704 older adults (mean age 77.83; 73.1% female) were collected via questionnaires assessing demographics, tobacco and alcohol use, primary healthcare engagement, physical activity levels, and eHealth literacy (eHEALS). Quantitative data were analyzed using Chi-square tests, univariate general linear models, and multinomial logistic regression. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically.

RESULTS: Smoking and drinking prevalence was low: 2.2% smoked only, 6.0% drank only, and 0.9% were co-users. Co-use was more prevalent among younger participants (65-74 years) (=25.008, df=6, p<0.001) and those living in public housing (=29.94, df=3, p<0.001), who had 235% higher odds of co-use (Odds risk (OR)=3.35, p=0.005). Co-users had 54% lower odds of engagement in primary healthcare system (e.g., being DHC members, OR=0.46, p=0.03) and 41% lower odds of achieving 300 minutes-per-week of exercise (OR=0.59, p=0.05). eHEALS scores were significantly lower among co-users (F(3, 6404)=2.67, p=0.046), with the lowest scores observed in this group (15.67±9.52). Qualitative data from 29 participants (aged 65-91, 62.1% female) were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically.

CONCLUSIONS: Co-use of tobacco and alcohol in older adults is associated with poorer health outcomes and lower eHealth literacy. Targeted interventions, including digital health education and enhanced participation in primary care services, are crucial for addressing the vulnerabilities of co-users and reducing associated health risks. Future randomized controlled trials can elucidate causal links between these factors and health behaviors.

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Oral nicotine pouches marketing and online promotions on social media and e-commerce websites: Content analyses

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BACKGROUND: Marketing, promotions, sales and use of oral nicotine pouches has been reported from high-income countries. We searched online social media and e-commerce websites to document if any marketing, promotions and sales were present online in Malaysian social media and e-commerce websites.

METHODS: We searched 'Velo',' Zyn', 'Onz', 'nicotine pouch', and 'oral nicotine pouch', on Google Malaysia and social media, from September to November 2024. Two trained coders used a codebook from previous research to collect visual and textual information on brands, prices, discounts, flavors, nicotine strength, and marketing claims. Results were presented as both descriptives and free text.

RESULTS: Our search showed that ONPs are being promoted and sold mainly on e-commerce websites in Malaysia. ONP marketing was present on TikTok, two overseas stores that shipped to Malaysia, and 55 e-stores. Brands such as 'Velo', Zyn', and 'Boltbe' offered discounts, free deliveries, and an array of flavors, with nicotine strengths of 2-50 milligrams. Age verifications and nicotine disclaimers were usually absent. All brands displayed nicotine strength (in milligrams), text, and graphic instructions. Only half the e-stores explicitly stated that the product contained 'nicotine', and a third displayed that nicotine is addictive. Half the stores had health-related marketing claims such as 'tobacco-free' and 'convenient of use anywhere, everywhere', but only a third made smoking cessation claims. However, less than a third had warnings against usage by minors, smokers, and pregnant women.

CONCLUSIONS: Online marketing and sales promotions were present on e-commerce websites and some social media platforms. Various nicotine strengths and flavors, marketing claims of 'tobacco-free', and 'convenience of use', do not imply ONPs as harm reduction products. Surveillance of ONPs is needed to inform regulatory policy. Further research is needed to know the impact of online marketing on perceptions and use behaviors.

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E-vaporisers: Rising concerns over nicotine and etomidate in electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery system (ENNDS) products

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BACKGROUND: E-vaporisers are rapidly gaining popularity, particularly among the younger demographic. They can be categorised as ENDS and ENNDS. While ENDS and ENNDS are prohibited in Singapore, there a still demand and supply of such products in the black market. Through vigilant enforcement efforts, attempts to smuggle, peddle and use such products are curbed by the confiscation of the items and penalties issued to the offenders.

METHODS: Samples from confiscated ENDS/ENNDS from the interdiction of smugglers, peddlers and users, were used for analysis via the various formats: pods, vape devices, and bottles of vape juice. Nicotine and etomidate were identified and quantified using chromatographic techniques, including gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and Liquid chromatography coupled with Diode Array Detection (DAD) and Mass Spectrometry (MS).

RESULTS: As expected, nicotine was detected in ENDS, while etomidate was found in ENNDS, often at high concentrations. The presence of etomidate, which belongs to the anaesthetic drug group, was discovered during recent analyses of ENNDS products. The extent of etomidate's inclusion in e-liquids remains relatively unknown, particularly in disposable pod-based products. These products, commonly marketed as 'K-Pods,' contain vape juice mixed with etomidate — an anaesthetic traditionally used in emergency and non-surgical procedures.

CONCLUSIONS: Etomidate's inclusion in these products raises significant health concerns. Known for its ultra short-acting, non-barbiturate hypnotic properties, etomidate can pose hazards due to its pharmacological and side effects. Its use in non-nicotine e-vaporisers introduces unique risks, particularly with repeated exposure and through inhalation. Its presence in e-vaporisers could pose severe health risks, particularly for unsuspecting users and the younger population. While the public may already be aware of the dangers of nicotine-based products after decades of public health education, they are likely unaware of etomidate. This underscores the urgent need for regulatory action and heightened public awareness about the dangers associated with the use of ENDS/ENNDS.

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Assessing the quality of guidelines on tobacco cessation: A systematic review

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BACKGROUND: Numerous guidelines have been developed in tobacco cessation worldwide for providing evidence-based interventions to help individuals quit smoking and other forms of tobacco use. Despite their widespread availability, a critical evaluation of the guidelines to assess their methodological quality, consistency, and applicability across different healthcare settings, populations, and regions has not been carried out. Thus, we aimed to perform a systematic review assessing the quality of guidelines on tobacco cessation.

METHODS: PubMed, Embase, Scopus, and Cochrane databases were electronically searched in December 2024. Additionally, the Guidelines International Network, Google Scholar, and references of relevant articles were also searched. Guidelines released within the last 10 years globally in the English language on tobacco cessation were included. The critical evaluation of the guidelines was carried out by the AGREE II instrument. The instrument comprises 23 key items within six domains and two additional global rating items.

RESULTS: A total of 20 guidelines were included in this review. The AGREE II showed only one domain with a mean score of more than 70% across the guidelines. A comparative evaluation of all the guidelines revealed consistently higher scores in the clarity of presentation domain (74.4 + 20.9). Lowest mean scores were reported for editorial independence (58.29 + 19.36), followed by the applicability (59.18+18.02) domain.

CONCLUSIONS: The guidelines on tobacco cessation have demonstrated clarity in presentation; however, there still exists a scope of improvement in domains such as editorial independence, applicability, and rigor of development. Addressing the shortcomings is of paramount importance for promoting evidence-based cessation practices and for effective delivery of tobacco cessation services.

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What's in your smokeless tobacco? Prioritising hazardous constituents for regulation in India

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BACKGROUND: Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use is highly prevalent in India, posing a significant public health threat. This study aimed to develop a framework for prioritizing hazardous SLT constituents based on toxicity, attractiveness, and addictiveness to inform regulatory policies.

METHODS: A comprehensive database of SLT constituents was compiled through a literature review (2005-2024) adhering to PRISMA guidelines, encompassing PubMed,

Scopus, and Web of Science databases. The review integrated recommendations from the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation, IARC monographs, and the US FDA's list of harmful and potentially harmful constituents. A multidisciplinary expert panel (n=24) evaluated 120 identified constituents using a structured digital evaluation form and a 10-point Likert scale. Constituent prioritization was conducted using the Analytic Hierarchy Process, equally weighting toxicity, addictiveness, and attractiveness criteria.

RESULTS: The analysis identified over 120 hazardous SLT constituents, including 65 classified as carcinogenic by the IARC (5 Group 1, 10 Group 2A, and 24 Group 2B). Nicotine emerged as the highest priority constituent (priority vector = 0.218), followed by tobacco-specific nitrosamines NNN (0.187) and NNK (0.167), and heavy metals lead (0.165), cadmium (0.162), and arsenic (0.158). Strong inter-rater agreement was observed across all criteria (Kendall's W = 0.83, $p < 0.001$), with a particularly high consensus for toxicity assessments (W = 0.88).

CONCLUSIONS: This evidence-based prioritization framework provides a crucial tool for advancing SLT regulation in India by identifying key constituents requiring monitoring and control. Policy recommendations include mandatory disclosure of priority chemicals on product packaging, establishing maximum permissible limits for priority toxicants, developing a network of accredited testing laboratories, and implementing standardized testing protocols aligned with WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10. These measures aim to mitigate SLT-related morbidity and mortality through enhanced tobacco product regulation.

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A study on gender differences in mortality risk based on demographic characteristics in smoking and alcohol consumption trajectories

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BACKGROUND: Long-term tobacco and alcohol consumption is a strong mortality predictor. Previous studies, due to their cross-sectional design, were unable to identify the change trajectories of tobacco and alcohol consumption and their representative demographic characteristics. Therefore, this study analyzes consumption trajectories, identifies demographic characteristics, and determines high-risk mortality trajectories.

METHODS: The analysis included 174968 participants (99273 males and 75695 females) aged 40-79 from the National Health Screening Cohort (2002-2019). Smoking (tobacco/day) and alcohol consumption (g/day) trajectories from 2002 to 2009 were assessed by gender using Multiple-Group Latent Class Analysis. Cluster analysis identified the demographic characteristics of each trajectory. Cox proportional-hazards models estimated HR for all-cause, cardiovascular disease (CVD), and cancer mortality over a 10.7-year follow-up (2008/2009–2019).

RESULTS: In males, eight-trajectories from 2002 to 2009 were identified: Type A (non-smokers/non-drinkers, Trajectory 2-(16.6%)), Type B (non-smokers/drinkers, Trajectory 1-(8.5%); 3-(26.3%); 5-(3.5%)), Type C (smokers/non-drinkers, Trajectory 6-(7.7%)), Type D (reduced smoking/reduced drinking, Trajectory 4-(8.2%)), and Type E (smokers/drinkers, Trajectories 7-(23.9%); 8-(5.3%)).

Type D consisted of younger, metropolitan, NHI, normal weight, exercised 3–4 times/week. Type E was younger, rural, medical aid, obese, inactive individuals. In addition, Types C and E, characterized by smoking, had higher HR for all-cause and cause-specific mortality than Type A during the follow-up.

In females, five-trajectories were identified: Type α (non-smokers/non-drinkers, Trajectory 3-(68.7%)), Type β (non-smokers/drinkers, Trajectories 1-(13.1%); 2-(6.0%); 4-(10.2%)), and Type γ (smokers/drinkers, Trajectory 5-(2.0%)).

Type γ consisted of older, urban, medical aid, underweight, inactive individuals. Compared to Type α, Type γ was associated with all-cause and cause-specific mortality.

CONCLUSIONS: The long-term analysis showed that non-smokers or non-drinkers did not transition into smokers or drinkers. Among smokers or drinkers, consumption decreased with age. However, in certain male and female groups, consumption stayed high, increasing mortality risk. Co-occurring smoking and alcohol further raised mortality risk, with smoking having a greater impact than alcohol.

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Analysis of the change trend of tobacco marketing content on the internet in China from 2021 to 2023

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BACKGROUND: To grasp the new characteristics and forms of Chinese tobacco enterprises' Internet marketing content, and offer targeted support for strengthening the supervision and law enforcement of online tobacco advertisements and promotions.

METHODS: Using web crawler technology, we combined computer-automated keyword recognition with manual assessment to capture in real-time tobacco advertisement and promotion details on Chinese information platforms, social media apps, search engines, and vertical tobacco sites from 2021 to 2023. Subsequently, we analyzed their variation trends and traits.

RESULTS: From the perspective of different keyword comparison, from 2021 to 2023, 'e - cigarettes' consistently had the highest volume in marketing information, with proportions of 58.26%, 59.15%, and 48.72% respectively. The volume proportion of 'Zhonghua cigarettes' decreased from 13.35% in 2021 to 9.00% in 2023, while that of 'Marlboro' rose from 3.43% in 2021 to 6.36% in 2023. E - cigarette brands' proportion grew rapidly. In 2023, 'RELX'

reached 11.24%, exceeding 'Zhonghua cigarettes', which had the highest volume among traditional cigarettes. From the perspective of different content comparison, positive information in tobacco control publicity ranked highest for three consecutive years. In 2023, its proportion reached 57.21%. 'Smokers' discussions' grew fastest, with an average growth rate of 42.75%.

CONCLUSIONS: In tobacco enterprise Internet marketing, China has made some progress in online monitoring. But there's still much to improve. Notably, supervision of e-cigarette and foreign-brand tobacco marketing info needs strengthening. Also, we must boost positive discussions on the harms of tobacco products and e-cigarettes to prompt society to create a tobacco-control-friendly environment.

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Government pension schemes and tobacco investment in India: An investigative research

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BACKGROUND: ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing assumes that financial performance of the organization is affected by environmental and social factors and thus have traditionally grouped the Tobacco business with environmentally harmful industries. Tobacco business are ethically and morally questionable with high litigation and regulatory risk. In 2017, the UNPRI decided that tobacco was fundamentally inconsistent with the UN Global Compact and launched the Tobacco Free Finance Pledge. Global examples of pension funds divesting from tobacco includes Australia, Dutch, Netherlands, UK and France. The aim of the study was to assess Tobacco industry investment by the Pension Funds under National Pension Scheme regulated by Ministry of finance, Govt. of India.

METHODS: The List of major Tobacco companies listed on NSE was obtained. Four companies viz. ITC Ltd., VST Ltd., Godfrey Phillips and Golden Tobacco were included and searched across all schemes. All ten Govt. Pension Funds were analyzed across 6 schemes and data (number of Units, amount and percent of portfolio invested) from portfolio reports for the month of Dec 2024 was assessed. Data was entered into digital spreadsheets.

RESULTS: 42 schemes (with investment in ITC Ltd.) across ten pension funds were included in the study. The pension funds invested in only one Tobacco business (ITC ltd). Overall % portfolio invested in ITC Ltd. Ranged from 3.40% to 0.19% across various schemes. Overall, 853.8 million USD was invested by Pension Funds under NPS. LIC Pension fund comprised 25.1% of the total investment in the tobacco business by pension funds followed by SBI (22.5%), UTI (22.1%) and HDFC (20.8%).

CONCLUSIONS: The results of the current study reports that there is significant investment of the Govt. Pension Funds into Tobacco. Therefore, the pension funds should more sensitized about global practices of ESG investments and thus avoid investing in business with negative environment, health and social costs.

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Study on practices and various aspects of bidi (form of smoking) rolling in state of Madhya Pradesh, India

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BACKGROUND: Bidi is a popular form of smoking tobacco in India. Manufactured by hand rolling tendu-leaves (Diospyros-Melanoxylon) with tobacco flakes by economically poor community with inadequate education, mostly women, widows and non skilled individuals. State produces 17% Bidi in the country. As per GATS-(2016-17), 9.1% adults consume Bidi in Madhya Pradesh. Bidi-rollers are forced to work in hazardous condition and exploited by the traders. This rapid study attempt to capture various aspects of Bidi-rollling, practices, health status and challenges working in unorganized sector.

METHODS: Study has been done in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh directly with the individuals and families involved in Bidi-rolling. FGD and interviews conducted using schedules. 50 Bidi-rollers families along with their members were extensively interviewed, providing sufficient time in year 2022-23. Primary and secondary data both collected and analyzed in Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS: A:98% Bidi-rollers want to leave rolling and looking for alternative livelihood.

B:70% do not have any other technical skills to adopt new livelihood.

C:88% complained health problems such as neck-back pain, body ache, stiffness in fingers, respiratory problems, burning sensation in eyes, etc.

D:Average monthly income ranged from Rs.1000-5000 only.

E:Most of them raised issue of poor remuneration by industry and their brokers

F:Only 30% went to middle school.

G:Wlling to take alternative livelihoods, if they get skill training and financial support to start new income generating activities.

CONCLUSIONS: Study indicates that working condition and remuneration needs to be looked seriously. They should be provided skills and financial support under various government schemes to have alternative livelihood. Should be enrolled under government health insurance scheme, be linked with community based self-help groups to learn group enterprise for enhancement of income and reduced dependency on hazardous work.

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Health, livelihood and governance issues around bidi rolling in India: A tale of two states

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BACKGROUND: Bidi smoking is the most common form of tobacco use in India, accounting for 85% of all smoking products. The bidi industry, with over EUR 450 million turnover, is considered a 'large non-EU company' under EU rules on corporate sustainability due diligence (Directive 2024/1760). This study focuses on West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, the two largest bidi producing states, to understand health impacts on bidi rollers, environmental impacts, and risks to women and under aged children.

METHODS: The study used a non-probabilistic purposive sampling method to identify three regions with high bidi roller density in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. 200 rollers from each state were interviewed between December-January 2023-24. Data was transcribed and translated into English, thematic analysis with iterative coding and descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using Ms Excel (2021) and SPSS v.27 (2020). Key themes identified include demographic, socio-economic scenario, occupational health issues, health issues of the family, exploitation, environmental awareness, handling of rejected bidis and socio-economic benefits as a bidi roller and benefits from the bidi company.

RESULTS: In both the states, disease and sickness in the family, accidents or burns were the major reasons of out-of-pocket expenses among the bidi rollers. Back pain was the most prevalent health issue linked to this occupation. Common grievances included low payment rates, fraudulent activities related to provident fund. Among the surveyed bidi rollers, high awareness of health impacts of tobacco was found as compared to the environmental impacts.

CONCLUSIONS: Prevalent health hazards, poor remuneration, and exploitative practices due to factors like poverty, family obligations, and societal norms. Ensuring livelihoods, registering all bidi rollers, and increasing taxation are crucial. This research adds to the dearth of evidence in an unorganised sector like bidi industry, to further transpose the EU-Directive into national law and communicate the relevant texts.

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Mapping tobacco industry influence in public policy in 10 Indian states: A historical analysis over 3 decades

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BACKGROUND: Globally, attempts at understanding the influence of businesses on public (health) policies is on the rise. Tobacco industry has been studied for its influence in shaping the tobacco epidemic and regulations. The WHO FCTC proposes measures to prevent tobacco industry interference (TII) in public health policies recognising a fundamental conflict between tobacco industry interests and that of public health policies/programs. India serves as the second largest consumer and among the top producers/exporters of tobacco in the world. While much of the prevailing research concerns trans-national corporations and focused globally and/or national level, we attempted to better understand TII at the sub-national level in India over the 1990-2017 period.

METHODS: We mapped TII incidents in 10 Indian states for the period 1990-2017 using information from media archives, internal industry documents and annual reports of tobacco companies. We scored each incident using a tool adopted from the SEATCA TII Index. The greater the score, the greater the extent of TII.

RESULTS: We found a total of 221 TII incidents leading to a total TII score of 875.2. Karnataka had the highest number of incidents (111) and TII score (436.8) while Nagaland had none. The highest number of incidents were related to governments providing benefits to tobacco industry (121) followed by the CSR by tobacco industry (64), forms of unnecessary interactions between governments and tobacco industry (26) and industry participation in policy development (10).

CONCLUSIONS: Our study, probably for the first time, charts out the nature of the extent of TII at sub-national level over a historical period. While TII varies significantly across states, there remains significant TII in some of the states undermining effective implementation of tobacco control measures. This implies the need for nation-wide policy to prevent TII in line with the WHO FCTC article 5.3 and the stringent enforcement of the existing policies.

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A qualitative study of tobacco initiation, use, reporting and cessation among women in China

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BACKGROUND: It is well known that almost half of Chinese men smoke, but few of women smoke in China. However, much more young girls smoke in public places than ten years ago, especially in big cities. This study aims to investigate Chinese females' motivation to smoke, characteristics of smoking behavior, reasons for quitting, and attitudes and perceptions of female smoking behavior.

METHODS: Semi-structured focus groups were used to explore both women and men's perception of women's tobacco use, and women's tobacco use behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and motivations for tobacco use and quitting in Beijing, Changsha and Shenzhen. In total, 288 participants were interviewed, which included 120 female smokers, 61 female nonsmokers, 66 female former smokers and 41 men. Nvivo software was used for data analysis.

RESULTS: Although some female non-smokers expressed negative sentiments towards female smoking, most participants believe more women are smoking nowadays,

and social acceptance of female smoking is higher than decades ago. Young women participants were more open to next generation's smoking compared to their mothers. Female smokers started smoking at different times in life and for different reasons. Female smokers tend to conceal their smoking behavior to their parents, strangers, and nonsmokers. Most female smokers have little interest in quitting. However, nearly all female smokers agreed that they would seriously consider quitting smoking when they prepare for, or have become pregnant.

CONCLUSIONS: Female smoking might be more acceptable in big cities nowadays in China, and the social and cultural constraints that previously prevented many women from smoking are weakening. Pregnancy might be a gold opportunity for female smoke to quit. Specific interventions should be tailored for each group to prevent them from smoking initiation. In addition, concealing smoking might bring a challenge for self-report tobacco survey for female.

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Through the lens of youth: A photovoice exploration of university students' smoking practices in Qatar

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BACKGROUND: Smoking among youth remains a challenge in Qatar, despite ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and implementation of anti-tobacco laws. Social norms, peer influence, and stress-related factors perpetuate smoking on university campuses, heightening health risks for this demographic. In collaboration with the Hamad Tobacco Control Center - WHO Collaborative Center, this photovoice study explored campus smoking practices through the lens of students, identifying persistent tobacco control challenges and importance of youth engagement in evidence-based policy.

METHODS: Participants included 22 undergraduate students, 18–24, at the University of Doha for Science and Technology, representing smokers and non-smokers from varied academic programs. Participants learned photovoice principles and ethics through preparatory workshops. Participants used university-provided devices to photograph smoking and second-hand smoke exposure experiences. Semi-structured interviews provided context to the images. Transcripts were thematically analysed, with a participant focus group verifying emerging themes. This participatory design ensured authenticity and depth of youth perspectives.

RESULTS: Results indicate that students recognize health risks yet continue to smoke. Students also show awareness of the environmental impacts of smoking, noting cigarette butts contribute to pollution and detract from the aesthetic appeal of the campus. However, academic stress, peer approval, cultural traditions, media portrayals, non-compliance with smoke-free polices, and social gathering normalize and encourage smoking. Students proposed a comprehensive approach to student tobacco reduction that included improved university-level enforcement, youth-centred cessation programs, mental health support, and peer-led campaigns.

CONCLUSIONS: Persistent societal, regulatory, and environmental factors sustain youth smoking in Qatar. This study highlights the critical role of peer-led future proofing initiatives in addressing the interception of factors contributing to persistent smoking. Ensuring interventions stay relevant by monitoring and addressing new tobacco products, leveraging technology for behaviour change, fostering sustainable policy enforcement, and building resilience against evolving societal influences can effectively reduce tobacco use among university students.

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The impact of smoking on oxidative stress in asthma patients

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BACKGROUND: Cigarette smoke, with its rich content of oxidants, exacerbates the oxidative stress in asthma, contributing to lung tissue damage and to worsening of symptoms. The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of smoking on oxidative stress in patients with asthma.

METHODS: Seventy-three patients were included in the study, comprising 50 with asthma and 23 without asthma (control group). Patients with asthma were divided into three subgroups based on smoking status: no-smokers, ex-smokers, and current smokers. Various biochemical parameters (including CRP - C-reactive protein, uric acid, glucose) and complete blood count (CBC) were evaluated, focusing on oxidative stress markers such as reduced glutathione (GSH), oxidized glutathione (GSSG), malondialdehyde (MDA), and the GSH/GSSG ratio.

RESULTS: Descriptive statistics revealed low serum uric acid values in smokers (5.29 mg/dL) and ex-smokers (4.75 mg/dL) compared to the no-smokers group (5.76 mg/dL). Reduced glutathione (GSH) concentrations in the blood showed low values for ex-smokers (232.90 μmol/L) and no-smokers (249.77 μmol/L). The GSH/GSSG ratio was lower in ex-smokers (3.94) and no-smokers (5.45) compared to smokers (7.79). Statistical analysis showed a significant difference ($p < 0.005$) based on white blood

cell count values. Malondialdehyde concentrations were measured at 2.30 mmol/L for no-smokers and at 2.45 mmol/L and 2.70 mmol/L for smokers and ex-smokers, respectively. Spearman correlations indicated significant associations between MDA and GSH (r=0.39, p<0.05), neutrophils and the GSH/GSSG ratio (r=0.40, p<0.05), and CRP and the GSH/GSSG ratio (r=0.35, p<0.05).

CONCLUSIONS: The decrease in GSH levels and the alteration of the GSH/GSSG ratio indicate a depletion of the antioxidant system and a disturbance of redox balance. The increase in MDA levels confirms the presence of oxidative damage. Exposure to cigarette smoke significantly contributes to increased oxidative stress in asthma, aggravating the disease.

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Flavoured cigarette uses and links to current, daily use and susceptibility among adolescent who have ever smoked

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BACKGROUND: Flavoured cigarettes lure young and new smokers while tempering harm perceptions. We investigated the prevalence of flavoured cigarette use and its associations with current use, daily use, and susceptibility to cigarette use among adolescent ever smokers.

METHODS: This was a territory-wide cross-sectional school-based survey among secondary school students in Hong Kong, conducted from April to November 2023. We assessed whether the first cigarette used among ever smokers was flavoured (yes/no). Ever, current (past 30-day) and daily cigarette use, and the susceptibility to use cigarettes (yes/no) in the next 12 months were self-reported. We only included adolescent ever smokers in this study. Proportions of current use, daily use and susceptibility to cigarette use among ever smokers were weighted by sex, age and grade distribution of the underlying population. In association analysis, Poisson regression models with robust standard errors were fitted among adolescent ever smokers.

RESULTS: This study included 1665 adolescent ever smokers with a mean age of 15.4±1.8 years, and 58.1% were boys. Half (50.2%) of them used flavoured cigarettes when they first smoked, 19.4% were current users, 7.6% were daily users, and 28.4% were susceptible to cigarette use in the next 12 months. Compared with those who used ordinary cigarettes first, those who used flavoured cigarettes first were more likely to be current users (32.3% versus 10.4%, adjusted prevalence ratio APR 2.53, P<0.001), daily users (13.1% versus 3.6%, APR 2.81, P<0.001), and susceptible to cigarette use (41.7% versus 20.3%, APR 1.82, P<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: Among Hong Kong adolescent ever smokers, around half of them used flavoured cigarettes at first smoking. Adolescents who first used flavoured cigarettes versus ordinary cigarettes were more likely to be current smokers, daily smokers and more susceptible to cigarette use in the next 12 months.

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Healthy claims as tobacco marketing message framing in Indonesia social media platforms

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco marketing strategies increasingly utilize digital platforms to promote their products. Among these strategies, health claims in message framing play a significant role in shaping public perceptions, particularly on social media. This study explores the prevalence and characteristics of health claims as part of tobacco marketing messages on Indonesian social media platforms.

METHODS: This analytical study utilized data from the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM), a digital monitoring system for tobacco marketing. Data were collected between January 2022 and August 2023, encompassing 21255 posts from Instagram, Facebook, news sites, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube. Quantitative analysis was conducted using frequency and percentage to assess message framing and marketing tactics.

RESULTS: A total of 219 posts containing health claims were identified. The majority (214 posts) were found on Instagram, followed by Facebook (4 posts). Among these, 198 posts were categorized as direct advertisements, 5 as price promotions, and 1 as community-based marketing. In terms of product types, 202 posts promoted e-cigarettes, 8 featured nicotine products, and 3 were related to heated tobacco products.

CONCLUSIONS: Health claims are a notable element of tobacco marketing on Indonesian social media platforms, with Instagram being the primary channel. Most messages emphasize e-cigarettes through direct advertisements. This highlights the need for stronger regulations and monitoring of health-related claims in digital tobacco marketing to protect public health.

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Engagement with mobile chat messaging for relapse prevention among people who recently quit smoking: A group-based trajectory modelling study

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BACKGROUND: Intervention engagement is crucial in improving health outcomes and is an important modifiable factor in optimizing effectiveness. This study examined the engagement patterns and associated characteristics among people recently quit smoking in a mobile relapse prevention messaging intervention.

METHODS: This was a secondary analysis of a randomized controlled trial (ClinicalTrial.gov: NCT05370352) conducted in two government-funded cessation services in Hong Kong. Participants were 295 service users (77.6% male, mean age 46.7) who had recently quit smoking for 3 to 30 days and randomised to the intervention group from Mar 2023 to August 2024. They received personalized chat messaging support by a live counsellor for preventing relapse via WhatsApp for 3 months. Intervention engagement was defined as responses (yes/no) to each of the 18 regular messages sent to the participants over the 3-month intervention period for initiating real-time chat support. Group-based trajectory modelling was used to identify the engagement patterns over time. One-way analysis of variance and Chi-square tests were used to compare the baseline characteristics across engagement patterns. Ordinal logistic regression was used to examine the baseline characteristics associated with engagement levels.

RESULTS: We identified 5 distinct engagement patterns: disengaging (92 [31.2%]) where participants showed no engagement throughout; sharp-declining (52 [17.6%]), with engagement only at the beginning; parabolic-declining (64 [21.7%]), where engagement started high but declined over time; fluctuating (57 [19.3%]), maintained moderate-to-high engagement with variations; and active (30 [10.2%]), engagement sustained high throughout. The active group included a higher proportion of participants aged 50 years or older. Participants in sharp-declining and active groups reported higher daily cigarette consumption. Perceived greater confidence in quitting was significantly associated with higher engagement levels.

CONCLUSIONS: Five engagement patterns were identified among people recently quit smoking in a mobile relapse prevention messaging, with perceived confidence in quitting significantly associated with higher engagement levels.

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Stop Tobacco Bangladesh sensitised and engaged youth and people at large to support government to impose ban on e-cigarette imports

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The definition of 'tobacco products' in the present tobacco control law does not include 'e-cigarette/electronic nicotine delivery system and related products', like bidi, regular cigarette, gul/tobacco powder and jarda (smashed tobacco). So, there is no direct ban or restrictions imposed on production, usage, marketing, promotion, import and disposal of e-cigarettes and related products.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Stop Tobacco Bangladesh (STB) sensitizes, educates and engages young generation, mass people and policy makers on importance to ban E-cigarettes through social/digital media platforms along with existing partners and grantees of Bloomberg Philanthropies. STB Facebook page shared total 16 posts in 2024 to support the government to ban e-cigarettes in Bangladesh and exposed the myth and propaganda created by the tobacco industry that it is safer and harmless.One Facebook post was viewed 4.1 million times, received 4 million impressions, reached 2.3 million users and one reel viewed 3 million times, reached 2 million users, and total watch time is 224 days. In total, STB posts on E-cigs were viewed 11 million times, received 10 million impressions, and directly reached 8 million users. These posts were also shared on other STB outlets (Instagram, X, LinkedIn and YouTube), and various tobacco control activists and organizations shared on their own pages/accounts. STB also organized formal live discussions that aired on different channels at a time. An example from Facebook.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Based on successful advocacy by the different groups and tremendous efforts by the Ministry of Health, the cabinet headed by chief adviser of the interim government of Bangladesh banned to import e-cigarettes and related products. Ministry of Commerce notified the official gazette.

CONCLUSIONS: Collective efforts of the tobacco control stakeholders supplemented by digital media like STB is instrumental to ban e-cigarette imports in Bangladesh. STB will continue to support the government to implement this ban along with stakeholders.

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Socioeconomic differential effect of tobacco control policies on smoking prevalence and quit ratios in the European Union (2009-2020)

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco control efforts have succeeded in reducing smoking prevalence and increasing smoking cessation rates in the European Union Member States (EU MS). However, the impact of these policies has been unequal across countries and different income groups. This study evaluates the differential association between tobacco control policy implementation levels and smoking prevalence and quit ratios in 27 EU MS over time (2009-2020) according to population's socioeconomic status (SES).

METHODS: Ecological study with the country as unit of analysis. We used the Tobacco Control Scale (TCS) in EU27 in 2010 and the smoking prevalence and quit ratios from the Eurobarometer surveys (2009, n=26582, and 2020, n=28288). We analysed the relationship between the TCS scores (2010) and smoking indicators and their relative changes (2009-2020) by means Spearman's rank correlation coefficients (rsp).

RESULTS: Large inequalities exist among SES groups in the EU27. High-income residents had lower smoking prevalence (19.0% vs 39.9%) and higher quit ratios (55.0% vs. 32.1%) compared to the most deprived group. Positive changes in smoking indicators from 2009 to 2020 were also higher among the high-income group. There was a strong inverse correlation between policy implementation levels and smoking prevalence in 2020 in high- and moderate-income groups (rsp=-0.615; rsp=-0.498; both p<0.01). A direct correlation was also observed between policy implementation levels and quit ratios in 2020 in high- and moderate-income (rsp=0.580, rsp=0.548, both p<0.01) groups. No significant correlations were found for the low-income group. Regarding relative changes (2009-2020), a strong inverse association was found in high- and low-income groups for smoking prevalence (rsp=-0.478; rsp=-0.450; both p<0.02).

CONCLUSIONS: Declines in smoking prevalence and increases in quit ratios associated with policy implementation levels were considerably lower among the most deprived groups. Tailoring tobacco control policies to make them fairer measures is key if EU27are to achieve their tobacco-free goal.

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Government initiatives against tax evasion in the Zarda industry: A context analysis of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: In Bangladesh, approximately 20 million people use Zarda. Despite its widespread use, the government doesn't focus on monitoring Zarda companies due to its low contribution to national revenue. This lack of oversight has enabled Zarda companies to increasingly evade taxes and violate legal regulations. This study examines and assesses the efficacy of government actions against Zarda companies involved in illegal operations and tax evasion.

METHODS: A thorough examination of secondary data gathered from 50 national and local newspapers, online platforms, and news outlets was performed from 2017 to 2023, concentrating on activities undertaken by different governmental agencies, such as the Customs, Excise, and VAT Commission, National Board of Revenue (NBR), the Bangladesh Police, and the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP).

RESULTS: The analysis unveiled multiple government efforts aimed at addressing Zarda tax evasion. The study identified 2 initiatives by Customs, Excise, and VAT Commission. One by NBR, 3 by DNCRP, and 3 by Bangladesh Police (Local Thana). Additional actions by the Dhaka South City Corporation and an Upazila Nirbahi Officer. Key findings include significant revenue evasion by prominent Zarda companies and the discovery of several duplicate Zarda factories. Notable cases involved Jahangir Chemical Works, A Qadir Eagle Tobacco, and Shahzada Salim Products, among others, with evasion amounts ranging from BDT 1.15 million to BDT 5.0 million.

CONCLUSIONS: While some of the government's initiatives are impactful, they are infrequent and suffer from inconsistent application, resulting in persistent revenue deficits. NBR's limited proactive involvement raises serious concerns, and enforcement of tax laws across the country is still insufficient. NBR needs to strengthen its proactive strategies against tax evasion in the Zarda industry. A collaborative strategy that includes more rigorous enforcement from the Customs, Excise, and VAT departments is crucial. Such actions will not only boost government revenue but also safeguard public health.

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Advocating for smokefree generation legislation in the UK

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In October 2023 the UK Government announced it would introduce a generational ban on the sale of tobacco. Action on Smoking and Health and Cancer Research UK (CRUK) are leading an advocacy campaign in collaboration with the members of the Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC). Challenges have included legislative progress in the face of industry lobbying, a change of government following a snap election and securing prioritisation from a new

incoming government. The tobacco industry has actively opposed the legislation, threatening legal challenge and seeking to weaken the provisions, often working via proxies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The campaign strategy combined outreach with politicians and media with mobilising professionals, organisations and CRUK supporters to champion legislation. Public opinion was tracked and shaped through the campaign. The strategy had to evolve as circumstances changed, particularly in view of a snap election called in May 2024 and the New Zealand repeal of similar legislation.

Collaboration with academics, NGO partners and politicians helped track industry activity and arguments allowing them to be exposed and countered. The policy development process was further protected by the UK Government's established approach to implementing Article 5.3.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign kept legislation high on the agenda through a period of political change, secured cross-party support, including in party manifestos and prevented legislation from being weakened as a result of industry influence. The engagement of the incoming government meant that returned legislation included additional measures to address smoking and youth vaping.

CONCLUSIONS: The UK experience of introducing a generational ban on the sale of tobacco has value for other countries building the case for domestic legislation. Relevant to other jurisdictions are; insights on the arguments that resonated with the public and politicians, the approach used to engage politicians, attempts by industry to weaken or delay legislation and utilising the opportunity to secure wider benefits.

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A comprehensive evaluation of an e-cigarette flavor ban on consumer behavior and purchasing

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BACKGROUND: The appeal of e-cigarettes is concerning as vaping is harmful to health. Flavored e-cigarettes are particularly appealing, especially to youth. To protect youth, the Dutch government implemented a ban on flavored e-cigarettes, limiting products to tobacco flavors and unflavored options only. This study assesses the impact of the flavor ban on e-cigarette use, aiming to inform policy makers about the effectiveness of such regulations.

METHODS: In September 2024, nine months following the ban's implementation, we conducted a retrospective cross-sectional survey. Participants included 548 adolescents and young adults (ages 13-24) and 457 adults (25+ years), all of whom used e-cigarettes at least monthly prior to the ban.

RESULTS: As a result of the ban, 39.5% ± 1.7% of respondents reported reduced vaping, and 22.4% ± 1.4% reported quitting. These outcomes did not differ between the two age groups ($p = 0.48$ and $p = 0.06$, respectively). The use of flavorless e-cigarettes among younger users increased (from 1.9% to 3.7%, $p = 0.01$), but there was no shift to tobacco flavors. The use of now-banned flavors declined from 91.4% ± 0.9% before the ban to 47.0% ± 1.6% after ($p < 0.01$). Among those continuing to use banned flavors, the majority (35.6% ± 2.2%) purchased them abroad. The use of related products (e.g., nicotine pouches/snus) remained stable pre to post-ban, while the use of other products (e.g., cigarettes) decreased, suggesting no major substitution of e-cigarettes with alternative products.

CONCLUSIONS: We conclude that the e-cigarette flavor ban effectively reduced e-cigarette use, potentially benefiting public health. To enhance policy effectiveness, we recommend international adoption of similar flavor bans or other strategies to restrict cross-border purchasing.

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Good practices and challenges in monitoring tobacco industry interference: The JAPreventNCD project

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: While the WHO FCTC has been ratified by most of the European Union Member States (EU MS) as well as by the EU, concrete tools to advance the implementation of Art. 5.3 are often lacking. Furthermore, the emergence of different novel nicotine products in recent years has also created new challenges in monitoring tobacco industry interference, for example with companies producing products with non-tobacco derived nicotine. JA Prevent Non-communicable diseases (JAPreventNCD) project aims to reduce the burden of cancer and non-communicable diseases in EU MS.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: As part of JAPreventNCD, a questionnaire was developed to examine existing practices to monitor tobacco and consumer nicotine industry interference, and practical examples of industry interference in five EU countries. Partners collected data from their own countries in July-September 2024, reflecting the past five years. Additionally, they assessed whether their countries would have the capacity to join an existing monitoring system (Global Tobacco Index, GTI).

RESULTS AND IMPACT: All five countries agreed that

collecting evidence about industry interference at national level would be beneficial. However, there was a clear lack of practices and registries to monitor tobacco industry interference, only one country having a designated organization responsible for regularly monitoring tobacco industry interference at national level. Nonetheless, most partners identified instances where tobacco/nicotine companies had recently tried to influence health or tobacco control policies in their country. Finally, three out of five countries indicated their interest to join the GTI in 2025.

CONCLUSIONS: Supporting countries in establishing or joining existing monitoring system on tobacco and related entities interference is essential in promoting the implementation of WHO FCTC Art. 5.3. Multi-sectoral and -national collaboration can help to build capacities to resist industry tactics and promote public health. Countries need tools to better address interference of nicotine industries, and interference outside health sector.

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Reasons to quit cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and smokeless nicotine products – a cross sectional study among Danish 15-29-year-olds

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BACKGROUND: As the use of e-cigarettes and smokeless nicotine products has increased among Danish youth, so has the proportion of youth wishing to quit or having already attempted to quit. To better adapt cessation services – traditionally focused on cigarettes – to youth wanting to quit newer nicotine products, such as e-cigarettes or nicotine pouches, it is essential to understand their reasons for quitting and whether reasons vary across different products.

METHODS: In a cross-sectional study using age- and gender-weighted questionnaire data, 2,228 youth aged 15-29 years were included. Differences in self-reported reasons across products used (cigarettes, smokeless nicotine products and e-cigarettes) were assessed using logistic regression. Interaction analysis was conducted to examine how quit success modified the association between product type and reasons to quit, also using logistic regression. Additionally, analyses stratified by quit success were performed.

RESULTS: 'Thoughts about health' and 'Don't want to be addicted' were the most common reasons to quit cigarettes, smokeless nicotine products and e-cigarettes, though prevalences varied across product types. Among youth who had attempted to quit cigarettes and smokeless nicotine products, 'Due to economics' was the third most common reason, while 'Switching to another product' was the third most common reason for those who had attempted to quit e-cigarettes. Quit success significantly modified the association between product type and reporting 'People I know privately' as a reason for quitting.

CONCLUSIONS: People working with youth in nicotine cessation should accommodate health and addiction concerns in their counseling but be aware of different reasons for quitting different products. Further studies are needed to explore the underlying intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural factors influencing these findings.

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Brand switching during South Africa's COVID-19 tobacco sales ban and its long-term effect on illicit trade

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BACKGROUND: In 2020, the South African government banned the sale of all tobacco products for 20 weeks, as part of its COVID-19 response. Before the ban, illicit trade was a problem, comprising 35%-40% of the cigarette market. By 2022, illicit trade comprised almost 60% of the market. I investigate the mechanism through which the ban exacerbated illicit trade, particularly by smokers switching from legal brands before the ban, to illegal brands after.

METHODS: I collected panel data from people who smoke, including questions on cigarette brands purchased. The surveys were conducted during and three years after the ban. Both brands that were typically legal and those that were typically illegal before the ban, were available on the black market during the ban. I use probit regression analysis to test whether smokers switched to illegal brands in the long term, after mass exposure to these during the ban.

RESULTS: Smokers who, pre-ban, bought legal brands were 17 percentage points more likely to buy illegal brands three years later, if they had bought historically-illegal brands during the ban (compared to smokers who bought historically-legal brands during the ban). The mass exposure to illegal brands during the ban shifted many 'legal' smokers into the illegal market, and many of these smokers stuck with illegal brands long after the ban. These smokers also significantly increased their smoking intensity after the ban (1.4 cigarettes more daily).

CONCLUSIONS: The sales ban entrenched illicit trade by exposing and desensitising legal-brand buying smokers to illegal brands. During the ban, many smokers of legal brands switched to historically-illegal brands out of necessity, and stuck with these brands in the long-term. Enforcement agencies were unable to stop black-market cigarette sales during the ban. When developing tobacco control policies, policymakers should consider enforcement capacity, to limit possible negative externalities, as was seen in South Africa.

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Innovative debate competition as strategic advocacy: A novel approach to youth tobacco control engagement

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Youth tobacco control faces significant challenges in China, with college students' daily smoking rates (4.7%) substantially higher than high school students (1.5%). Traditional advocacy approaches often lack youth engagement and sustainable impact. To address these challenges, Peking University pioneered China's first collegiate tobacco control debate competition as an innovative strategic advocacy intervention.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The intervention utilized a theory-driven approach combining Strategic Health Communication Model and Advocacy Mobilization Theory. The debate competition integrated evidence-based tobacco control knowledge with competitive debate format, engaging university students nationwide. Implementation included systematic topic design, expert consultation, multi-platform promotion, and live-streaming integration. The program employed comprehensive evaluation methods including pre-post surveys, social media analytics, and qualitative feedback assessment.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The initiative engaged 12 universities across China, generating substantial social media impact with over 5 million Weibo topic reads and 150,000 live stream viewers. Quantitative assessment showed significant improvement in participants' tobacco control knowledge ($p<0.05$) and advocacy capabilities. The competition catalyzed formation of university tobacco control advocacy networks and stimulated sustained youth engagement in tobacco control initiatives. Media coverage included 48 positive reports across major platforms, amplifying the advocacy impact.

CONCLUSIONS: This pioneering practice demonstrates the effectiveness of competitive debate as an innovative tobacco control advocacy strategy. The model offers a reproducible framework for engaging youth in tobacco control through intellectual discourse and peer influence. The experience provides valuable insights for modernizing youth tobacco control advocacy globally, particularly in leveraging competition formats for public health advocacy.

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Cigarette consumption and affordability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2005-2023

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BACKGROUND: The increase in cigarettes' affordability in the last years in Bosnia and Herzegovina has probably contributed to higher smoking rates, as economic growth and disposable income have outpaced tobacco tax increases. Regardless of the efforts made until 2019 to reduce consumption through increased tobacco excise taxes, cigarette prices remain low, particularly compared to the European Union. The post-COVID-19 economic shifts, including a significant rise in GDP and inflation with minimal cigarette price increases, further highlight the need for stronger tobacco control measures, addressing both price and income dynamics.

METHODS: This study applies quarterly macroeconomic data from 2010 to 2023 to examine cigarette consumption and affordability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Employing Time Series Analysis on macro data, the research assesses the impact of key affordability indicators on cigarette consumption across different income groups. The current analysis, with the estimates of price, income, and affordability elasticity, aims to evaluate the effectiveness of tax and price increases in curbing cigarette consumption.

RESULTS: The analysis of affordability trends reveals a downward trend up until 2020, followed by a reversal in direction thereafter. A ten percent increase in income leads to an increase in cigarette consumption by 5.87 percent, while a ten percent increase in price and relative income price decreases cigarette consumption by 8.85 and 9.67 percent, respectively. To reduce consumption by 10 percent, an increase in the specific excise tax by 37 to 44 percent is needed, which would raise tax revenue from the specific excise by 27 to 34 percent.

CONCLUSIONS: Since there was no increase in specific excise for five years, while in the same period CPI and GDP growth were high, substantial increase in excise taxes and changes in tobacco control policies is necessary for reduction in affordability and thus reduction of demand for cigarettes.

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Digital platform roles to ensure smokefree environment at various places to protect people from secondhand smoke

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Secondhand smoking (SHS) is a major public health concern in Bangladesh. Among adults, 49.7% in restaurants, 44% in public transport and 42.7% in workplaces were exposed to SHS while the law banned smoking in these places. These GATS data indicated gaps with information, education and practices on smokefree provisions of law. Several studies identified that teens are also exposed to SHS in these places.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Stop Tobacco Bangladesh (STB) social media platform (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) continue to share posts to aware people about the smokefree provisions of law that banned smoking in public places and transports, as well as obligation to display no smoking signages in those public

places. STB also focuses on health hazards of smoking along with SHS and encourage everyone to ensure a smoke-free environment. STB produce 48 images and reels with brief information and call of action to keep their premises smokefree. Several of these posts exposed the tobacco industry's illegal activities to promote smoking zones in restaurants.

STB also promoted 100% smokefree environment by removing designated smoking zones from public places and encouraging smokefree environment at home to protect non-smokers from exposure to tobacco smoke including infant, children and women.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: STB Facebook page received 28.5 million impressions, directly reached 18.3 million users, viewed by about 11.9 million times, and about 650k users interacted. These posts were also shared on other social media outlets, as well as by tobacco control activists on their own organizations and personal pages.

CONCLUSIONS: To protect non-smokers from exposure to SHS requires rigorous public support and effective enforcement of smokefree provisions of law. For both, social media campaigns would be effective to be aware about law, health hazards of SHS and the role to ensure smokefree environment at their premises.

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STB initiative succeeded to remove smoking scene from promotional materials of Toofan and Jongly films

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act 2005 banned all kinds of tobacco advertisement and promotions including smoking scene in the TV and film/cinema. Implementation of this section of law is being overlooked as authorized officers of TC law don't monitor these media (TV, Film and OTT). 'Toofan' released in 2024 and 'Jongli' to be released in 2025. Both films published promotional posters in June 2024 with cigarettes in attrractive look. Shakib Khan, a prominent hero in Toofan, and promising hero Siam in Jongly appeared with cigarettes in their lips, a clear violation of current law.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Stop Tobacco Bangladesh (STB), a well-known anti-tobacco digital platform among young people shared post on TC law violation in these two films and called for action against this violation. This post received 2.9 million impressions and reached 1.53 million users, and 123k users interacted on STB Facebook page alone. With the evidence of law and promotional posters of Toofan and Jongly, STB encouraged journalists to highlight this violation in mainstream media. About 50 news published/aired in the national daily newspapers, online news-portals, and TV channels in September 2024 including Deshi Blitz, Barnabee News, and Somoy TV. These media outlets shared this news in the print and online versions and aired TV and YouTube channels that received attention from policy makers as well.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Both Toofan and Jongly films removed their promotional posters in which the heroes appeared with smoking. Toofan reduced smoking scenes before it released on OTT. Jongly reduce smoking scenes from the film, demonstrated health warnings as per law during the smoking scenes and published new promotional posters without smoking scenes.

CONCLUSIONS: STB social media successfully addresses the TC law violation in two films. These examples would be useful to ensure law is being complied in future by other films.

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Restricting the sale of tobacco products exclusively in tobacconists: Analysing a regulatory model for Brazil

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BACKGROUND: This study highlights the importance of restricting the sale of tobacco products exclusively in tobacconists by analyzing current legislation, international experiences, and Brazilian scenarios. The objective is to strengthen the National Tobacco Control Policy, considering that low-income neighborhoods exhibit a higher density of tobacco retailers, leading to health inequities and increased exposure of children and adolescents.

METHODS: A scoping review was conducted following the Joanna Briggs Institute methodology based on the PRISMA Checklist. Data sources included BVS, MEDLINE, SCIELO, SCOPUS, and Web of Science. The study covered publications from 2005 to 2020, incorporating national and international studies on the density of tobacco retailers and their public health impacts. Data collection occurred in March 2021, with stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria applied.

RESULTS: The study found that areas with higher tobacco retailer density show greater smoking prevalence among youth, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. The review identified that restricting tobacco sales near schools and residential areas could reduce smoking initiation and promote health equity.

CONCLUSIONS: Regulating the sale of tobacco products exclusively in tobacconists in Brazil is an effective measure to reduce consumption and associated inequities. The study recommends implementing a new legal framework to regulate the location and operation of these establishments, significantly contributing to tobacco prevention and control.

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'Those bugs are so gross!' Chinese children's feedback on e-cigarette prevention videos

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BACKGROUND: While video-based prevention campaigns show promise in addressing the rising e-cigarette use among youth, little is known about what makes such videos effective from children's perspectives, particularly in China's cultural context. This study uniquely explores how children interpret and respond to e-cigarette prevention videos to inform evidence-based communication strategies.
METHODS: Using purposive sampling, we conducted four gender-stratified focus groups with 35 primary school students (aged 12-13) in Beijing and Yunnan. Participants watched four stimulus videos with different messaging approaches and discussed their perceptions of effective and ineffective features. Focus group discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis with NVivo software.
RESULTS: Children identified several key features that enhanced prevention effectiveness: real-life testimonials, explicit health consequences, chemical constituent information, and emotional appeals (particularly fear). Visual elements like dynamic animations and medical expert appearances strengthened message credibility. Ineffective features included overly complex explanations, perceived inauthenticity, and news-style reporting. Notably, while some participants reported discomfort with fear-based appeals, they demonstrated high recall of these message elements.
CONCLUSIONS: This study provides novel insights into developing culturally appropriate e-cigarette prevention videos for Chinese children. Findings suggest that effective videos should combine authentic testimonials with clear health risk information, appropriate fear appeals, and engaging visual elements while avoiding overly complex or news-style presentations. These insights can guide the development of more effective youth-focused e-cigarette prevention campaigns in China.
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Public attitudes towards tobacco endgame policies in Georgia

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BACKGROUND: Georgia has made significant strides in tobacco control by implementing comprehensive bans on Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) and adopting strict smoke-free policies. However, tobacco use remains prevalent, with approximately 27% of adults using tobacco products. To address this, Georgia has introduced the 'Tobacco-Free Georgia' initiative, aiming to reduce tobacco/nicotine product use to less than 5% by 2040. This study assesses public attitudes toward tobacco endgame policies and identifies support for potential regulatory measures.
METHODS: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 1,300 adults aged 18 and older across all regions of Georgia (excluding occupied territories) using face-to-face interviews in 2024. A stratified cluster sampling method ensured national representativeness by gender, age, education, ethnicity, income, and settlement type. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate statistical methods.
RESULTS: While 90% of respondents were not aware of the 'Tobacco-Free Georgia' initiative, when the initiative was explained, 75% of respondents expressed approval. Support was stronger among women (81%) than men (68%) and older adults (18-44 years) [82%] than younger adults (45+ years) [69%]. For individual policies, 80% supported raising the minimum legal purchasing age for tobacco/nicotine products to 21; 74% favored a gradual ban on sales to individuals born in 2010 or later; 75% supported reducing nicotine content by 95% in tobacco/nicotine products; and 73% approved banning flavorings and additives that make tobacco products seem less harmful.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings demonstrate broad public support for bold tobacco endgame policies in Georgia, particularly measures targeting product accessibility, nicotine reduction, and industry accountability.
Implications for Tobacco Control and recommendations:
• Immediate adoption of policies to raise the legal purchasing age, ban flavorings and reduce nicotine content by 95% in tobacco/nicotine products.
• Launch widespread public education campaigns to raise awareness of the 'Tobacco-Free Georgia' goal.
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Changes in kretek use between 2011 and 2021 among Indonesian adults aged ≥15 years

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BACKGROUND: In 2018, Indonesia had the highest tobacco smoking prevalence (33.4% among adults) in the world, with kretek (clove cigarettes) being the most popular tobacco products. This study examines changes in kretek use among Indonesian adults (≥15 years) between 2011 and 2021 by selected sociodemographic and tobacco control factors.
METHODS: Data from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey

(GATS) Indonesia in 2011 (n=8,305, response rate=95.4%) and 2021 (n=9,156, response rate=94%) were analyzed. GATS uses nationally representative, multistage cluster sampling. Multivariable logistic regression calculated adjusted prevalence ratios (aPR) for kretek use changes over time controlling for sociodemographic characteristics, knowledge of smoking harm, exposure to secondhand smoke, pro- and anti-tobacco messages.

RESULTS: Overall, crude prevalence of kretek use was 31.5% (95% CI, 29.8%–33.3%) in 2011 and 28.6% (95% CI, 27.1%–30.1%) in 2021. Adjusted prevalence decreased relatively by 8% (aPR, 0.92; 95% CI, 0.86–0.98), from 31.3% (95% CI, 29.9%–32.8%) in 2011 to 28.8% (95% CI, 27.5%–30.1%) in 2021. Notably, adjusted prevalence among men decreased by 8% (aPR, 0.92; 95% CI, 0.85-0.99), from 53.9% (95% CI, 51.1%–56.8%) in 2011 to 49.6% (95% CI, 46.9%–52.3%) in 2021, while adjusted prevalence among women remained consistently low, at 3.4% (95% CI, 2.4%–4.5%) in 2011 and 2.3% (95% CI, 1.5%–3.0%) in 2021. Significant reductions were observed among adults aged 45–64, rural residents, individuals without schooling or tertiary education, adults with a low or middle wealth index, individuals' aware of the harms from smoking, those exposed to secondhand smoke or anti-tobacco messages, and adults without exposure to tobacco advertising.

CONCLUSIONS: While progress has been made in reducing kretek use, prevalence remains high, particularly among men. Comprehensive tobacco control policies, including stricter advertising regulations and expanded anti-tobacco campaigns, can help to address this issue.

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When neighbours smoke: How multiunit housing residents experience tobacco smoke intrusion

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) is the mixture of more than 6000 chemicals found in smoke exhaled by a smoker and emitted from the smoldering cigarette. Health consequences of SHS exposure are well established, and widespread exposure to SHS among nonsmokers in low-income, minority populations has been well-documented. Little is known, however, about how nonsmokers in multiunit housing experience and evaluate secondhand smoke intrusion into their homes. This study explored multiunit housing resident's experience of tobacco smoke intrusion.

METHODS: Between February 2019-September 2022, 116 San Diego County adults completed a structured interview administered by a trained research assistant. Interview questions included smoking history, household and apartment complex smoking rules, characteristics of and response to tobacco smoke intrusion, and knowledge and attitudes about exposure. Statistical analysis was conducted using STATA.

RESULTS: All 116 participants were current non-smokers who lived in affordable multiunit housing, were on average 58 years old, primarily female (86%), Hispanic/Latinx (75%), and unemployed (29%) or retired (44%). Participants who reported current intrusion of tobacco smoke (n=51) were more educated, more likely to report previous smoking, and better informed about the smoking restrictions in their apartment complex than participants who did not (n=65). They described tobacco smoke intrusion as extremely stressful, of long duration (i.e., >1 year), frequently occurring (i.e., ⩾ 1 time per week), and predictable. Almost half reported that intrusion was accompanied by physical symptoms. Nearly all (94%) stated they could identify the source, and 61% had reported the problem to property management. Research assistants confirmed stale tobacco odor in 20% of apartments with intrusion.

CONCLUSIONS: These results suggest tobacco smoke intrusion is a persistent problem in affordable multiunit housing, frequently accompanied by physical symptoms, and remains unresolved despite reports to property management. Existing policies restricting smoking in multiunit housing are insufficient and fail to protect vulnerable residents.

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Efforts to secure e-cigarette product placements in popular media: A content analysis of tobacco industry documents

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies have sought to place cigarettes in popular media for decades because it increased their social acceptability. Research regarding e-cigarette product placements in media has primarily focused on appearances in music videos. We explored the product placement activities of e-cigarette company Ploom and its successors, Pax Labs and Juul Labs, to examine their motivations for product placements, activities to obtain inclusion in media productions, and resulting appearances.

METHODS: We conducted a case study using internal company documents housed at the UCSF Truth Tobacco Industry Documents Library that were released in litigation. Relevant documents were cataloged in Excel, summarized, and placed in chronological order to create a timeline of strategic thinking, efforts, and outcomes.

RESULTS: We found that Ploom sought product placements to expand its audience and enhance credibility. Ploom, which later split into Pax Labs and Juul Labs, pursued free product placements by establishing relationships with prop masters in the entertainment industry and loaning out devices to media productions using a placement agency. Pax devices secured placements in music videos, film, and television, while Juul appeared to secure minimal

placements by comparison.
CONCLUSIONS: Ploom and its successor companies secured placements in music videos, films, and television. The companies obtained most placements for free. Tactics the e-cigarette companies used to secure placements reflected past efforts by the tobacco industry. Pax devices may have had greater success in obtaining placements compared to Juul because of its association with cannabis. Given that the promotion of tobacco products in popular media increases demand and is known to lead to youth initiation, stronger regulation of e-cigarette product placement practices may be warranted.
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Experiences of tobacconists, police, and public health officers regarding the illicit tobacco trade in Australia: Lessons for the tobacco endgame

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BACKGROUND: Between 2016 and 2021 the estimated value of illicit tobacco products seized in Australia increased from $135 million to $2.09 billion. The estimated size of the illicit tobacco market also tripled to about 15% of the overall Australian market. Criminal gangs have also begun firebombing tobacconists in a turf war for the illicit tobacco marketplace. The Australian illicit tobacco market therefore now presents an urgent and escalating public health and public safety concern.
METHODS: In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 12 owners and staff of tobacco retailers regarding the licit and illicit trade of tobacco and vape products. Supplementary interviews were also conducted with police and public health officials working on controlling the illicit trade. Transcripts were analysed using deductive and inductive coding, with overarching 'themes' identified and reported.
RESULTS: Tobacconists reported that the last three years have been tumultuous for tobacco retailing due to the emergence of 'pop-up' shops selling illicit tobacco and vaping products outside of established franchises, impacting their revenue and leading many to close. The proliferation of these outlets supported by criminal organisations has created an environment where tobacconists are more incentivised to sell illicit products.
CONCLUSIONS: The Australian tobacco market has been impacted by an expansion of the illicit tobacco and vape markets facilitated by organised crime groups. While regulatory reforms (e.g., retail licensing and establishment of a federal commissioner) are being enacted to control this growing illicit market, the situation highlights the lack of preparedness of current tobacco retailers for business disruption. Government planning for a commercial tobacco endgame must consider ways to control the illicit market and how to help retailers transition out of retailing tobacco.
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Digital campaign strategies to strengthen the regulation on online tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco companies increasingly use digital media to target youth especially when tobacco marketing regulations are weak. Despite restrictions on direct advertising, tobacco companies continue to employ various strategies to promote their products online, including leveraging social media influencers and subtle placements across digital platforms. In this context, social media plays a vital role in efforts to strengthen the regulation of online tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS).
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Between December 2021 and December 2024, Vital Strategies and partners had mobilized online citizens to advocate for a comprehensive regulation on TAPS online. Digital activations supported by thousands of social media users had used the following methods: creation of collaborative content with multiple accounts; use of unifying hashtags, such as #OnlineTanpaRokok ('Online Without Cigarettes') and #FreeNetFromTobacco to enhance visibility and engagement; use of data from the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) and the YouTube Priority Flagger program which served as a foundational resource; and the development of a microsite to facilitate citizen reporting of TAPS violations on social media.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The digital campaigns complemented other efforts done in the media, public hearings, and one-on-ones. #SuaraTanpaRokok and #FreeNetFromTobacco accounts led the way which published over 51 posts, including Instagram Reels and Stories, and collectively garnered over 12,000 engagements. Additionally, 11 accounts actively participated in advocacy efforts that led to the passing of Government Regulation No. 28/2024, which the President signed in July 2024. This regulation explicitly prohibits TAPS on social media. Two 'video reactions' to a Netflix series 'Cigarette Girl', which violated YouTube's Community Guidelines, were viewed organically by more than 73,000 people.
CONCLUSIONS: While the policy change was achieved, a digital campaign to support the enforcement effort remains crucial. The tool for TAPS reporting will be put to a test with the support of the Ministry of Health in 2025.
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Global media competition: A transformative platform empowering youth to reclaim digital spaces and expose big tobacco's deception

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry (TI) persistently exploits digital platforms to mislead youth, normalize tobacco use, and greenwash its environmental and health harms. Countering these tactics requires innovative approaches that empower youth to reclaim digital spaces. Traditional youth-led campaigns rarely address TI's escalating environmental damage or provide a global platform for creative expression.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2020, the Global Media Competition (GMC), organized by the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) with Bloomberg Philanthropies' support, fills these gaps. It empowers youth to deepen their understanding and advocate against TI tactics. It provides a platform for diverse voices—students, medics, and influencers—from 43+ countries, with significant participation from Indonesia, the Philippines, India, China, and Vietnam. Its inclusivity draws entries from low- and middle-income countries, mobilizing youth where advocacy resources are scarce. GGTC provides research materials to support informed advocacy. Annual themes inspire creative formats like videos, images, and infographics, widely shared on social media to engage advocates and public. GGTC further shares participants' works with local advocates for policy use, amplifying their impact.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: GMC has engaged over 1,400 participants, with Facebook impressions increasing from 7.28K in 2020 to 22.7K in 2024. Popular finalists like 'Exposing the Tobacco Industry in the Philippines' achieved significant engagement, averaging a 5K reach per entry. A public and expert voting system enhances transparency and builds awareness. Local advocates are encouraged to utilize winning submissions in policy advocacy, grassroots campaigns, and education.

CONCLUSIONS: GMC turns digital spaces into platforms for truth and advocacy, engaging youth in tobacco control. With minimal marketing, GMC relies on its advocate network, and sustained efforts are needed to integrate participants' work into country-level advocacy. WHO's collaboration in 2024 boosted visibility, but systematic in-country outreach could enhance its impact, establishing GMC as a sustainable source of advocacy materials for the tobacco control movement.

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Transforming tobacco control in The Gambia: Overcoming challenges through policy advocacy and enforcement

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use in The Gambia remains a pressing public health challenge, contributing to 3.3% of annual deaths and imposing an economic burden of 415.8 million dalasis. Despite the enactment of the Tobacco Control Act (2016) and Regulations (2019), enforcement gaps, limited public awareness, and interference from influential stakeholders hinder progress. Key challenges include non-compliance in tourist development areas and resistance to bans on shisha and electronic cigarettes, underscoring the need for innovative, sustainable approaches to policy implementation and enforcement.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A collaborative, evidence-based advocacy strategy was launched to address these barriers. Stakeholders - including ministers, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, and international donors such as the African Capacity Building Foundation - worked together to strengthen enforcement mechanisms and mobilize community support. Quarterly operations targeted non-compliant regions, seizing contraband tobacco products and promoting compliance. The establishment of a Tobacco Industry Monitoring Team in 2020 marked a critical step in exposing industry tactics and guiding policy responses. Comprehensive measures, such as 75% graphic health warnings on packaging and bans on advertising, sponsorship, and single-stick sales, were implemented to protect vulnerable populations.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Advocacy efforts led to measurable declines in youth smoking prevalence and enhanced public awareness. Tax reforms generated substantial revenue ($6.3 million in 2020) for sustainable tobacco control programs. However, enforcement operations revealed ongoing gaps in public compliance and resistance from key stakeholders. Lessons learned informed the development of targeted, community-centered campaigns involving religious leaders, youth, and media, amplifying impact across diverse demographics.

CONCLUSIONS: The Gambia's experience highlights the transformative potential of coordinated, multisectoral advocacy and enforcement in overcoming systemic barriers to tobacco control. By prioritizing sustainable funding, strengthening enforcement, and fostering global partnerships, governments can build resilient, scalable models for advancing public health and achieving a tobacco-free future.

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Youth-led advocacy transforming tobacco control in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Indonesia, home to seven of the world's largest cigarette companies, has become a stronghold for the tobacco industry. Despite Indonesia's absence from the FCTC, young Indonesians have risen to expose the industry's predatory tactics and resist becoming its targets. What began in 2015 with 20 young advocates has grown into a nationwide movement of over 10 million youth fighting for change.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: This journey showcases the resilience and advocacy of Indonesia's youth in countering the tobacco and nicotine industry's aggressive strategies. Lentera Anak empowered young people to voice their rights, starting with small efforts like documenting cigarette ads near schools. This led to mobilizing 90 schools and 2,000 students in five cities to remove tobacco ads, successfully removing 150 cigarette advertising banners, and followed in various cities in Indonesia[1]. The movement also exposed egregious tactics, such as making seven-year-old children wear cigarette brand logos during national badminton auditions[2]. Despite the backlash, these efforts drove significant changes, including issuing Government Regulation No. 59 in 2019[3], strengthening child protection, and ending Djarum's sponsorship of the All Indonesia Badminton Association in 2021.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The movement expanded inclusively, addressing issues beyond health—such as economic disparity, environmental degradation, gender equality, and disability rights. Campaigns like #PilihBicara, #TolakJadiTarget, #SatuPuntungSejutaMasalah, and #MuralParade along with programs like the Youth Pioneer, mobilized youth nationwide. In 2021, the movement formalized with a youth council representing 43 organizations across 20 cities.

CONCLUSIONS: Advocacy efforts also amplified children's voices through 202 forums across cities/provinces and nationwide contributing to a decline in child smoking prevalence from 9.1% to 7.4% (2023)[4]. Regulatory victories include raising the smoking age to 21+, banning cigarette ads near schools, regulating e-cigarettes, prohibiting flavored ingredients, and banning point-of-sale ads[5]. These milestones underscore the transformative power of youth leadership in tobacco control.

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E-cigarette use among youth in Rajasthan: Awareness, accessibility, and pattern of usage

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarettes have been banned in India since 2019, however it has been pitched as an alternative to traditional smoking, particularly among youth, by the tobacco industry, promoting them as products with reduced harm and social acceptance. Despite the ban, research highlights, significant disparities in awareness, accessibility, and usage of e-cigarettes among youth. Understanding these patterns is crucial for developing targeted public health interventions and enforcement of the law in Rajasthan.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 386 youth aged 15-24 in Rajasthan, India, using a stratified random sampling method during July 2024. The sample included 100 urban and 286 rural participants. Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire covering demographics, e-cigarette awareness, accessibility, and usage patterns. The questionnaire was pre-tested for reliability and validity before administration.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to compare urban-rural differences, identify key behavioural patterns and influencing factors. Chi-square tests and t-tests were used to assess statistical significance.

RESULTS: The study highlighted disparities in e-cigarette awareness, accessibility, and usage between urban and rural youth. Urban youth showed higher awareness (48% vs. 15%) and accessibility (58% vs. 26%) compared to rural counterparts. Social media was the primary information source for urban youth (73%), while rural youth relied on family and friends (81%). Usage rates were slightly higher in urban areas (46% vs. 40%), driven by peer pressure and flavor variety. The average age of first use was 18.35 years for urban youth and 17.28 years for rural youth.

CONCLUSIONS: The study reveals rising e-cigarette use among Rajasthan's youth, with urban youth showing greater awareness and access. Peer pressure and social media play significant roles in usage patterns. Targeted public health interventions, stricter implementation of the ban, and awareness campaigns are essential to curb e-cigarette use and mitigate associated health risks among young individuals.

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Gender and its intersection with tobacco usage and control

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco production and consumption are known to be harmful. In India, we see stark sex-based differences in tobacco consumption, disease burden and access to healthcare. Despite that, there is no substantive efforts within research and policy/programs to better understand and address the role of gender in tobacco epidemic. We aimed to use gender, as a social construct, to better understand tobacco epidemic and situate gender

within the role of tobacco industry and State policy/programs related to tobacco.
METHODS: We conducted a narrative review of published literature to scope what is known about gender and tobacco link globally and in India. We analysed imagery of tobacco products and tobacco advertising to understand the role of gender in product development and promotion. We analysed tobacco-related policies/programs to understand whether and how gender has been considered in tobacco control interventions in India.
RESULTS: We find limited research exploring gender and tobacco link, with much of the work from Europe and the USA. Tobacco industry has considered gender in market segmentation studies and deployed campaigns targeting specific genders. Such campaigns enhanced tobacco consumption among targeted groups while reiterating conventional, and often harmful, gender stereotypes. At macro level, the neoliberal economic order worsened gender inequities by limiting women employment and their underrepresentation in decision making. We find some similarities in how gender was used by tobacco industry in India and 'western' contexts (e.g., industry targeting men by associating tobacco use with hegemonic masculinity, women and children in precarious employment) but also important differences (e.g., rarely portraying women smoking and women liberation/emancipation themes in India; optimizing on stereotype of a happy heterosexual married couples for advertising filtered cigarettes in India)
CONCLUSIONS: We are yet to fully understand how gender operates and industry employs it. Tobacco control policies/programs remain largely gender blind and ought to consider gender in their design/deployment.
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Global legislative activism (Sue) for regulating e-cigarettes

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco Industries new tactics, e-cigarettes, marketed as safer alternatives to traditional tobacco products, have raised global health concerns due to their addictive nature and misleading marketing practices. Currently, 29 countries have banned e-cigarettes, while 78 have enacted regulations to control their use. This study examines global judicial actions and legislative frameworks to regulate e-cigarettes, highlighting key challenges, strategies, and outcomes. The primary objective is to explore how legal mechanisms address the public health risks posed by these products.
METHODS: This study analyzes judicial decisions, legislative policies, and enforcement practices in various countries. Cases were identified through official government records, court rulings, and public health reports. The qualitative analysis focuses on penalties, bans, and regulations implemented to curb e-cigarette marketing and usage.
RESULTS: Key findings reveal significant disparities in regulatory approaches. Countries like Australia, the U.S., and Italy imposed substantial penalties on companies for deceptive advertising and non-compliance, for example, Juul Labs was fined $462 million in the U.S. for misleading youth-focused advertisements, and Philip Morris faced multiple fines in Lithuania for illegal promotions. In India, the Karnataka High Court upheld a state circular banning e-cigarettes and imposed a penalty of 1 lakh Rupee on the Council for Harm Reduced Alternatives for challenging the ban. In Panama and Uganda, courts upheld strict e-cigarette bans, emphasizing public health over industry interests. Despite these actions, enforcement gaps persist, allowing loopholes in many jurisdictions.
CONCLUSIONS: Judicial activism plays a crucial role in regulating e-cigarettes, setting critical precedents for safeguarding public health. A unified global approach is essential to counter youth addiction and deceptive marketing strategies. For countries like Bangladesh, the absence of regulatory measures poses a pressing need for immediate legislative action to prevent widespread addiction and health damage. Lessons from global judicial activism can guide comprehensive policy development to effectively regulate e-cigarettes and protect public health.
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Assessing tobacco control law implementation status in public places and public transportation in eight divisional cities of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use remains a major public health challenge in Bangladesh, the ranked in 5th globally and the 3rd in the WHO South-East Asia Region in terms of number of tobacco users. Government enacts tobacco control law, to restrict smoking in public places and transport for aiming to protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke and promote smoke-free environments, enforcement remains inconsistent. This study evaluates the implementation status of smoking ban provision in the public place and public transport in eight divisional cities.
METHODS: A mixed approach has been used to conduct the study. The study period was from May 2023 to April 2024 at TC law specified 114 public places and 46 public transports in eight divisional cities (Out of Eight) of Bangladesh. Structured observational checklists were designed based on tobacco control law.
RESULTS: Total 114 public places and 46 public-transports were identified, where smoking was observed

in 57% of public-places and 44% of public-transports. Among the public transport smoking occurred in 100% of water transport, and their terminals, 39% of trains, 100% of buses during the rest time, and 88% of bus terminals or waiting areas. Only 42% of public-places and 37% of public-transports displayed no-smoking signs, among these 80% of public-places and 76% of public-transports displayed poor visible signage in multiple locations. Additionally, 75% of public places and 91% of transports used their own signage, not government-prescribed.

CONCLUSIONS: The study reveals several non-compliances with tobacco control laws in public places and transport across Bangladesh. Despite some partial compliance, enforcement remains weak. To improve compliance, government should develop targeted monitoring and reporting system, enhance the capacity of existing law enforcers, empower more officials to enforce law, involve NGOs to enhance monitoring, enhance penalties, and raise public awareness.

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The potential of tobacco taxation for Slovak fiscal consolidation

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BACKGROUND: Despite considerable increases to cigarette excise duty in recent past, the Slovak Government has last year opted to raise taxes on cigarettes again, this time as a part of overall fiscal consolidation. Such step opens a question whether further tax increases can still produce sufficient public budget revenue. The study investigates this question, while providing additional attention to the structure of cigarette demand by income.

METHODS: Utilizing the Household Budget Survey microdata for 2020-2022, a two-part model (2PM) and quadratic almost ideal demand system (QUAIDS) were estimated for three income groups. Resulting own-price and total expenditure elasticities were subsequently employed in stochastic simulations of cigarette demand in Slovakia to illustrate public budget revenues from cigarette taxation with increasing excise duty rates.

RESULTS: The simulations indicate that highest tobacco taxation revenues could have been gained in 2022 at specific duty raises of 30% (2PM) and 86 % (QUAIDS), respectively. This would imply average increase in price per pack in range of 0.76-2.14 EUR. Differences in the smokers' expected reactions (across income groups) are stemming from elasticity estimates, which are mainly driven by price sensitivity of medium income group households. From the perspective of budget revenues, the potential increase in tobacco taxation can generate additional income ranging between 5-20%.

CONCLUSIONS: In terms of international comparison, the estimated expenditure elasticities are relatively high for all income groups of households. Regarding the price elasticity estimates, its size is relatively high for both utilized approaches only in case of the medium income households. Results suggest that contribution of tobacco taxation to fiscal consolidation of public budget should be utilized more boldly compared to the past decade in which maximal raise in specific duty reached 16.4%.

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Effectiveness of an individual-tailored smoking cessation intervention app among people who smoke in China by randomised controlled trial

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use has posed a tremendous public health problem for China. In order to provide smokers more convenient cessation services, an individual-tailored smartphone smoking cessation application-'Help You Quit' was developed based on Behavior Change Wheel (BCW) and Stage of Change Model. This study aims to assess the efficacy of the app through a randomized controlled trial (RCT).

METHODS: Current smokers who are motivated to quit within 1 month were recruited online and assigned to the intervention group (receiving the app and a self-help smoking cessation manual) and control group (receiving a self-help smoking cessation manual only) randomly. A two-arm, single-blind, parallel-group RCT was used in this study. Participants were followed up after enrollment through online questionnaires or by phone call. The primary outcome is self-reported 6-month continuous abstinence. Additionally, a 7-day point-in-time cessation rate was evaluated. Person was used to analyze the difference between the intervention group and control group for the 6-month continuous abstinence, and a multi-logistic regression was used to explore the factors associated with it. Intent-to-treat analysis was used in this study.

RESULTS: A total of 1236 smokers attended this study, of which 618 were in the intervention group and 618 were in the control group. The 6-month follow-up rate was 88.2%. Using intent-to-treat analysis, 101 smokers in the intervention group (16.34%) kept quitting for six months, while 76(12.30%) in the control group ($P<0.05$). The 7-day point-in-time cessation rate of the intervention group was 27.83%, which was also higher than that in the control group (19.74%) ($P<0.001$). The frequency of app use was positively related to 6-month sustained smoking cessation (RR=9.041, 95%CI: 4.963-16.470).

CONCLUSIONS: 'Help You Quit' could help smokers quit smoking. It could be a supplement to the current approach of smoking cessation services.

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The Brazilian experience in implementing sustainable economic alternatives to tobacco farming

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BACKGROUND: Brazil is the third-largest tobacco producer in the world, involving more than 130,000 farming families. After ratifying the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2005, the country established the National Program for Diversification in Tobacco-Growing Areas (PNDACT). This program aimed to provide sustainable economic alternatives to tobacco-growing families through the integration of public policies and, primarily, technical assistance and rural extension. This study analyzes the results achieved and the challenges faced by PNDACT.

METHODS: The methodology included a document analysis of reports, databases, and other public materials related to the program, as well as participant observation in events and thematic meetings.

RESULTS: Between 2006 and 2020, PNDACT benefited approximately 11,000 families, encouraging the transition to diversified and sustainable production systems. Notable progress was observed in crop diversification, food security, and the social organization of the supported communities. Specific initiatives, such as the recovery of heritage seeds, the implementation of agroforestry systems, and the inclusion of family farmers in institutional markets, exemplify the program's positive impacts. Integration with the National School Feeding Program and the Food Acquisition Program was particularly significant. However, political changes starting in 2016 led to the discontinuation of PNDACT, resulting in budget cuts that culminated in the complete halt of activities in 2021.

CONCLUSIONS: The program demonstrated its potential as a public policy to promote economic diversification in areas dependent on tobacco cultivation, although challenges related to continuity and funding remain. The Brazilian government's indication of restarting the program in 2024/2025 presents an opportunity for revitalization. However, the challenge of effective integration with food security and family farming policies persists. The Brazilian experience highlights the importance of articulated and sustainable policies for economic transition, aligned with the goals of the WHO FCTC.

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Tobacco industry interference with point-of-sale bans in Armenia

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BACKGROUND: Despite Armenia's comprehensive tobacco advertising and promotion ban at points of sale (POS), compliance remains suboptimal. POS advertising remains a critical point of consumer influence, especially in low- and middle-income countries like Armenia, where enforcement resources are limited. This study investigates how the tobacco industry (TI) undermines these policies, particularly near educational facilities, employing innovative tactics.

METHODS: Structured observations were conducted in 2024 at 132 POSs. Locations included supermarkets, mini markets, kiosks, vape shops, and tobacco specialty stores across the capital city Yerevan and Kotayk region. POSs near educational facilities were purposefully sampled. Data were collected using an observation checklist addressing product availability, placement, advertisement, and promotions.

RESULTS: Among POSs, 84.1% sold conventional cigarettes, 50.0% e-cigarettes, and 47.0% heated tobacco products (HTPs). Power walls displaying these products were observed in 94.6% of POSs for cigarettes, 68.2% for e-cigarettes, and 93.5% for HTPs. Power walls were open even in the absence of costumers for cigarettes in 45.0% of POSs, for e-cigarettes in 28.8%, and for HTPs in 25.8%. Additionally, open displays were available for cigarettes 9.9%, for e-cigarettes 40.9%, and for HTPs 9.7%. Illuminated advertisements were present in 78.4% of POSs for cigarettes, 28.8% for e-cigarettes, and 71.0% for HTPs. Products were strategically placed within 30 cm of candy and snacks in 43.2% of POSs for cigarettes, 27.3% for e-cigarettes, and 30.6% for HTPs. Instances of promotions such as discounts, gifts, brand representatives, and loyalty programs were also observed despite legal restrictions. In 65.9% of POS the sign banning sales to underage were missing.

CONCLUSIONS: The TI employs covert tactics to bypass POS bans, targeting youth through strategic product placement, advertisement and promotion, especially for alternative tobacco products. Strengthening enforcement, increasing penalties for violations, and raising public awareness are essential to counter these tactics and protect public health.

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Lessons from an advocacy campaign for the operationalisation of the tobacco control fund in Kenya

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Kenya Tobacco Control Act (2007) established a Tobacco Control Fund (TCF) whose sources of funds include a solatium compensatory contribution by the industry. This provision is further elaborated in the Tobacco Control Regulations (2014), setting out the uses of the Fund, which aim to ensure sustainable domestic funding for tobacco control programmes in the country, such as cessation, public awareness and research. However, the operationalisation of the Fund was marred with challenges including the lack of a clear policy and legislative framework and industry inference through litigation. To address these issues, the International

Institute for Legislative Affairs implemented an advocacy campaign for the operationalisation of the Fund.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: An evidence-based advocacy campaign was designed in response to the issues. This included a comparative analysis of tobacco control and health funds in other countries as well as legislative analysis of other funds in Kenya to draw lessons, best practices and an understanding of the national funds' management pathways to provide recommendations for operationalising the Fund, which included the need to develop stand-alone and comprehensive regulations for the Fund. The report was presented to the Tobacco Control Board and advocacy materials including a policy brief, information sheets and social media messages developed from it and used to engage policymakers and parliamentarians.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The advocacy created an urgency and prioritisation of the agenda, leading to the drafting of the TCF Regulations 2020 for operationalising the Fund. The analysis report and advocacy materials were an effective strategy that provided evidence for the advocacy. The TCF has recently been set up and is being implemented.

CONCLUSIONS: Evidence-based advocacy is effective as demonstrated in this case, where it contributed to a sustainable funding mechanism for tobacco control programmes in Kenya. Also, Civil Society Organisations are key actors in driving policy change and sustainability in public health interventions<s></s>.

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Examining cigarette, heated tobacco, and e-cigarette market pricing and tax pass-through in Ukraine during the 2019-2022 tax reforms

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BACKGROUND: This study offers a comprehensive examination of the pricing strategies/dynamics used by the tobacco industry in response to tax increases using Ukraine as a case study during the 2019-2022 tax reforms. This period saw the introduction of new tax categories for Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) and e-cigarettes with concomitant tax increases, thus the study represents the first systematic consideration of these products. The primary objectives are to examine how tax changes influence product pricing and how HTPs are priced relative to cigarettes, particularly in the context of harmonised tax rates.

METHODS: The study utilises NielsenIQ monthly price and sales data for cigarettes, HTPs and e-cigs, and official tax information from the Parliament of Ukraine. Tax pass-through analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between tax increases and changes in retail prices across different products.

RESULTS: The industry usually overshifted taxes on cigarettes (mid-price and premium), HTPs, and e-cigs while undershifting taxes on economy cigarettes and HTPs at the point of big tax increase, showcasing its nuanced approach to price segmentation. The industry also employed price-smoothing strategy where initial price increases following tax increases were kept moderate, with further increases introduced gradually throughout the year. HTPs were priced between mid-price and premium cigarettes after the 2021 tax reforms, reflecting strategic efforts to sustain profitability despite increased taxes. E-cigarettes exhibited the most variability in pricing, with significant declines in net revenue, highlighting the evolving nature of this market segment.

CONCLUSIONS: These insights fill critical gaps in understanding how the industry navigates tax harmonisation across novel products and traditional cigarettes. The industry has used tax increases on HTPs and e-cigs as an opportunity to raise prices and increase revenue per stick. It underscores the potential for higher taxes on HTPs and e-cigarettes to curb consumption, increase government revenues, and align with international public health goals.

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How legal battle of Kerala Voluntary Health Services advanced tobacco control in the state of Kerala

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: KVHS is a non-Government Organization working in Tobacco control since early nineties. KVHS always seek the support of Judiciary to support government to overcome its hurdles by Tobacco Company Interference. Not only judicial support, filing of Right to Information is another measure to support officials to move ahead. The judicial and RTI efforts of KVHS help the state to advance in tobacco control. The analysis on its judicial and RTI activities found that both the activities help to advanced tobacco control in the state by upscale enforcement and institutionalized systems.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: KVHS filed its first Public Interest Litigation in 2010 and Judgement came in 2012. Thereafter in 2012 KVHS implied seven cases in which tobacco companies filed cases against State government regarding the ban of Smoke Less Tobacco. In 2022 KVHS filed a PIL against a cultural event organised in sponsorship with Tobacco Company. The event was stopped. Thereafter in 2024 Noncompliance of High Court Judgement to constitute School Protection Committees in the State. High Court issued notice to Government of Kerala. Finally again in 2024 another PIL filed against on compliance of film rules. In this case also Hon. H C issued notice. Apart from this KVHS give legal aid and support to MoH &FW in the cases registered by the enforcement Officials of the department. Three state level RTI application filed by KVHS also influenced the enforcement department.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Total Fine Collection before and

after the date of issue of notice to government shows that the amount has a marginal increase after filing the case in compared to previous months. This shows that KVHS' judicial interventions and RTI Submission made the enforcement departments more vigil and upscale the enforcement.

CONCLUSIONS: So Judicial intervention and filing of RTI are help to advancing tobacco control in the State of Kerala.

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Exploring tobacco company interference to establish designated smoking area at restaurants in major cities of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: In the current tobacco control law in Bangladesh smoking in designated smoking areas (DSA) are prohibited in single-room restaurants. In multi-room restaurants, owners are permitted to designate DSA in an open space. The law also bans tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS). Evidence indicates that partial smoking bans are ineffective in protecting individuals from secondhand smoke. This study aims to identify the motivations behind the establishment of DSAs in restaurants and to investigate which tobacco companies are providing advertising materials and incentives to restaurant owners.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted in January 2023, data was collected from 102 restaurants in Dhaka, Chittagong, and Cox's bazar cities using snowball sampling. Restaurants were eligible for inclusion if they had more than one dining area and tobacco advertising materials displayed. Data was gathered using a pretested observational checklist and a semi-structured questionnaire for interviews with restaurant authorities.

RESULTS: All (100%) surveyed restaurants displayed British American Tobacco (BAT) Company's advertising materials and signs/logos. Over three-fourths (77.5%) of the DSA area featured BAT advertising materials. Nearly all (99.02%) of the DSA areas contained BAT-branded lighters and/or ashtrays. BAT cigarettes were available for purchase in 89.22% of the restaurants. Cent percent of the surveyed restaurants received a one-time cash benefits averaging 806,667.00 Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) from BAT to establish DSA and maintain the DSA area and display BAT advertisement materials. All surveyed restaurants had written agreements with BAT to display of these advertising materials.

CONCLUSIONS: The study revealed that BAT blatantly incentivizes restaurant owners to promote smoking activity at their venues by alluring restaurants owners to establish DSA and displaying advertising materials. This behavior undermines public health efforts. This study recommends strengthening the tobacco control law and ensuring 100% smoke-free environment at hospitality sectors to protect women, children and non-smokers from tobacco menace.

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A case study of Thailand's preparation for joining the protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products

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BACKGROUND: In 2019, Thai Custom officials confiscated cigarettes worth over US$ 300,000. A year later, over US$ 16 million worth of cigarette was confiscated, from a cargo ship en route to Singapore from Vietnam.

At present, electronic cigarettes, which is illegal in Thailand, are easily available through online shipment and distribution, and onsite venders at night markets in Thailand's major cities. Both illegal cigarettes and e-cigs are a major problem for the Thai government. The prevalence of Thai underage youths' using electronic nicotine delivery system, or electronic cigarettes, is increasing every year.

METHODS: This is a qualitative research, by interviewing relevant government agencies' officials.

RESULTS: The study found that in practice, the Excise Department, Ministry of Finance, has made great efforts to improve the form of permits, monitoring system, development of a stamp system according to Article 15 of the FCTC. However, there are several conditions which limit the enforcement such as, how much in the Protocol can it implement, the details of equipment to be reported by tobacco farmers, origin tracking number of tobacco farmers' production, devices to be registered, information related to production plants, raw materials, equipment, etc. All these are considered heavy burden by the Excise Department. Even though a working group consisted of representatives from various government agencies, such as the Custom Department, the Excise Department, etc. has been established to prepare for the Thai government to join the Protocol, but the Excise Department seems to be reluctant.

CONCLUSIONS: In ASEAN region, none has yet participated in the Protocol. This is used as an excused by the Excise Department. As a result of this study, collaborative implementation of tobacco control law on illegal cigarettes and e-cigs, both domestically and internationally, are necessary, but the Excise Department officials are not ready to join.

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Tax disparities between e-cigarette types: Lessons from the Israeli market

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The WHO recommends taxation of e-cigarettes[1], without distinguishing between disposable e-cigarettes, closed-system refillable e-cigarettes (pods), and open-system refillable e-cigarettes (e-liquid). Governments and the

e-cigarette industry on the other hand often treat each type separately. In 2021, Israel's Ministry of Finance introduced its first e-cigarettes tax ordinance, creating disparities in tax rates among these types. Over the subsequent three years, eight tax amendments were enacted, all maintaining an unequal tax structure that favored e-liquid. For example, the fourth amendment (15 June 2022) imposed a €39 tax on two disposable e-cigarettes (10ml equivalent), while the same volume of e-liquid was taxed at only €26.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The differentiated tax structure aligned with the industry's strategy of marketing e-cigarette types as distinct types. Distributors capitalized on these tax disparities, expecting consumers to switch easily between types. In early 2022, importers delayed the release of disposable e-cigarettes at ports to avoid the new tax, shifting instead to importing e-liquids. Due to the resulting shortage of disposables, retailers encouraged consumers to transition to open system refillable e-cigarettes, promoting them as premium alternatives.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: E-cigarette users demonstrated high mobility between e-cigarette types, desiring to vape regardless of the device type. Following the 2022 tax implementation, most age groups under 24 showed decreased use of disposable e-cigarettes but significantly increased adoption of refillables. Most notably, among 12-14-year-olds, refillable e-cigarette use surged from 0.4% in 2022 to 6.0% in 2023. Similarly, usage among 20-21-year-olds increased from 9.1% to 14.9%.

CONCLUSIONS: A uniform tax on all e-cigarettes sends a clear message that harm knows no difference between e-cigarette types. It also shuts down industry tactics to shift consumers between e-cigarette types for profit, putting public health first.

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Enhancing the National Tobacco Control Policy in Brazil: Lessons from a pilot project in selected states

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since the 1980s, Brazil has implemented the National Tobacco Control Policy (PNCT) with notable success in reducing smoking prevalence. However, challenges such as emerging products, the sustainability of actions, and policy integration across states and municipalities persist. This project, conducted between 2020 and 2022 with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, aimed to strengthen the PNCT in five Brazilian states (Tocantins, Paraíba, Goiás, Paraná, and Rio de Janeiro), representing diverse regional contexts.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Activities included technical visits, the formation of state technical groups, and virtual workshops on topics such as funding sources and legislative partnerships. Questionnaires and SWOT-based inventories were applied to identify local challenges and opportunities. Regular meetings with state and municipal managers were held, and best practices were shared at national and international events.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The project strengthened collaboration between states and national coordination, generating detailed diagnostics and sustainable action proposals. Outcomes included professional training, strengthened state tobacco control networks, and strategic alignment to promote stronger legislation. The model proved viable for national expansion and helped integrate tobacco control into local health agendas.

CONCLUSIONS: The project highlighted the importance of intersectoral partnerships and participatory methodologies to ensure the sustainability of the PNCT in Brazil. Expanding actions to other states is recommended, focusing on resource mobilization and strengthening regional networks to sustain and amplify the achieved progress.

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Tobacco industry interference during the 2022 FIFA World Cup: Analyzing online marketing strategies and the need for regulatory action

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BACKGROUND: The Fédération Internationale de Football Association's (FIFA) has committed to tobacco-control measures including a ban on advertisements, promotions, and sponsorships (TAPS) during its events. The Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) documented how the tobacco industry (TI) successfully used the 2022 FIFA World Cup (WC) to promote its products in Indonesia, India and Mexico social media platforms. This is a public health concern because tobacco marketing in sports causes youth experimentation and endears tobacco brands to them.

METHODS: TERM is a digital media monitoring and reporting system that offers rapid, qualitative insights into online tobacco marketing gathered by an artificial intelligence-driven monitoring tool. The content analysis of publicly available posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube were conducted by trained analysts using a theory-driven codebook.

RESULTS: A total of 350 WC related posts from September to December 2022 were analysed. More than 50 accounts are operated or associated with brand-extension products, third-party retailers, and community marketing accounts on football, music, etc. which promoted live WC viewing parties sponsored by Gudang Garam. Djarum Super Soccer community-marketing account had the highest number of

posts and promoted limited edition WC cigarette packs. The e-cigarette GeekVape, promoted products designed with the flags of participating country teams, conducted price promotions and product giveaways to its followers.

CONCLUSIONS: TI interference through indirect marketing strategies such as releasing limited edition tobacco packs, e-cigarette designs and promoting tobacco-sponsored live viewing parties through social media platforms are rampant. It is illegal for the TI to sponsor sports events, however, it is still happening through non-tobacco related accounts. The next FIFA WC is scheduled from June 14 - July 13 2026, youths around the world will be watching. Countries, especially Indonesia where WC is followed closely, must act quickly to ban online TAPS to protect youths from the harms of online TAPS.

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Flue-cured tobacco: an unnecessary hazard to human health and the environment

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BACKGROUND: After harvest, tobacco leaves are dried (cured). Virginia, one of the three major types of leaf used in cigarettes, is typically cured in barns with heated pipes (flues). The production of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) is particularly hazardous to human health and the environment. Little academic literature has evaluated FCV or the current options in play for reducing its harmfulness.

METHODS: We used a case study approach, focusing on Zimbabwe which is the third largest producer of FCV globally. The two data sources for this study were (a) fieldwork in Zimbabwe comprising interviews (n=10) and focus group discussions (n=2) with smallholder farmers, and key informant interviews (n=11) with other stakeholders, and (b) tobacco industry material comprising two tobacco company Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) reports and relevant articles of Tobacco Journal International 2018-2024, an industry journal. Data collection focused on a) impact of flue-curing b) solutions to the issues it poses. Additional subthemes were identified inductively.

RESULTS: Apart from 'Big Tobacco', most other players recognised the impact of FCV on deforestation in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, tobacco farmers stated they would struggle to replace the benefits from flue cured tobacco, since at present there are no equally lucrative alternative crops. Smallholder farmers hoped that the government and industry would innovate (although it was unclear how) whereas other stakeholders were pressurising the farmers themselves to reduce deforestation. Buyer-instigated fuel efficiency measures were patchy. Provision of tree seedlings to farmers so they could reforest had been largely unsuccessful, while alternative curing fuels were largely inappropriate or in early development in the Zimbabwean context.

CONCLUSIONS: Governments should consider banning flue cured tobacco as an ingredient in cigarettes to protect health and the environment. At the same time tobacco farmers need to be supported to transition to a more sustainable livelihood.

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Mobile based monitoring compliance of tobacco free educational institutions (TOFEI) guidelines in Jammu and Kashmir India

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BACKGROUND: Article 16 of WHO FCTC recommends complete ban on access and exposure of tobacco products to minor It is usually observed that tobacco products are being sold around educational institutions. Whereas Section 6b of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 ban use of tobacco products to and by minors and ban sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of any educational Institutions. The current study access the compliance with the tobacco free educational institutions (TOFEI) guidelines in Govt schools of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

METHODS: A mobile based TOFEI compliance monitoring system was used to collect the data and was analysed using SPSS 2.0 software. After Implementation of all provisions of TOFEI guidelines, if the institution scored more than 90 points, after verification of submitted self-declaration, it was declared 'TOFEI compliant'.

RESULTS: Total no of Govt Schools in Jammu and Kashmir is 18723, (source- Department of school education).

A total of 5,426 schools used the TOFEI monitoring application for self-evaluation wherein 771 schools were non-compliant to TOFEI and remaining 4,655 were found compliant to TOFEI guidelines.

About 94% of schools were found compliant to Section-4 of COTPA.

92% of schools were found compliant to Section- 6b of COTPA.

Overall, 84% schools were found TOFEI compliant and 16% were non-compliant to TOFEI in the state.

CONCLUSIONS: A Web-based monitoring system is a feasible option to monitor and upscale the implementation of TOFEI guidelines and transforming educational institutions into tobacco free zones.

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When public health crosses borders: Tobacco use and smuggling in Ponta Porã, Brazil

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Ponta Porã, in the Brazilian, shares a dry border with Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay. This geographic setup facilitates the smuggling of tobacco products, sold at low prices and unregulated, exacerbating the public health impact of tobacco use in Brazil. The Brazilian Unified Health System is heavily burdened, as Basic Health Units serve both Brazilians and Paraguayans without financial compensation. Additionally, violence and threats associated with smuggling hinder local management efforts. The border, with no visible physical barriers, reinforces the circulation of illegal products and undermines tobacco control efforts.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: As part of the 'Sustainability through Strengthening and Coordination of Tobacco Control Initiatives at State and Municipal Levels' project, funded by the Bloomberg Initiative, a technical visit to the municipality was conducted. The intervention included interviews with health, education, and sanitary surveillance managers to map challenges and understand the impact of smuggling. Visits to retail outlets in Paraguay revealed widespread availability of tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and hookahs, in violation of Brazilian regulation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The visit revealed high accessibility to smuggled products, particularly among youth, driven by low prices and aggressive marketing. An increase in the use of electronic smoking devices was identified as a gateway to tobacco use. Nevertheless, the project strengthened intersectoral collaboration, fostered dialogue among local and state managers, and highlighted the need for robust public policies for enforcement and control. The mobilization contributed to progress in raising awareness about the impact of smuggling on tobacco consumption and public health.

CONCLUSIONS: The experience in Ponta Porã underscores the importance of intersectoral strategies to combat tobacco use in border regions. Integrating health, education, and security is essential to address the challenges of smuggling and protect public health. Expanding these actions to other Brazilian border regions is recommended, ensuring greater enforcement and the implementation of tobacco control policies.

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Contributions of tobacco smoking and chewing to chronic disease morbidity among a nationally-representative sample of 4.6 million adults in India

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BACKGROUND: Long-term smoking, including in India, shortens life by at least 10 years. However, the relationship between tobacco use and major causes of adult morbidity remains largely uncharted in many countries.

METHODS: We examined 4.6 million adults aged 20 to 69 interviewed in 2014 by the Registrar General of India's nationally-representative study. The survey covered 8858 urban blocks or villages selected randomly from the 2011 Census. We calculated sex-specific age-standardized rates of current smoking or chewing tobacco and performed multivariate adjusted log-binomial regression to estimate their prevalence ratios (PR) with morbidities self-reported in the last year. The five morbidities examined were cardiovascular and respiratory disease, cancer, tuberculosis and arthritis. We documented residual confounding covariates (locality, education, hypertension, diabetes and health insurance coverage) by quantifying changes in log PR in stepwise analyses.

RESULTS: 13% of adult men smoked, while only 1% of women did. Chewing was more prevalent (men: 20%, women: 7%). After adjusting for covariates, smoking was significantly associated with morbidity in men: cardiovascular (PR 2.03, 99%CI 1.91-2.14), respiratory (PR 1.90, 1.76-2.05), tuberculosis (PR 1.78, 1.56-2.03), cancer (PR 1.56, 1.33-1.84), and arthritis (PR 1.41, 1.29-1.55). In women, chewing tobacco was significantly linked to tuberculosis (PR 1.54, 1.29-1.84) and arthritis (PR 1.53, 1.42-1.65). These associations were minimally attenuated by potential confounders. Chewing tobacco was modestly associated with arthritis in men (PR 1.33, 1.21-1.45). By contrast, in both sexes the linkages of chewing to other morbidities were largely explained by covariates.

CONCLUSIONS: Smoking is a leading cause of morbidity in Indian men, contributing to a range of health issues. In women, chewing tobacco is linked to tuberculosis and arthritis. As some morbidities may lead to tobacco cessation, the true strength of these associations could be even greater that observed. Prospective documentation of the large hazards of tobacco use on death and morbidity is urgently needed.

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Lessons from Quebec's experience banning characterising flavours in vaping products

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Faced with increased lifestyle and online promotion for vaping products, the Canadian province of Quebec introduced restrictions on retail and promotion in 2015. Unfortunately, the Canadian government's legalization of nicotine vaping products with few restrictions on sale and promotion, led to a surge in youth vaping across the country, including in Quebec.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Between 2020 and 2023, two territories and four provinces banned the sale of vaping products with characterizing flavours other than tobacco. In addition to limiting characterizing flavours to tobacco, Quebec's October 2023 regulation limits the sale of any device pre-filled with more than 2ml of nicotine

liquid, refills with more than 30 ml, and devices in the form of a toy, piece of jewelry, food, animal or real or fictional person, or any other form, appearance or function that might be attractive to minors.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The vaping industry and specialized retailers responded by circumventing restrictions in a number of ways: by mislabelling flavoured products as tobacco, by diversifying their shops to sell flavours enhancers that can easily be combined with flavourless e-liquids, and by promoting and delivering uncompliant products to Quebec consumers via online retail websites located in other provinces. While polling indicates that youth have found the appeal of vaping products reduced, flavoured vaping products remain easily accessible to Quebec consumers through the generally delinquent Canadian retail sector.

CONCLUSIONS: With other jurisdictions and countries experiencing or anticipating similar challenges following the implementation of flavour bans, the Quebec experience provides various lessons for advocates and policymakers. For example, it highlights the merits of country-wide bans on online sale (as opposed to subnational ones), the simultaneous introduction of standardize packaging, a licencing regime with relevant criteria, and additional controls to limit the dual sale of e-liquids and separate e-liquid flavouring.

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New Dutch Smoking Cessation Clinical Guideline does not recommend e-cigarettes as a method for smoking cessation

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BACKGROUND: About 10% of Dutch people who undertake a serious attempt to quit smoking use the e-cigarette as a smoking cessation aid. However, using an e-cigarette leads to damage to the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Many former smokers also continue to use the e-cigarette permanently. The revision (2024) of the Dutch Guideline on Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction, based on scientific evidence and expert opinion, has formulated a recommendation for all Dutch healthcare professionals on whether or not to recommend the e-cigarette as smoking cessation support.

METHODS: Various databases were systematically searched for guidelines, systematic reviews and RCTs. The scientific evidence found was assessed using the GRADE methodology for guideline development. In addition, a working group of 20 healthcare professionals and patient representatives took into account other considerations based on their practical experiences. This process and the resulting recommendations were reviewed and approved by 25 professional and other organisations.

RESULTS: The quality of the evidence was 'moderate' to 'very low'. In its assessment, the working group attached great importance to the fact that patients remain exposed to harmful substances by inhaling the vapour of the e-liquid. Moreover, switching to the e-cigarette temporarily or permanently maintains both nicotine addiction (physical) and smoking behaviour (psychological). It can also lead to a relapse to tobacco products. The final recommendation is that e-cigarettes are not recommended as smoking cessation support, unless a smoker has already made several unsuccessful quit attempts and expresses a clear desire to use the e-cigarette in the next attempt.

CONCLUSIONS: Abroad, e-cigarettes are regulated in various ways. In the Netherlands, the health care system is reluctant to use e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation aid for health and ethical reasons. Also, the Dutch healthcare has (yet) insufficient experience in adequately integrating the e-cigarette into (behavioural) smoking cessation programmes, so other ways of smoking cessation are preferred.

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Illicit tobacco trade in Bolivia: A cross-sectional survey of consumption patterns

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BACKGROUND: Bolivia is a developing country with widespread illicit trade across most consumer goods. Additionally, Bolivia shares borders with Paraguay—a country frequently involved in the illicit trade of cigarettes in Latin America. The objective of this study was to analyse cigarette consumption patterns and estimate, for the first time, the penetration rate of illicit trade in four Bolivian cities through a smoker survey. Consumption patterns included smoking intensity, brand, price, packaging, purchase location, flavoured cigarette use, and electronic cigarette consumption.

METHODS: A stratified smoker survey by sex and city used high-traffic data and household surveys for sampling. Self-reported smoking behaviours, socioeconomic data, and type of purchase were collected. Participants identified whether their last purchase involved loose cigarettes or a full pack. Cigarette pack photographs were also taken when available. The sample included 2,366 smokers (18+ years, all income levels) from La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz, representing 75% of urban smokers (2021). The margin of error was 5%, with a 95% confidence level. Illicit cigarettes were identified based on brand, health warnings, and price.

RESULTS: Illicit trade accounted for 37% of cigarette consumption in the four cities, with nearly all illicit products originating from Paraguay. Significant variations in the penetration of illicit trade were observed between Santa Cruz (54%) and the other cities, where rates ranged from 10% in La Paz and El Alto to 14% in Cochabamba. Additionally, the survey revealed a high penetration of flavoured cigarettes in the Bolivian market, exceeding

60% of the market share.
CONCLUSIONS: City-specific differences in illicit trade cannot be attributed solely to uniform factors like taxation. Proximity to Paraguay, law enforcement, and cultural patterns likely play a role. The pervasive presence of flavoured cigarettes—among the highest in Latin America—calls for immediate regulatory action to curb their expansion.
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Using discarded packs collection to estimate illicit cigarrette trade in Colombia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco taxes in Colombia have remained essentially unchanged since 2017. However, relevant changes in the political context, such as deteriorating security conditions at the Venezuelan border, may influence the penetration of illicit trade. Using a littered-pack methodology applied for the first time in Colombia, this study estimates illicit trade in the five cities with the largest smoker populations (Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, and Cúcuta).
METHODS: A weighted probabilistic sample survey with two-stage selection was employed. Using data from the 2019 National Survey of Psychoactive Substances and the 2018 National Household and Population Census, a logistic regression model estimated the smoking probabilities in each city. Census tracts were grouped into clusters based on smoker densities, and random starting points within the cluster were selected. Structured analyses identified attributes of cigarette packs, such as brands and countries of origin for licit and illicit cigarettes.
RESULTS: Illicit trade accounted for 16.9% of cigarette consumption in the five cities. Penetration varied significantly, ranging from 6.6% in Bogotá (the capital) to 73.7% in Cúcuta (a border city near Venezuela). Over half (53.7%) of the illicit packs lacked origin information. However, the dominance of the leading illicit brand, Rumba, suggests that many of these cigarettes originate from the USA. Results reveal that prior industry reports overestimated illicit trade by nearly 20 percentage points.
CONCLUSIONS: The increase in illicit trade penetration reflects a complex interplay of factors, including border vulnerabilities, humanitarian crises in neighbouring countries, and socio-political disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest. Contrary to industry claims, the difference between cities reflects that common factors, such as taxation, cannot explain the increase in illicit trade penetration. These findings underscore the need for regular, independent analyses to counteract regular industry reports that regularly overestimate illicit trade.
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Exploring the marketing strategies of Zarda: An observational study in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Zarda is the most commonly used oral smokeless tobacco product in Bangladesh, with 14.5% prevalence among adults aged 15 years and older. Various marketing strategies have been employed to promote its sales. Despite regulations on packaging and promotion, these strategies continue to pose challenges to tobacco control efforts and reduce SLT consumption. This study aimed to explore Zarda marketing strategies, including displaying methods at Points of Sale (POS)/shops, product packaging size and characteristics, and non-compliance with tobacco control laws at Zarda POS/shops in Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Sylhet, based on their high SLT consumption and production rates
METHODS: An observational study was conducted from January to June 2024 using two structured checklists: one focusing on Zarda packet characteristics and another for compliance monitoring of Tobacco Control Guidelines for Local Government Institutions. Data were collected from 120 Zarda samples based on packaging types, branding practices, regulatory compliance, and promotional activities in 50 Zarda shops/POS.
RESULTS: The study revealed diverse branding strategies, with identical brand names used across different companies. 69.2% of Zarda brands were associated with chemical industries or other industries. Zarda is predominantly packaged in tin containers (61.7%), followed by poly packets at 36.7%. A majority of shops/POS (70%) used direct promotional displays for Zarda. However, 78.3% of Zarda packets had packaging appeals, with 'Best Taste' being the most common; 83.3% showed manufacture and expiration dates. Though the use of GHW was 87.5%, only 39.2% adhered to the 50% GHW requirement. Smaller-sized packets under 25 gm dominate the market with 72%, which is affordable for all.
CONCLUSIONS: Zarda marketing strategies often bypass tobacco control laws and guidelines. Strengthening law enforcement, including standardized packaging, and registering all Zarda companies under government authority is essential. Enhanced oversight at the retail level will help mitigate marketing influence and support tobacco control initiatives, ensuring better compliance with regulations.
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The role of race/ethnicity in the association between private or medicare health insurance coverage and smoking prevalence

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BACKGROUND: Health insurance coverage is associated with reduced smoking prevalence in the U.S. However, the extent to which this association differs by race/ethnicity is unknown. The goals of this study were to estimate smoking prevalence among U.S. adults (18+ years old) by private or Medicare insurance and investigate racial/ethnic differences by coverage type.

METHODS: We merged data (n=38,081, N= 204,606,674) from the Tobacco Use Supplement (January and May 2019) and the 2019 Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey. We assessed associations between each insurance type (private, Medicare) and smoking prevalence within non-Hispanic (NH) White, NH Black/African American (BAA), NH American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Hispanic adults using Rao-Scott chi–square tests. We used a logistic regression model (for the odds of smoking) with two interactions: between private coverage and race/ethnicity (NH White, BAA and Hispanic), and between Medicare coverage and race/ethnicity. The model controlled for sociodemographic factors, disability status, Medicaid coverage and several other factors.

RESULTS: Both private and Medicare coverage (compared to no such coverage) were associated with lower smoking prevalence within each racial/ethnic group. However, only a few results were statistically significant: private coverage was associated with significantly lower prevalence among NH White (8.8% vs. 19.6%, p<0.001) and BAA (9.3% vs. 19.6%, p<0.001) adults, and Medicare coverage was associated with significantly lower prevalence among NH White adults (9.6% versus 12.3%, p=0.002). In the model, the interaction between private coverage and race/ethnicity was significant (p=0.044): private coverage was significantly associated with lower prevalence among NH White adults only (AOR=0.59, 98.3%CI=0.48:0.73). The other interaction was not significant.

CONCLUSIONS: The association between private coverage and smoking prevalence differs by race/ethnicity, and type of coverage is associated with lower prevalence among NH White adults only. The study points to possible underutilization of private coverage to enable smoking cessation among communities of color.

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Lifelong and ever-daily non-daily cigarette smoking and all-cause and cause-specific mortality: Findings from the Tobacco Longitudinal Mortality Study

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BACKGROUND: Growing evidence demonstrates that there are health risks associated with non-daily smoking, but more work is needed to establish whether there is a dose-response, particularly with less frequent use.

METHODS: We assessed associations of non-daily smoking and all-cause and cause-specific mortality using data from 1,141,000 U.S. adults in the Tobacco Longitudinal Mortality Study (TLMS), a large nationally representative dataset from the Tobacco Use Supplement to the Current Population Surveys (TUS-CPS) with linked mortality data. Detailed information was collected in the TUS-CPS from 1992 to 2018 with mortality data through the end of 2019. We fit Cox proportional hazards regression models to estimate hazard risks (HRs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for mortality outcomes, adjusting for potential confounders and survey year, including sampling weights for generalizability. Age at survey was used as the time metric.

RESULTS: After a mean follow-up of 13.3 years, mortality was higher among persons who smoked non-daily lifelong (HR=1.53, 95% CI=1.52–1.53) compared to those who never smoked, and when stratified by race/ethnicity in this non-daily group, mortality was higher among non-Hispanic Black individuals than their White counterparts. We observed a dose-response relationship in mortality risks by cigarettes per day (CPD) and month (CPM), across exposure from non-daily lifelong to daily smoking. Compared with people who never smoked, the mortality risk for all mortality among those who reported lifelong non-daily smoking was higher in the 1-2 CPM group (e.g., HR=1.14, 95% CI=1.11–1.18), with HRs increasing up to two-fold for those who smoked >90 CPM.

CONCLUSIONS: Non-daily smoking, regardless of whether participants reported lifelong non-daily smoking or prior daily use (not shown), is associated with increased all-cause and cause-specific mortality, with higher risk for 1-2 CPM and a dose-response relationship observed with higher CPM. Consistent with prior research, we observed increasing risks across the continuum of non-daily to daily smoking.

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Lessons learned from monitoring e-cigarettes and tobacco products in the United States

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BACKGROUND: Since 2019, the Monitoring Tobacco Product Use Among Youth and Young Adults project has generated scientifically-defensible and rapidly-available data to assess e-cigarette flavor restrictions in the United States, with a specific focus on youth and young adults. This project provides vital information on policies implemented at the federal, state and local levels using multiple data sources.

METHODS: E-cigarette retail sales data (Multi Outlet +

Convenience) from January 2020 through the duration of the project are licensed from Circana, LLC. E-cigarettes are investigated at the UPC-level and analyzed by flavor and product type using supplemental coding through internet searches. The Tobacco Epidemic Evaluation Network Study (TEEN+) Study, a longitudinal cohort of youth and young adults in the U.S. and California, has fielded semiannually since 2022. TEEN+ utilizes address-based sampling to invite 13-to-24-year-olds to complete an online survey of tobacco use and related behaviors.

RESULTS: Retail sales trends provide sentinel signals for new types and classes of products: flavors and devices intended to circumvent policy restrictions, high-capacity e-cigarettes, smart vapes and nicotine analogues. Given the rapidly changing policy and product landscape, nationally-representative, longitudinal data are imperative to understanding within-person behavior change over time. TEEN+ yields insights into new and emerging tobacco products and patterns of use among young people. For example, TEEN+ analyses illustrate that young people who are protected by strong flavor restriction policies have lower prevalence of tobacco use compared to those not covered by a policy.

CONCLUSIONS: Lessons learned from this project help inform global tobacco control. This U.S. case study highlights the tobacco industry's strategies and how they've adapted to a changing policy landscape by developing different products and flavors designed to entice youth and evade regulation. Other countries can use findings to plan policy interventions and ensure they keep pace with the tobacco industry and protect community health.

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Citizen litigation and healthy taxes: The experience of Ecuador

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: A second-instance court ruled in favor of a constitutional action filed by the 'Colectivo todas y todos por la vida' against Decree 645, issued on January 10, 2023, by the President of the Republic, which reduced taxes on tobacco products and other products harmful to health and the environment. Despite this victory, various authorities, industries, and merchants have filed appeals with the Constitutional Court to reverse the ruling.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The citizen collective implemented a legal, edu-communication, and mobilization strategy that included various actions. Legally, they filed a constitutional action that annulled Decree 645 and an action of unconstitutionality, in addition to defending the ruling against appeals filed by authorities and business sectors. In terms of communication, they created a website, disseminated materials on social media and in the media, conducted interviews and academic discussions, and promoted a popular trial. They also gained support from national, regional, and international civil society, obtaining letters of support and amicus curiae to strengthen the judicial process.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Despite the favorable ruling, the conflict is not yet resolved due to the appeals filed by the Executive and industries. However, the litigation has generated significant social mobilization and facilitated interdisciplinary collaboration between legal, communication, and public health teams.

CONCLUSIONS: This process has strengthened the fight and provided valuable lessons that can be applied in other countries, especially in Latin America, to address similar public health and fiscal policy issues. The case allowed for the identification of the interaction between industries, political power, and the media, highlighting the importance of citizen organization in defending public policies.

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Your rights versus my rights: Media representation of smoking and secondhand smoke-drift in homes, 2015–2024

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BACKGROUND: The media plays an important role in influencing policy reforms and public attitudes. There was extensive media coverage in Australia advocating for the need to protect children in cars with smoking occupants, with subsequent legislation banning smoking in cars carrying children. Secondhand smoke-drift issues in residential contexts have also received media attention, given the contentious nature of regulating smoking in private spaces. No known studies have analysed the media discourse on smoke-drift in homes. Therefore, we examined temporal trends and framing of the issue in the media, including what interest groups are involved in putting forth specific messages.

METHODS: We systematically searched Factiva and Google News for relevant mainstream Australian news sources published between 2015 and 2024. Sources that discussed the problem of smoking or smoke-drift in homes, or potential solutions were included. Content analysis was used to code key characteristics. Thematic analysis was used to analyse news frames and interest groups involved. News frames were defined as arguments made for or against regulating smoking, or proposed solutions. Interest groups were defined as individual or organisational actors mentioned or quoted within each article.

RESULTS: Preliminary findings showed that 243 relevant articles were published between 2015 and 2024. The number of articles published each year ranged from 9 to 71, with the lowest volume in 2020 and highest in 2017. News frames commonly centred around individual rights, such as the right to smoke in your home, and neighbours' right to clean air. Preliminary findings also showed

considerable advocacy efforts by the public and non-government organisations to increase support for home smoking regulations.

CONCLUSIONS: The media framing of smoking in the home and secondhand smoke-drift issues provides insights on public and political support for smoke-free regulations in residential settings. Future research is needed to understand the impact of different framings on support for smoke-free policies.

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The relationship between land and sea border lengths with the illicit trade of cigarettes

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BACKGROUND: Policy and price differences between countries can incentivize the movement of products across borders, but illicit trade is not a foregone conclusion. This analysis looks at whether sea and land border lengths are correlated with the illicit trade of cigarettes.

METHODS: The World Factbook was used for data on land borders and coastlines. There are 166 countries/territories with land borders and 199 with coastlines. One coastline (Canada) was an outlier with a length of 202,080km that was more than three times the next longest (54,716km; Indonesia). Illicit cigarette trade data is from Euromonitor's Illicit Trade Penetration analysis for 2022. The land border analysis included 91 countries, coastline analysis included 81 countries (80 without Canada), and the combined border analysis was 97 countries (96 without Canada). Analysis was run with and without Canada and separately for land borders and coastlines.

RESULTS: Total border length ranged from 193km (Singapore) to 210,972km (Canada). The estimated size of the illicit cigarette trade in 2022 ranged from 0% (Japan) to 80.6% (Panama). The correlation between these two sets of data is -0.0024. When removing the outlier border length of Canada, the variation in total border length explained 0.82 percent of the variation in the estimated size of the illicit cigarette market. The variation in coastline (excluding Canada) still only explained 2.77 percent of the differences in the illicit cigarette markets. The variation in the length of land borders explained <0.001 percent of the variation in the illicit cigarette markets.

CONCLUSIONS: Border length alone is not correlated with illicit cigarette trade. Previous research has found that illicit trade is best mitigated by a secure supply chain and strong governance, which can include industry-independent tracking and tracing system and strengthening enforcement efforts. Future analysis will include variables such as border characteristics, governance strength and price differentials.

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What's in the cloud? Comparison of chemical compounds in bottle and aerosolised e-liquids

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BACKGROUND: Different components impact the aerosolization process of e-liquids, affecting the chemical changes. It is believed that a higher wattage leads to greater production of byproducts and greater potential for damage. This study compares the differences in compounds between bottled e-liquids and aerosols.

METHODS: 10 e-liquid samples (6 Mexican, 4 US made) were aerosolized in a MOD device (Voopoo Drag 3) using two atomizers, Wotofo Recurve V2 with single 0.38 Ohms coils and Voopoo PNP Pod Tank with 0.3 Ohms prefab coils. We use two wattage levels (80w and 177w) in 3 second bursts. The aerosols were recover using a condensation device. 10 bottled and 40 aerosolized samples were analyzed using gas chromatography with single quadrupole mass spectrometry. The library NIST was used for identification.

RESULTS: Compared to bottled e-liquids (136 identified compounds, 65 irritants, 56 toxicants, 5 carcinogens), those aerosolized with the Pod Tank at 80w had fewer identified compounds (124) and less toxics (52), but a higher number of irritants (75) and carcinogens (7). At 177w, compounds increased (130) but irritants, toxicants and carcinogens decreased (67, 48 and 4, respectively). With the Recurve, at 80w we found more compounds (119 vs. 115) and more irritants (60 vs. 59), but less toxics (49 vs. 53) and carcinogens (4 vs. 5) than at 177w, both cases with compounds numbers below or equal to the bottled samples.

CONCLUSIONS: The combination of lower wattage with the prefab coil produced more irritating and carcinogenic compounds than other options. This combination is commonly found in devices available for sale. More research about the increased risk that comes from different combination of wattage/ohms available at the market is needed for adequate regulation

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Establishment of the London Tobacco Alliance to enable partners to accelerate efforts to eliminate smoking in London

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Although smoking rates in London have declined there remain 900,000 smokers, with large variances between differing population groups. The charity, Action on Smoking and Health estimates that smoking costs London £6.89bn and accounts for 6,000 deaths a year in London.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The London Tobacco

Alliance (LTA) was established in 2022 by the London Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPHL), bringing together key partners to support London becoming smoke free by 2030.
The LTA brings together differing partners, including the NHS, local authorities, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority. In addition, it works with wider partners such as faith communities, the voluntary sector, different populations groups and academics. It is chaired by leaders from OHID/NHS/ADPH.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The LTA has:
• Established pan-London governance and a strategic framework
• Established a councillors' smoke free network
• Established a London network of local authority and NHS tobacco leads
• Formed a network of London tobacco academics
• Provided pan-London policy responses.
• Worked with large London employers– such as the police, transport bodies and the construction industry.
• Worked with inclusion groups to develop materials for communities with high rates of smoking, such as homeless people, the Polish and LGBT communities
• Developed programmes supporting smokers in non-clinical settings – including giving Very Brief Advice and signposting to services.
• Worked with the Partnership for Young London to gather young people's views. The LTA's public-facing arm, Stop Smoking London (SSL), runs a website, featuring content to support smokers quit and links to local cessation services.
SSL develops London-wide campaigns to raise awareness and public support, and has recently launched an innovative digital smoking cessation offer across London.
CONCLUSIONS: The LTA has successfully engaged key partners to work in a more aligned and dynamic way to reduce smoking rates in London and address health inequalities.
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Assessing the environmental impact and hazardous waste classification of cigarette butt waste in Indonesia: A policy review

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Globally, 766 million kilograms of cigarette butt waste are found annually, and two million tons of this is solid waste from cardboard and cigarette packaging. Indonesia, the country with the third largest number of smokers in the world, has experienced an increase in the number of adult smokers in the last ten years, with the prevalence of adult smokers reaching 28.62% in 2023 . Apart from that, a trend of increasing consumption of new tobacco products has also hit Indonesia since the last decade with the introduction of liquid and solid electronic cigarettes. There is evidence that packaging Electronic cigarettes that use batteries can explode when used. This condition increases the type of hazardous substance product as an explosive product. This policy paper aims to assess whether cigarette butt waste qualifies as hazardous waste based on its content and characteristics and to explore the need for regulatory changes to address its environmental and health impacts.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The drafting of this Policy Paper was carried out using the desk review method by reviewing regulations, institutional documents, journals, books, websites, and media portals 1.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Some of the characteristics of hazardous waste are explosive; oxidizer; easy to ignite; poisonous; dangerous; corrosive; irritating; harmful to the environment; carcinogenic; teratogenic; and mutagenic. The results of the study show that in terms of definition, content, and characteristics, cigarette waste meets most of the requirements for the hazardous waste category.
CONCLUSIONS: The results of the study show that in terms of definition, content, and characteristics, cigarette waste meets most of the requirements for the hazardous waste category. With the fairly high level of cigarette consumption in Indonesia, the environmental impact is quite significant without efforts to manage toxic and dangerous cigarette butt waste
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Prevalence and factors associated with secondhand smoke exposure at homes in Malaysia: Findings from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2023

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure from tobacco products is a major risk factor for death and disability. Reducing SHS exposure could lead to substantial health improvements. Understanding the prevalence of SHS exposure at home and its associated factors such as household smoking behaviors, demographics, and home rules, is essential for designing effective smoke-free policies. We assessed the prevalence of SHS exposure at home and its associated factors among adults in Malaysia.
METHODS: We used the 2023 Global Adults Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia data. GATS is a standardized, nationally representative household survey of individuals aged ⩾15 years. SHS exposure at home was defined by the frequency of smoking inside the home (daily, weekly, or monthly). Logistic regression with predicted marginal means was used to calculate adjusted prevalence ratios (aPR) with 95% CIs to examine factors associated with SHS.
RESULTS: Overall, 19.4% of adults, approximately 4.8 million individuals, reported SHS exposure at home. Multivariate analysis, adjusted for demographics, showed that males (aPR=1.44 [1.15-1.82]), individuals aged 15-24

years (aPR=1.80 [1.18-2.77]), those living in rural areas (aPR=1.26 [1.04-1.53]), those with no formal education (aPR=2.24 [1.54-3.27]), and those who were self-employed (aPR=1.40 [1.01-1.94]), were more likely to be exposed to SHS at home as compared to females, aged ⩾ 65 years, those living in urban areas, those with a college or university education, and those who were unemployed or retired. Similarly, individuals who were exposed to SHS in at least one public place (aPR=1.27 [1.04-1.56]) and those living with someone who smoked (aPR=11.28 [8.04-15.82]) were more likely to be exposed to SHS at home as compared to their counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS: Efforts to reduce SHS exposure could target specific demographic groups, particularly males, young adults, and individuals who did not complete primary education. Implementing an awareness campaign promoting smoke-free home rules and SHS awareness in public places may help reduce SHS exposure, especially for children and women.

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Simple physical exercise practices supported by instant messaging for smoking cessation: A community-based, pragmatic randomised controlled trial

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BACKGROUND: Physical exercise is used as a smoking cessation aid but supervised face-to-face exercise trainings reported low attendance and adherence. We evaluated the effectiveness of simple physical exercise practices supported by mobile instant messaging (mHealth) on smoking abstinence.

METHODS: We conducted a 2-arm, parallel, pragmatic cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) in 1031 proactively recruited adult daily smokers from 70 community sites across Hong Kong from June to October 2022. The intervention group received brief cessation advice with the use of simple physical exercises (e.g., handgrip and elastic band) and practice reminders via instant messaging for 3 months (n=492). The control group received general brief cessation advice via short message services (n=539). Physical activity level was assessed by International Physical Activity Questionnaire-short form and categorized into low (⩽600 metabolic equivalent of task, MET-minutes/week), moderate (600-3,000), and high (⩾3,000). The primary outcome was biochemically validated 7-day point prevalence abstinence (PPA) at 3-month after enrolment, analyzed by intention-to-treat.

Trial registration: ClinicalTrials.gov, NCT05430451.

RESULTS: Of the 1031 participants (80.9% male, mean age [SD] 18.2 [5.5] years), 62.1% responded at 3-month follow-up. Participants in the intervention and control groups had similar validated abstinence rates (9.3% vs. 9.3%; RR=1.01; 95%CI 0.69-1.48) and self-reported PPA (19.9% vs. 19.0%; RR=1.05; 95%CI 0.82-1.35) at 3-month. Intervention group reported a decreasing trend of the weekly practice of the elastic band (from 10.26mins at 1-month to 2.2mins at 3-month) and handgrip (from 9.43mins to 1.81mins) exercises (Ps<0.001). In those who performed moderate to high physical exercise at 3-month, the intervention group had a higher validated abstinence (vs control, 12.1% vs. 10.4%; RR=1.16; 95%CI 0.69-1.96), though not statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS: Simple physical exercise practices supported by mHealth were not effective in increasing smoking abstinence. Further studies exploring the experiences and perceptions of the intervention and effective strategies to promote adherence are warranted.

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Impact of cigarette price and smoking-related factors on youth smoking initiation in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia ranked first among Southeast Asian countries in 2021 with the youngest age of smoking initiation at an average of 16.8 years old. While previous studies have demonstrated significant roles of tobacco control measures, including cigarette prices to prevent adolescents' uptake of smoking, there is no evidence yet in Indonesia regarding the effects of cigarette prices and other smoking-related factors on youth smoking initiation.

METHODS: This study examines the effect of cigarette prices, parental smoking, and exposure to secondhand smoke on youth smoking initiation in Indonesia, employing discrete-time hazard models and a pseudo-longitudinal dataset constructed from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey and the National Consumer Price of Selected Goods and Services 2014-2023. All analyses use the sample weights that were provided with the data.

RESULTS: Higher prices for cigarettes, particularly filtered kreteks (clove-mixed cigarettes), significantly decreased the risk of smoking initiation, with a 1% price increase associated with a 1.9% and 2.2% reduction in the risk of smoking initiation (95% CI -3.8% to -0.1% and 95% CI -3.52% to -0.9%, respectively). No significant impact was found for the prices of white cigarettes and kreteks on youth smoking initiation. Meanwhile, having one or both parents who smoke and exposure to cigarette smoke increased the hazard of adolescents to start smoking (HR=-1.27 [95% CI -1.15 to -1.40] and HR=-6.73 [95% CI -5.66 to -8.01], respectively).

CONCLUSIONS: Cigarette prices, parental smoking, and exposure to cigarette smoke are significant predictors of smoking initiation among adolescents in Indonesia. The government should raise cigarette prices by setting higher excise taxes and minimum retail prices while at the same

time enforcing smoke-free laws and increasing access to smoking cessation, especially for parents, to significantly reduce smoking uptake among Indonesian youth.

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Smoking reduction after tobacco tax increase among individuals who smoke without an intention to quit in Hong Kong

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BACKGROUND: In Hong Kong, the smoking prevalence is already-low and the proportion of smokers lacking motivations to quit increases. Despite smoke-free legislation, cessation services and health warnings at the best-practice levels, the decline in smoking prevalence has decelerated in recent years. For almost a decade, the tobacco tax was frozen before a 32% increase each in 2023 and 2024. We investigated whether tax increase motivated smokers in Hong Kong to smoke less.

METHODS: Territorially-representative surveys collected data from 1,597 current smokers (weighted mean age 50.7±15.5 years; 82.6% male) in 2022, 917 current smokers (53.4±13.5 years, 88.9% male) in February 2024 (after 2023 tax increase and before 2024 tax increase) and 1,482 current smokers (48.6±14.6 years, 81.5% male) between March and May 2024 (after 2024 tax increase). The frequency of smoking and daily cigarette consumption in the past 30 days, and any intention to quit were reported. Data were weighted to represent smokers in the Hong Kong population.

RESULTS: In 2022, 84.8% of current smokers smoked daily. The proportion reduced to 69.8% (p<0.001) after the 2023 tobacco tax increase, and further to 54.1% (p<0.001) after the 2024 tax increase. In daily or almost-daily smokers, the average cigarette consumption reduced from 14.4 sticks per day in 2022 to 11.5 sticks per day (p<0.001) after the 2023 tax increase, and remained similar (11.4 sticks per day) after the 2024 tax increase. Similar trends were observed in smokers not intending to quit.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco tax increase may at least motivate smoking reduction if not quitting in Hong Kong. This dispels the doubts over the effectiveness of tobacco tax increase in settings with low smoking prevalence and smokers lacking motivations to quit, and lends support for further tax increase in Hong Kong.

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Examining using patterns and attitude towards tobacco endgame policy in tobacco and alcohol co-users: A population-based study in Hong Kong

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine and alcohol co-use synergistically increases dependence and worsens health outcomes. Co-users display distinct consumption patterns compared with single-substance users. This study examines usage patterns and attitudes towards tobacco End Game in tobacco and alcohol co-users.

METHODS: We included 5,600 randomly selected adult respondents from a 2024 population-based tobacco policy survey. Smoking behaviors included daily cigarette consumption, time to first cigarette, nicotine dependence, intention to quit within 30 days, and determination to quit. Alcohol behaviors included drinking frequency, binge drinking, and daily alcohol consumption over the past year. Support for the End Game on total bans of tobacco sales and use was evaluated. Associations between support for the End Game and usage groups were analyzed, adjusted for sociodemographics.

RESULTS: Among 5,600 participants, half were male and 44.9% were aged 30 to 49 years. Four groups were identified: co-users (882 [15.8%]), tobacco users (1,718 [30.7%]), alcohol users (1,242 [22.2%]), and non-users (1,758 [31.4%]). Co-use was more common among men, aged 30 to 49 years, with secondary education, and not living with children (all Ps<0.001). Compared with tobacco users, co-users reported increased cigarette consumption on drinking days (mean [SD] 5.50 [4.60]), more frequent smoking in the past month (25.3[8.4] vs. 22.9 [10.1], ß=-2.37, P=0.001), and less likely to quit within 30 days (93.1% vs. 86.1%, AOR=0.48, P=0.03). Compared to alcohol user, co-users had higher drinking frequency (8.6% vs. 1.7%, AOR=0.13, P<0.001), more binge drinking (47.8% vs. 20.4%, AOR=0.33, P<0.001), and greater daily alcohol consumption (2.16[3.69] vs. 1.64[2.57], ß=-0.63, P<0.001). Compared with non-user, co-users, tobacco users, and alcohol users were significantly less likely to support the End Game (ARR range, 0.04-0.41; 0.12-0.29; 0.76-1.52, respectively).

CONCLUSIONS: Co-use is associated with higher consumption levels and reduced support for tobacco endgame policy. Our findings highlighted the need for targeted interventions to address co-use behaviors and enhance policy acceptance.

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Opportunities and challenges of implementing smoke-free areas from the perspective of venue managers in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: More than two third of Indonesian cities have adopted comprehensive smoke free law as part of the MPOWER strategies to protect people from tobacco smoke. The implementation of the regulation is relatively weak and varied across the country. Three cities/districts that showed good implementation were Bogor City, Kulonprogo District and Klungkung District. This study aims to portray the promoters and barriers of an effective smoke free law implementation from the perspective of venue managers.

METHODS: This study was a qualitative explorative study conducted from November-December 2023. Data was collected through a focus group discussion (FGD) attended by 10-12 participants from each city. The venue managers were selected purposively to represent all types of designated smoking area including health facilities, educational facilities, worship places, government offices, hospitality sectors (hotel and restaurant), public transportation services and other public places. The data was analysed thematically to identify different aspects of policy implementation and supporting and inhibiting factors of implementation, comparison across cities were also made.

RESULTS: Promoters of effective implementation of the policies were strong commitment from the regent/mayor, increased public awareness on smoke-free areas and positive support from the communities including religious/traditional leaders. Meanwhile, the challenges faced by venue managers were mainly due to lack of resources for internal monitoring and enforcement, resistance from some visitors especially in the hospitality sectors, limited spaces at the outdoor space for smoking area. Participants suggested the need to improve cooperation between venue managers, local governments, and the community, awareness programs and supporting infrastructure and resources.

CONCLUSIONS: The venue managers reported several factors that support and hamper the effective implementation of SFL which should be addressed for improving compliance. Venue managers play important roles to ensure the effective implementation. Improvement of their capacity and supporting resources with strong support from the leader and community is essential.

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School-based tobacco cessation intervention for adolescents: Experiences from LifeFirst

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: According to Global Youth Tobacco Survey for India, 8.4% adolescents in the age group of 13-15 years used some form of tobacco. More than 20% of them wanted to quit their habit. To address this burden, it is important to design and implement evidence-based behavioural tobacco cessation interventions targeted to this specific population. Schools are considered to be an opportunistic setting to offer cessation support to the students but there are limited school-based behavioural cessation interventions, especially for smokeless tobacco.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: LifeFirst, an in-school tobacco cessation program, was implemented over two years in 170 municipal schools of Mumbai. All the students of 7th-9th grades attended orientation sessions about harmful effects of tobacco (including e-cigarettes, hookah and smokeless tobacco products). Students were informed about the availability of a cessation service and encouraged to register voluntarily for theme-based group sessions conducted over six months. Three structured activity-based sessions were conducted with the registered students to understand their triggers, develop coping mechanisms and refusal skills. Tobacco use status was recorded in each session.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: 13349 students attended the orientation sessions. Overall prevalence of tobacco use was 6%; higher among boys (9%) than girls (2%). 780 current tobacco users registered for the cessation programme. Among them, 701(90%) were smokers, 69 (9%) used smokeless tobacco and remaining 10 were dual users. The most commonly used smoking and smokeless products were hookah (28%) and gutkha (6%) respectively. At the end of three sessions, 504 (65%) registered students self-reported not using tobacco. The abstinence was slightly higher among the boys (65%) compared to the girls (63%).

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use is prevalent among school going children and cessation support is required. In-school activity-based group tobacco cessation programme is feasible and effective to support the adolescents to quit their tobacco use.

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The perspective of independent tobacco retailers on underage sales and marketing restrictions in Jakarta, Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies (TCs) incentivize retailers to advertise their products. In Indonesia, some restrictions on outdoor tobacco advertising exist but enforcement is inconsistent and point-of-sale advertising and displays are largely unregulated. This study explored views of tobacco retailers in contact with TC representatives on advertising restrictions and underage sales.

METHODS: We interviewed 30 independent tobacco retailer managers/owners in Jakarta. Eligible stores

had visible tobacco advertisements and a relationship/contract with TC representatives. Transcripts were coded and thematically analyzed.

RESULTS: Retailers reported the current prohibition of banners outside stores had little to no effect on sales. Most supported outdoor ad bans even considering potential loss from bonuses or contracts, citing moral concerns like preventing youth smoking and respecting legal authority. Some disliked excessive advertisements, particularly stickers, for aesthetic reasons. Display cases and limited indoor advertising were valued by some for customer information and organizing stock. A minority preferred fewer restrictions, emphasizing practical benefits like compensation, shade provided by large banners, and promotion of their store, but still expressed willingness to comply with the law. Some viewed ad bans as insufficient protection from the harms of smoking, suggesting broader measures like ending cigarette production as a more effective option.

No retailer disagreed with prohibiting sales to minors, but suggested underage sales are normalized and ignored in practice; some feared losing business to other retailers if they refused sales. A few admitted selling to high school students or customers without ID verification, often due to personal familiarity or the pretext of purchases for older family members. A couple retailers admitted to selling to minors without qualms.

CONCLUSIONS: Retailers were generally interested in following the law and reducing youth smoking. Increased retailer engagement and education, paired with stronger policy enforcement, may be beneficial to reduce tobacco advertising and underage sales in Indonesia.

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Engagement of civil society to sensitize government for import ban of electronic cigarettes in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The current tobacco control Act and tobacco control Rules in Bangladesh neither define Electronic Cigarette (E-cigarette) nor it is mentioned anywhere in the Act or Rules. Global Adults Tobacco Survey 2017 reported 0.2% of Bangladeshi adults used e- cigarettes. Evidence shows Bangladesh do not produce E-cigarettes. On 30th June 2018, the government published a gazette notification to allow import of electronic cigarettes. After that E-cigarettes became a new public health threat in Bangladesh. Civil societies and different professional and youth groups raised their voices to ban e-cigarettes to protect public health, especially the youth.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: E-cigarettes ban campaign was started in 2019 by a sensitization meeting with Health Ministry, and a roundtable with journalists. After that number of non-government organizations (NGO), Members of Parliament (MP), different professional bodies, youth groups and journalists' networks were engaged. Out of 350 MPs, 153 MPs wrote a letter to the Prime Minister to ban e-cigarettes. Ministers and relevant government high officials were sensitized through small group meetings and public events. Press conferences, rallies, human chains were organized with media coverage for policymakers' attention. Many special reports were published along with comprehensive social media campaigns. In August 2024, a new interim government formed, and NGOs reached out to the health advisor and relevant advisor to urge support in the Cabinet meeting. Evidence is also provided to the health ministry to submit in the Cabinet meeting.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: On 12th December 2024, the Advisory Council (Cabinet) approved the proposal of Health Ministry to ban e-cigarettes imports. Following which the Ministry of Commerce included E-cigarettes and vaping related products in the list of prohibited goods in the Import Policy Order (gazette notification on 1st January 2025).

CONCLUSIONS: This is a great public health policy win in Bangladesh engaging civil society organizations to protect public health, especially the younger generation.

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Assessing rationalization beliefs among people who use e-cigarettes in China: Scale development and validation

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarette use poses significant public health concerns, particularly in China, where the market is extensive and the number of users continues to rise. It is essential to explore the beliefs of e-cigarette users, as these often undergo rationalization—a process where individuals reconstruct beliefs to justify their behavior amid cognitive dissonance. For users, this may lead to minimizing health risks or adopting misconceptions about e-cigarette use. Investigating rationalization beliefs is crucial for developing targeted public health interventions and educational strategies that effectively address the unique context of e-cigarette consumption in China.This study aims to develop a scale measuring rationalization beliefs among e-cigarette users in China, providing a reliable tool for future research and interventions.

METHODS: The Rationalization Belief Scale for E-cigarette Users was developed through a systematic process. First, a literature review and semi-structured interviews with 25 e-cigarette users were conducted, using thematic analysis to identify key rationalization beliefs. A preliminary scale was created and refined through a small-scale pre-test. The finalized questionnaire was then distributed via a snowball sampling approach, yielding 617 valid responses. Psychometric evaluation included exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess structural validity and reliability.

RESULTS: The final version of the scale comprised 28 items loading onto four factors identified through EFA: Harm Skepticism Beliefs, Comparative Safety Beliefs, Vaping Function Beliefs, and Social Acceptability Beliefs, which explained 57.9% of the variance. The overall scale demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's α = 0.936). The reliability of the subscales ranged from 0.774 to 0.911. CFA confirmed a good fit to the data (CFI = 0.914, TLI = 0.906, RMSEA = 0.059).

CONCLUSIONS: We constructed a valid and reliable instrument for measuring rationalization beliefs among e-cigarette users. This scale can facilitate further research into personalized behavior intervention and inform public health strategies aimed at reducing e-cigarette usage.

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Experience of Hong Kong in banning electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since April 2022, Hong Kong has banned the import, promotion, manufacture, sale, or possession for commercial purposes of electronic cigarettes (ECs) and heated tobacco products (HTPs). The most intensive tobacco industry opposition and interferences were encountered throughout. The proposed ban was almost replaced by a regulation regime exempting HTPs.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: As the statutory tobacco control organisation in China's Special Administration Region, Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH) counteracted the interferences from the tobacco industry and its allies, especially some legislators connected to the industry. COSH led and organised extensive publicity campaigns, such as community exhibitions and school talks, to raise public awareness of the harms of ECs and HTPs especially to children, reveal tobacco industry tactics, and explain the importance of the ban to protect the next generation from smoking and nicotine. COSH actively engaged the medical, health and education sectors, and parent, patient and youth groups in press conferences and briefings, petitions, rallies, and lobbing to legislators to gather the strongest support possible for a total ban with no exemption throughout the six-year war.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The multi-sectoral and massive collaborations, with solidarity and perseverance, were unprecedented in the public health history of Hong Kong. The strongest demands from schools, parents and students were most compelling and instrumental in successfully combating industry interferences, urging government to stand firm on banning, and urging legislators to pass the proposed ban and reject opponents' amendments to exempt HTPs. The cigarette smoking prevalence decreased from 9.5% in 2021 to 9.1% in 2023, while EC and HTP use remined low.

CONCLUSIONS: Persistent and concerted efforts across society to protect the next generation were the key to counteracting tobacco industry interferences and passage of the ban. The post-ban reduction in the smoking prevalence, although small, implied that neither ECs nor HTPs are essential for tobacco control.

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Latent class analysis of people who vape e-cigarettes in Australia: An analysis of the 2022-23 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

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BACKGROUND: Vaping has increased substantially in Australia. Understanding the profiles and motivations of people who vape in a country with strong vaping control policy is important to understanding policy impacts. This study aims to identify the distinct profiles of individuals who vape and examine the socio-demographics and correlates of these profiles.

METHODS: We analysed data from the 2022-23 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, (n=21,500, nationally representative sample) restricted to individuals who had vaped at least once or twice (n=3,457). Using latent class analysis, we identified distinct characteristics based on key vaping and smoking variables. Logistic regression explored the correlates of each identified class.

RESULTS: A three-class solution was identified. Class 1 was characterised by high probabilities of individuals who formerly smoked and vaped only once or twice, out of curiosity (Experimenters, 46.0%); Class 2 (Vape adopters, 20.4%) had high probabilities of individuals who formerly smoked and vape occasionally. Class 3 (Cessation, 33.4%) featured high probabilities of individuals who smoked daily and used e-cigarettes as a tool to quit smoking. Using experimenters as a reference group, the vape adopters were more likely to be older (30+ years), experienced very high psychological distress, belonged to a culturally and linguistically diverse background, had lower education, lived in areas of low socioeconomic disadvantage, identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or were not currently employed. The cessation class members were likely to be older (30+ years), male, experienced moderate to very high psychological distress, have lower education, and report recent illicit drug use.

CONCLUSIONS: This study identified three distinct profiles of individuals who vaped in Australia, each characterised by unique socio-demographic and psychological correlates. These findings emphasise the need for tailored public health strategies to address the unique needs of each group, including targeted interventions to reduce e-cigarette-related harms and support smoking cessation efforts.

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Engaging the business sector to support tobacco control measures through company-oriented awards

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The total employment in Hong Kong over 3.8 million, accounting for more than 55% of Hong Kong population. As Hong Kong people generally work longer hours, workplace being one of the locations where employees spend most of their time every day. However, corporates seldom put tobacco control or smoke-free promotion at the top of their agenda.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health encouraged the business sector to implement smoke-free measures in the workplace through the Hong Kong Smoke-free Leading Company Awards which assisted corporates to set clear objectives for smoke-free policies and measures to promote smoking cessation among their stakeholders to foster an all-win situation for employees, employers and the society.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Since 2011, the Awards has attracted over 1530 forward-looking companies or organizations from a variety of industries to join, including large companies, small and medium enterprises, government departments and non-governmental organizations, benefiting over 307000 employees and other stakeholders, including the public.

In 2024, the Awards received full support from 65 chambers of commerce and organizations from different industries, mobilizing 730 companies/organizations to spread smoke-free messages among more than 150000 employees. Outstanding companies were commemorated for their effective smoke-free measures and set as industry role models.

CONCLUSIONS: It is important to engage and empower different sectors of the community to maximize the impact and effectiveness of smoke-free promotion and tobacco control. Support from industry associations was crucial to raise awareness and boost participation of the business sector. Guidelines and promotion collaterals shall be provided to facilitate companies in planning and implementing smoke-free policies. Reward and buddy scheme would strengthen employees' quit willpower and support their needs. The establishment of various awards would encourage organizations in cultivating a competitive mindset, enabling them to design and implement diverse smoke-free policies more effectively.

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Spatial distribution and its influencing factors of secondhand smoke exposure among adults — 31 PLADs, China, 2022

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BACKGROUND: SHS exposure claims approximately 1.3 million lives annually through various associated diseases. While China witnessed a modest decline in SHS exposure rates from 72.4% to 68.1% between 2010 and 2018, recent trends remain unclear.

METHODS: The present study utilizes data from the 2022 National Adult Tobacco Survey (NATS), which offers both national and provincial representativeness, to analyze current SHS exposure rates across China. Spatial analyses were conducted using GeoDa (version 1.22; Dr. Luc Anselin team) to examine spatial data matrices, spatial autoregression, and ordinary least squares (OLS) spatial regression models for analyzing influencing factors and spatial heterogeneity of SHS exposure. This research aims to inform the development of targeted, region-specific tobacco control strategies and measures.

RESULTS: In 2022, the SHS exposure rate among non-smoking adults aged 15 years and above in China was 52.4%, with significant positive spatial correlation across regions (Moran's I=0.337, Z=4.626, P=0.001). Stronger tobacco control measures were associated with lower SHS exposure rates across multiple settings: homes (ß=-0.571, T=4.621, P<0.001), indoor workplaces (ß=-0.446, T=-3.472, P=0.002), and medical and health care institutions (ß=-0.539, T=-2.502, P=0.019). Additionally, higher population coverage by comprehensive smoke-free regulations was significantly associated with reduced SHS exposure (ß=-4.002, T=-4.241, P<0.001). Regarding tobacco harm awareness, regions with higher recognition of SHS-related heart disease risks (ß=-0.472, T=-2.682, P=0.012) and smoking-related risks of stroke (ß=-0.438, T=-2.501, P=0.018) and heart disease (ß=-0.483, T=-2.977, P=0.006) demonstrated significantly lower SHS exposure rates.

CONCLUSIONS: In conclusion, while China has made notable progress in tobacco control efforts, there remains a critical need for enhanced public health interventions. Future initiatives should focus on strengthening health education programs, elevating public awareness of SHS-related health risks, establishing robust SHS exposure monitoring systems, and implementing regular regional assessments. These measures will enable the development of more targeted and regionally-specific tobacco control strategies and interventions.

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Engagement of youth in tobacco control in smoke-free elite teens programme

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The latest smoking prevalence in Hong Kong is 9.1%, in which more than a half (58.4%) of daily smokers started smoking weekly at age of 10 to 19. Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health initiated the Smoke-free Elite Teens Programme (the Programme) in 2012, aiming to engage youth in tobacco control by nurturing their leadership

skills and promoting tobacco-free culture.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Programme facilitated training for young leaders through workshops, online classes, smoke-free programmes and study tour. Participants were educated on smoking hazards and information on tobacco control. Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards were awarded to the students based on their Smoke-free Programme proposals, reports and the number of Smoke-free Programme successfully held. The Programme encouraged youth to organize smoke-free initiatives in schools and communities, fostering a proactive approach to tobacco control, in which smoke-free messages and information of smoking cessation were transmitted to the participants, their families and the community.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Over the years, about 3,200 teenagers had completed the Programme, gaining valuable knowledge of smoking and vital skills in leadership, communication, and project planning. The initiative had garnered support from more than 195 secondary schools, youth centers, and uniform groups, reaching over 400,000 students and citizens with tobacco-free messages. During 2023-2024, more than 90% of participants demonstrated increased knowledge and corrected misconceptions about smoking, developing a positive attitude towards tobacco-free living.
CONCLUSIONS: The Programme highlighted the critical role of youth engagement in tobacco control efforts. The findings underscored the potential for youth-led initiatives to drive significant cultural and policy shifts. Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health would continue to keep abreast of the smoking situation in Hong Kong and the global trend in tobacco control to enrich the Programme content and promotion strategy to enhance the youth's smoke-free knowledge, leaping towards a healthier, smoke-free future.
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Enhancing tobacco control in the Maldives: Assessing public perception of tobacco law compliance, awareness, and enforcement challenges

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use remains a significant public health issue in the Maldives, necessitating stronger enforcement of control measures. While the Maldives ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004 and enacted the Tobacco Control Act (TCA) in 2010, persistent gaps in compliance and enforcement deter progress. These challenges are compounded by limited public awareness, inadequate monitoring mechanisms, and insufficient regulatory enforcement. This study provides one of the first comprehensive evaluations of public perception, awareness, and compliance with tobacco control laws in the Maldives, offering actionable insights to guide policy improvements.
METHODS: A nationally representative, stratified cross-sectional survey of 300 participants was conducted across urban centers, rural islands, and atolls. Data collection utilized structured questionnaires available in Dhivehi and English. The survey examined three domains: (1) Public Awareness of tobacco laws, (2) Perceived Compliance with regulations, and (3) Barriers to Enforcement, such as monitoring gaps and insufficient education. Chi-square tests were used to analyze demographic differences.
RESULTS: Awareness: While 75% of participants were aware of tobacco laws, only 40% associated smoking with diseases like oral cancer and cardiovascular conditions. Compliance: 23% perceived compliance as low, while 57% observed occasional adherence to regulations. Barriers: Key issues included smoking in prohibited zones (75%), frequent sales to minors (50%), and smoking within 50 meters of health institutions and sports venues (90%).
CONCLUSIONS: The findings emphasize the urgent need for targeted public awareness campaigns, stricter enforcement mechanisms, and community-led initiatives to bridge compliance gaps. For instance, online campaigns could aim to increase awareness by 30% within two years, and deploying additional enforcement personnel could raise compliance rates by 20%. This study not only addresses enforcement challenges in the Maldives but also provides a replicable framework for similar low-resource settings. The recommendations align with FCTC priorities and contribute to global public health efforts.
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Elucidating different sources of exposure to secondhand smoke in school-going children in Karachi and Dhaka: Findings from CLASS III Trial

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure is a major public health concern, particularly in LMICs like Pakistan and Bangladesh. This study aimed to address critical gaps in understanding SHS exposure among school-going children in Dhaka and Karachi by combining self-reported data with salivary cotinine measurements, a reliable biomarker of nicotine intake.
METHODS: We analyzed baseline data from the Children Learning About Secondhand Smoke (CLASS-III), a cluster randomized controlled trial conducted in public and private schools. A total of 2,769 grade 5 students, aged 9–12, were enrolled as self-reported non-tobacco users, with assent and parental consent obtained on an opt-out basis. Baseline data included salivary cotinine levels, sociodemographic characteristics, and self-reported SHS exposure within and outside home. Children with cotinine levels ⩽12.0 ng/mL were included. Descriptive analyses summarized cotinine levels by country and SHS exposure settings using appropriate statistical measures.
RESULTS: Among the 2,716 children analyzed (1,368 from Bangladesh and 1,348 from Pakistan), the mean age was 11.3 ± 1.0 years, with 54.9% being girls. The

median cotinine level was 0.40 ng/mL (IQR: 0.49), higher in Pakistan (0.57 ng/mL, IQR: 0.56) than Bangladesh (0.27 ng/mL, IQR: 0.33). Boys had higher levels (0.47 ng/mL, IQR: 0.55) than girls (0.36 ng/mL, IQR: 0.44). SHS exposure in both venues (home and outside) led to higher cotinine levels (0.64 ng/mL, IQR: 0.70) than exposure at home (0.61 ng/mL, IQR: 0.64) or outside (0.36 ng/mL, IQR: 0.45) alone. Exposure from smokers at home resulted in higher levels (0.68 ng/mL, IQR: 0.70) compared to guest smoking (0.62 ng/mL, IQR: 0.67). Outside exposure was highest near communities (0.44 ng/mL, IQR: 0.57) and during transportation (0.43 ng/mL, IQR: 0.51).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions, including strict enforcement of smoke-free laws in public places and public awareness campaigns to educate people promoting smoke-free homes to reduce SHS exposure among children.

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Compliance is the key to success in the Tobacco Control Movement in Bangladesh: DAS experience

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Bangladesh's tobacco control law (TCL) mandates smoke-free public spaces, including transportation systems. Despite regulatory frameworks, implementation has faced considerable challenges. Resistance from tobacco users, non-compliance by the tobacco industry, and weak coordination among stakeholders have impeded progress. Furthermore, tobacco control activities lack proper enforcement mechanisms. The Deputy Commissioner's office is the sole authority permitted to operate mobile courts, often influenced by NGOs with limited capacity. Authorized officers lack clear directives, and police authorities are not empowered to impose fines in public spaces or transport. While institutions like the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) are authorized to enforce mobile courts, they rarely execute fines for violations. Addressing this enforcement gap is vital for effective tobacco control.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2020, the Development Activities of Society (DAS) has implemented a multifaceted intervention to promote tobacco control in public transport. Key actions included conducting baseline surveys, stakeholder mapping, and tailored training for transport staff. DAS engaged in one-on-one advocacy with policymakers, distributed Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, and conducted capacity-building workshops for transport owners, staff, and union leaders. Vigilance teams were established at terminals, and mobile courts were mobilized to enforce TCL.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: DAS initiatives have activated compliance strategies among some authorities. Traffic police have begun fining individuals for smoking in public transport, while BRTA has enforced fines and mandated 'No Smoking' stickers in vehicles. BRTC declared its fleet smoke-free, and DTCA required no-smoking signage. MoS and BIWTA banned tobacco product sales at ferry terminals. BMET introduced awareness campaigns and recognized contributions through awards.

CONCLUSIONS: Empowering authorized officers and ensuring enforcement by relevant authorities are essential for long-term compliance and creating smoke-free public transportation in Bangladesh.

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International comparative study and enlightenment of e-cigarette regulation policies: Text analysis

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BACKGROUND: In recent years, the sales of e-cigarettes have been increasing. However, an international recognized system has not been formed in the regulatory policy of e-cigarettes.

METHODS: The e-cigarette regulatory policies of different countries were reviewed and analyzed in five dimensions: e-cigarette sales restriction, protecting people from the harm of e-cigarettes, warning the harm of e-cigarettes, banning e-cigarette advertising, promotion and sponsorship and e-cigarette taxation.

RESULTS: Among 43 countries, 55.8% countries have banned e-cigarette use in certain places. 69.8% countries require health warnings on packaging, and 90.0% of them require a minimum area of at least 30.0% of the surface. 71.7% countries have banned or restricted e-cigarette advertising, with 25.6% specifically regulating the display of samples at retail points. The ratio of national e-cigarette tax to traditional tobacco tax is 20.0%~30.0%.

CONCLUSIONS: It is time to standardize the decoration standards of e-cigarette retail outlets in order to reduce hidden propaganda. Meanwhile, a nationwide push should be made to ban smoking in all indoor public places as soon as possible.

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Identifying effective tax policies to reduce cigarette smoking: Cross country empirical evidence

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BACKGROUND: Features of a country's cigarette tax system can enhance or undermine taxation's effectiveness in reducing smoking. While the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends policies to maximize taxation's effectiveness, research on the combined effects of tax policies is limited. This paper examines the combined and independent impacts of key elements of countries' cigarette tax systems, as per the Tobacconomics Cigarette Tax Scorecard (TCTS), on adult smoking prevalence and consumption. The TCTS scores evaluate countries using cigarette prices, affordability, tax burdens, and tax

structure.
METHODS: Using global WHO cigarette price and tax data (2008–2022) we generate tax system scores and link them to their underlying values. We combine them with WHO data on smoking prevalence and Euromonitor data on sales. Using two-way fixed-effect regressions, we examine the impacts of aspects of tax systems on both smoking prevalence and consumption, including the independent and combined impacts of the TCTS components. We also assess the potential of stronger overall tax system to increase the effectiveness of tax and price policies.
RESULTS: The overall tax system score is more effective in reducing smoking than any individual scoring component: a one-unit increase in overall tax system scores reduces prevalence by -0.89 percentage points and consumption by -7.6 percent. Among individual scores, the tax structure score has the largest impact on reducing prevalence, but the price score has the largest impact on reducing consumption. The effectiveness of a price increase to reduce tobacco use significantly improves when it is combined with a higher score.
CONCLUSIONS: Though the WHO's tax share target constitutes a good benchmark for countries, a higher tax share will not be effective in reducing tobacco use if not accompanied by improved overall tax systems and especially higher real prices. To reduce cigarette smoking, governments should fully implement all components of a strong tax system.
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'I don't always quit for good' – a qualitative study on approaches to smoking cessation among young people in Denmark

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BACKGROUND: Around one in six of the 16–24-year-olds in Denmark smoke. Although many wish to stop, motivation to do so is lower among young people than other age groups. While Denmark has excellent cessation services, young people mostly try to quit on their own. We wanted to investigate how young people experience smoking and cessation. Why do they not seek counseling? And how do we adapt cessation services to their needs?
METHODS: In December 2022 the partnership Smokefree Future carried out a qualitative study to investigate experiences with smoking cessation and cessation services among young people. 31 participants aged 18-29 were interviewed in four focus groups. All participants had experiences with smoking cessation. Participants had different educational backgrounds and both men and women were represented.
RESULTS: *'I just don't think that I need help. I can handle it on my own."* -Malthe, 26 years old
The interviews showed that young people generally start smoking in groups but quit on their own. Quitting is perceived as an individual responsibility and something that does not necessitate help.
'I never paid attention to specific dates when I stopped smoking." -Johanne, 24 years old
The young people in the study expressed an experimental approach to cessation and decided on quitting from one day to the other. That means that they do not prepare for quitting.
'I'll still say 'I'm on a break'.' -Anton, 19 years old
The study showed a tendency among young people to avoid committing to the decision of quitting. They prefer viewing cessation as a break from smoking rather than a final decision.
CONCLUSIONS: Counseling efforts targeting young people should:
• Allow for experimenting with cessation by providing help when and where young people are ready to quit
• Frame cessation as breaks rather than quitting forever
• Nuance the image of cessation including relapse.
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Implementing a workplace tobacco cessation programme in a large multi-site manufacturing company in India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: 267 million adults use tobacco in India, majority of whom belong to the working population. Workplace setting provides strategic opportunity to reduce the overall prevalence of tobacco and impact the health of the workforce. Designing an effective tobacco cessation programme in India is a challenge because of diverse tobacco products, varied cessation needs of management and workers and limited evidence for addressing smokeless tobacco users.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: LifeFirst implemented the workplace cessation programme in 18 units of a cement manufacturing industry from 2018-2023 across 11 states of India in a phased manner. The multi-faceted programme included leadership engagement and sensitization to secure their buy-in and collaborative action plan development with management teams. The core components of the intervention included awareness session for all the employees, distribution of self-help materials and offering tobacco cessation counselling services for six months. The individual counselling sessions were conducted in-person and over telephone. These components were tailored to address the varied needs of each unit and employees.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Out of 12496 employees, 8698 (70%) (both management and workers) were sensitized about harmful effects of tobacco. Among them 3010 (35%) registered for counselling services. All of them were males. Average age of initiation was 24.4 years. 78% consumed smokeless tobacco, 14% smoked and 8% consumed both, with regional variations in the products. 56% registered employees had never made a quit attempt. The uptake of counselling was higher among the workers as compared to the management employees. At the end of the programme, 1661 (55%) self-reported not using

tobacco, 20% reduced and 5% relapsed. 56% of smokeless tobacco users, 51% smokers and 42% dual users stopped their use.

CONCLUSIONS: Behavioural workplace tobacco cessations are feasible and help reduce the overall tobacco use. A top-down approach and tailored support strategies, are essential for effective implementation.

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Should protection from tobacco smoke incursion into homes be included in FCTC strategies? Findings from the 2024 ITC Israel Survey

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BACKGROUND: FCTC Article 8 guidelines identify measures necessary to achieve effective protection from the hazards of second-hand tobacco smoke (SHS). However, tobacco smoke incursion (TSI) into private homes impacts millions of individuals around the world, particularly those living in multi-unit housing (MUH). Notably, protection from TSI into one's own residence is not generally offered by governments, and is not currently enshrined in FCTC/MPOWER strategies.

METHODS: Data are from 1790 adults (aged ³18) who participated in the 2024 International Tobacco Control Israel Survey. We assessed tobacco smoke incursion (TSI) into homes. A multivariable logistic regression model was fit to examine the prevalence of TSI into private homes in Israel, while considering possible inequitable differences in exposure to TSI: age group (18-39, 40-59, 60+), sex, population sector (Jewish/Arab), current smoking status (yes/no), income (high/medium/low), education (high/medium/low), and type of residence (private/MUH). Analyses were conducted on data weighted for population characteristics and smoking status.

RESULTS: TSI into private homes affected 40.6% of adults in the past 12 months, with 19.4% experiencing incursion at least weekly. Exposure to TSI increased as income decreased (Adjusted odds Ratio (AOR): 1.29 CI:[1.11,1.53], p=.0016), residents residing in MUH experienced greater TSI relative to those in private homes (AOR:2.60 CI:[2.02,3.35], p<.0001), and TSI increased as age decreased (AOR:1.16 CI: [1.01,1.34] p=.0403). Adults who smoke cigarettes were less likely to report TSI compared to adults who do not smoke (AOR:.74 CI:[0.55,0.99] p=0.0449).

CONCLUSIONS: About 4 in 10 adults in Israel reported tobacco smoke incursion into their homes, with inequitable differences in exposure. Regulation to protect individuals from SHS due to tobacco smoke incursion into their own homes should be included in the FCTC Article 8 guidelines, with a specific focus on those living in densely populated living conditions.

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Household tobacco expenditure and its impact on child nutrition: Evidence from South Africa

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BACKGROUND: Child malnutrition is shaped by various factors, including maternal education and access to sanitation. However, a less explored but critical determinant is household expenditure on tobacco, which can divert resources away from essential goods like food. This study examines the 'crowding-out' effect of tobacco expenditure and its implications for child nutrition and health outcomes.

METHODS: Using data from South Africa's National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS), a nationally representative panel survey (2008–2017), child nutritional status was assessed through anthropometric measures—height-for-age (HAZ) and weight-for-age (WAZ)—expressed as z-scores. Cross-sectional regression models with lagged expenditure and instrumental variables, such as adult-sex ratio and community characteristics, were employed to address endogeneity concerns.

RESULTS: Between 2008 and 2017 there have been notable improvements in child nutritional status, with declines in stunting (from 17.2% to 11.8%), underweight prevalence (from 9.6% to 5.5%), and wasting (from 4.7% to 3.3%). Household income consistently shows a positive and statistically significant association with both HAZ and WAZ scores, supporting the expectation of improved access to nutrition and healthcare. However, lagged household expenditure on cigarettes shows no statistically significant effect on HAZ and WAZ scores, suggesting that resource diversion from products for essential needs may be mitigated by compensatory household behaviors or informal support systems. Child age is weakly but consistently negatively associated with WAZ, likely reflecting age-related nutritional changes, while gender effects are modest and inconsistent.

CONCLUSIONS: These findings highlight the complex interplay of socioeconomic and demographic factors in child health. While reducing tobacco expenditure could theoretically free up resources for essential goods, the nuanced effects observed underscore the need for a comprehensive approach. Policies such as tobacco tax increases and public health education should be complemented by deeper investigations into intra-household dynamics and broader poverty alleviation efforts to sustainably improve child nutrition and health outcomes.

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Visualising traceability data of tobacco products

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

The EU traceability system for tobacco products generates data that can be useful in a wide range of analyses. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is the only Swedish authority with access to the EU traceability database. We are exploring ways to visualise this data alongside other databases, such as income levels, population demographics, and public health statistics, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of tobacco consumption patterns.

The traceability system provides that all unit packets of tobacco products are to be marked with a unique identifier in order for their movements to be recorded in the European Union. Each unit packet of tobacco products shall be recorded and traced to a specific retail outlet, enabling detailed mapping of tobacco sales and consumption patterns across cities and municipalities.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: By combining and visualising this data with other datasets, we aim to show how traceability data potentially can be used for public health initiatives.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The primary objective of the traceability system is to combat illicit trade in tobacco products. The presentation will show how traceability data can be used for the purpose of indicating illegal sales activities and to guide enforcement authorities against illicit trade. By this presentation we will show how traceability data can be used by different national authorities for different purposes such as health, illicit trade, taxes, environment etc.

CONCLUSIONS: The combination and visualisation of traceability data with other databases provide valuable insights into tobacco consumption. These efforts highlight the potential for such data to support a wide range of public health initiatives.

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Enforcement of school tobacco policies (STPs): students' and staff's perception of their school's commitment

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BACKGROUND: School tobacco policy (STP) is an alternative promising strategy for schools to become smoke-free. However, evidence on their effectiveness to prevent adolescent smoking is still lacking, mainly because of poor implementation. Qualitative research suggest that both students and staff perceive these policies as a further restriction to their autonomy and staff is reluctant to enforce them. This study aims to evaluate both actors' opinion about the acceptability and feasibility of STPs at school.

METHODS: This study is part of the ADHAIRE trial (NCT06655038). We collected and analyzed data from the ADHAirE study, Belgium. Students (n = 3064) and staff members (n = 610) from 18 secondary schools reported to what extend their school did enough against smoking (too much, enough, not enough) and other socio-demographic and tobacco-related statements. We used chi-squared to evaluate the concordance between staff' and students' opinion of their school STP and logistic regression models to assess potential explanatory factors of this opinion.

RESULTS: 42% of the students (vs. 47% of the staff members) found that their school did not do enough to prevent smoking, whereas 8.8% (vs. 1.2%) found that their school did too much to prevent smoking (students vs. staff Chi-squared: $p<0.0001$). Smoking status (never smoker, $p<0.0001$), gender (female, $p<0.01$)) and high visibility of smoking on school premises or at the school gate ($p<0.01$) were associated to reporting that more STP enforcement was needed.

CONCLUSIONS: Unlike previous qualitative data, our results show that a large proportion of the school community supports better implementation of STPs to prevent smoking. However, there is a difference between staff and students on that matter. Supporting an advocacy coalition on that topic could enhance implementation of STPs.

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Gen Z GenStrong against vaping campaign

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Thailand launched the GenZ Strong program targeting those born between 1995 and 2009 to be a smoke-free generation. Social media and digital media are utilized to convince the target youths not to start Vaping.

Objectives: Raise Awareness: Educate GenZ about the health risks of vaping, including nicotine addiction / Empower Youth Leadership to lead the charge in raising awareness about vaping / Combat Misinformation: / Advocate for Stronger Policies:

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The project has expanded to engage more youth leaders and organizations. In 2017, about 100 youth leaders were engaged to support, promote, and share the Gen Z project with their network through workshops and training for 5,000 youths nationwide. In 2019, a new initiative 'MPOWER GEN Z' was designed to build and strengthen the capacity of youth groups in different areas including media (writing news, creative video clips) and tobacco industry monitoring and surveillance through a 'Gen Z Academy Program'. Six Gen Z Academy workshops were held with the participation of 500 young leaders across ten provinces between 2019 and 2025.

RESULTS AND IMPACT:

- Z membership has grown from 1,501 (in 2022) to 14,393 in 2025 from 32 provinces across Thailand.
- Advocate for Stronger Policies and Provide capacity building for smoke-free schools
- Engagement in social media platforms
- To disseminate information on tobacco control besides encouraging youth in the network to participate in creative activities
- Connecting with net idols and influencers as motivation and inspiration for youths.

CONCLUSIONS: The GenZ GenStrong Against Vaping Campaign is a call to action for young people to take

control of their health and future by rejecting the harmful influence of vaping. Through education, empowerment, and advocacy, ASH Thailand aims to build a generation of informed and strong leaders who will actively fight against the rise of e-cigarettes and work towards a healthier, vape-free future for Thailand's youth.

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Distribution of cigarette retail points around middle schools and association with the students'smoking behavior in Beijing, 2024

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BACKGROUND: In order to protect youth from tobacco, the China Minors' Protection Act banned cigarette and e-cigarette retail points around schools. Beijing has legislation banning cigarette retail points within 100 meters of schools. This study examined the distribution of cigarette retail points in Beijing and explored its association with student smoking behaviors, highlighting the suggestion for a specific distance.

METHODS: We analyzed data from the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, including 7,847 secondary students from 60 schools across 10 districts of Beijing. From July to August 2024, we surveyed the distribution of cigarette retail points within 100m, 200m, and 500m distances to the gates of these schools. The distribution of cigarette retail points was described separately, using straight-line distance and walking distance. The Logistic regression analysis was used to explore the association between the number of cigarette retail points and the student smoking behavior.

RESULTS: A total of 60 schools were surveyed. In terms of straight-line distance, the proportion of schools that have cigarette retail points within 100m, 200m, and 500m around the school gate was 21.7%, 61.7%, and 96.7%, respectively. In terms of walking distance, the proportion was 16.7%, 41.7%, and 86.7%, respectively. The number of cigarette retail points within 200m (both straight-line and walking distance) were positively associated with increased odds of ever smoking (OR: 1.07, 95% CI: 1.01 to 1.06; OR: 1.07, 95% CI: 1.01 to 1.14) and current smoking (OR: 1.07, 95% CI: 1.01 to 1.06; OR: 1.14, 95% CI: 1.04 to 1.24).

CONCLUSIONS: Strengthening the enforcement of current legislation is necessary. If the cigarette retail points could be banned within 200 meters of the school gate, it might be more effective to protect youth from smoking.

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Prevalence and associated factors based on PRECEDE model for e-cigarette use among secondary school students in Bangkok, Thailand

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BACKGROUND: In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reinstatement of regular educational activities, youth worldwide, including those in Bangkok, Thailand, are facing a new public health challenge: the escalating e-cigarette epidemic. This study aimed to identify the prevalence and associated factors based on the PRECEDE model for e-cigarette use among secondary school students in Bangkok, Thailand.

METHODS: A cross-sectional analytic study was conducted in a targeted school offering instruction for all secondary grades (grades 7 – 12) under the Smoke-Free Family Program. The sample was systematically collected from the entire student population attending school on the day of data collection, meeting inclusion criteria, resulting in 2,506 participants. Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires from August to September 2023. The instruments used were validated and reliable, meeting accepted standards. Multiple logistic regression with adjusted odds ratio (AOR) was employed to investigate significant factors associated with e-cigarette use.

RESULTS: 21.6% (95%CI: 20.0%, 23.2%) of the students had first tried e-cigarettes. Among these, 6 in 10 were regular e-cigarette users within the past 30 days. 20.8% (95%CI: 19.2%, 22.3%) are currently e-cigarette users. Regular e-cigarette use is significantly associated with factors derived from the PRECEDE model, with a 30.0% increase in risk. These factors included a GPA of less than 2.5, insufficient health literacy regarding the dangers and effects of e-cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products, positive attitudes towards e-cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products, and having close contacts who smoke, including siblings/relatives and close friends.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the need for comprehensive school-based intervention programs that address multiple factors contributing to student e-cigarette use, directly targeting prevention and reduction efforts.

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Political entanglements with tobacco industry influence on Sri Lanka: Presidential Candidates 2024

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BACKGROUND: The presidential election to elect the 9th Executive President of Sri Lanka was held in September 2024. The Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC), a subsidiary of British American Tobacco (BAT), maintains a monopoly over the manufacture and sale of cigarettes in Sri Lanka. This is despite a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship under the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) Act. Objective; examine engagements between the tobacco industry (TI) and candidates in the 2024 Sri Lankan presidential election.

METHODS: Investigative research techniques were used, including key informant interviews, online content, industry publications, news reports, and community-level documentary evidence. Data were analyzed deductively based on the themes of 'type of engagement,' 'TI investment,' and 'potential impact.

RESULTS: All four leading candidates demonstrated positive associations with the tobacco industry. Three had a history of direct engagement with CTC, while the fourth publicly supported the beedi industry during the campaign. Former Agriculture Minister: Accepted CTC sponsorship for water reservoir renovations. CTC cultivates most of the tobacco used locally for cigarette production and has been accused of exploiting Sri Lankan farmers. Former Prime Minister: Appointed CTC-affiliated individuals to government positions, including a former CTC chairman. Notable actions included promoting tobacco cultivation through an official letter (August 2017) and interfering in tobacco taxation policies. Hambantota District Parliament Member: Supported the 'Sustainable Agriculture Development Programme(SADP) Mega Project,' which CTC conducted in collaboration with the 'Na Sevana' project. A CTC Director was part of the project's executive committee. All these engagements received positive media coverage, amplifying TI influence.

CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco industry's involvement with key political figures in Sri Lanka poses significant risks to public health, policy integrity. Findings emphasize need for a national policy to implement WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3 to safeguard public health policies from TI influence.

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Building capacity in tobacco control in India: Development and implementation of online courses

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BACKGROUND: India faces significant public health challenges from tobacco use, exacerbated by limited awareness and a shortage of trained leaders across sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the urgency for scalable and accessible training solutions. In response to these challenges, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched multiple Tobacco programs aimed at training individuals at various levels. However, these initiatives have not fully addressed the growing demand for trained personnel, partly due to logistical constraints, the diversity of India's population, and regional disparities in access to resources. The development and implementation of online tobacco control training programs in India present a promising solution to address the capacity-building gap in tobacco control.

METHODS: The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control established in a tertiary healthcare institute of India since 2018 had developed a self-paced comprehensive online courses on tobacco control. An e-learning platform, featuring basic and advanced modules tailored to professional needs, was developed taking consensus from experts from across the country. A total of 9 and 17 modules consisting of 27 and 71 topics were further established with help of subject-experts. Learning methods included pre- and post-tests, project assignments, and employment data analysis to track progress. Interactive sessions, multimedia content, and case studies were employed to enhance engagement.

RESULTS: Total 309 enrolled participants from 29 states, 215 completed the course, yielding a 70% completion rate. Pre- and post-test results demonstrated significant knowledge improvement, and evaluations showed high satisfaction levels ($p<0.5$). Participants expressed strong intentions to apply knowledge in their professional contexts. Challenges, including time management and content adjustments, were identified, shaping recommendations for future iterations.

CONCLUSIONS: The program effectively built capacity among professionals to tackle tobacco control challenges in India, showcasing the potential of flexible, scalable online training during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations include addressing completion barriers, expanding outreach to underrepresented regions.

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Understanding the integration of brief advice for tobacco cessation in healthcare: A qualitative study using the COM-B model

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BACKGROUND: Brief advice for tobacco cessation is a critical component in the reduction of tobacco-related morbidity and mortality. This qualitative study, based on the Capability, Opportunity, Motivation-Behavior (COM-B) model, investigates the enablers and barriers to the implementation of brief tobacco cessation advice in healthcare settings.

METHODS: The exploratory qualitative study followed COREQ guidelines to explore the integration of brief tobacco cessation advice in healthcare. Data were collected during a webinar panel discussion involving diverse stakeholders, including healthcare practitioners, public health specialists, policymakers, representatives from non-governmental and civil society organizations, and tobacco control advocates. The panel discussion was recorded and transcribed verbatim. A combination of deductive and inductive thematic analysis techniques was applied to the transcripts, with the COM-B model guiding the classification of themes into the Capability, Opportunity, and Motivation domains. Using deductive content analysis, the coding scheme was established based on the COM-B model. For cross-validation of emergent themes researchers have dicsussion. Data saturation was established as there were no more new

themes that emerged.
RESULTS: Three key themes were identified in the study: capability, opportunity, and motivation. Capability gaps included inadequate training and awareness of cessation advice to be integrated in routine practice. Opportunity barriers included limited resources, lack of institutional policies, and competing priorities hindering routine integration of cessation advice. Motivation was influenced by professional values, patient receptivity, and perceived intervention efficacy. Cross-cutting themes call for collaborative policies, expanded referral systems, and intersectoral partnerships to strengthen cessation efforts.
CONCLUSIONS: Brief tobacco cessation advice should be integrated into routine healthcare. Multi-level barriers need to be addressed in this process. Recommendations included customized training based on the requirements of healthcare providers and enhanced support at the institution level along with intersectoral collaboration. Strengthened tobacco control is expected to reduce the global burden of tobacco-induced diseases.
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Experiences of pregnant women on receiving an integrated tobacco cessation service within the antenatal care services in rural India

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BACKGROUND: The Global Adult Tobacco Survey-2 (India) reports that 7.5% of pregnant women use tobacco, with a high prevalence of smokeless tobacco use in rural India. The lack of awareness and cessation support within antenatal care services often results in pregnant women continuing or initiating tobacco use during pregnancy, struggling to quit on their own.
METHODS: LifeFirst tobacco cessation service was integrated into the workflow of a rural community-based maternal and child health (MCH) program implemented by an NGO from May 2022 to April 2024. 98 women received cessation service during pregnancy and the postpartum period, of which 26 were selected using purposive sampling method, those reporting abstinence(13) and continued use(13) at the end of the intervention. Data saturation was attained. Implementation research frameworks guided the development of data collection tools and the framework method was employed for thematic data analysis.
RESULTS: Pregnancy was identified as a teachable moment leading to genuine quit attempts, requiring 3–6 months to achieve tobacco abstinence. Facilitators for abstinence included fear of adverse pregnancy outcomes, lack of withdrawal symptoms, support from spouse, and regret about not learning the harms earlier. Continued use was attributed to early initiation of tobacco consumption in adolescence, long-term habituation, influence from family members and spouse using tobacco, and previous failed quit attempts. Culturally appropriate tailored cessation support through community health workers who lived in the same village and consistency in monthly home visits increased the acceptability of the intervention.
CONCLUSIONS: Raising awareness among pregnant women and their communities is critical for initiating cessation efforts. Integrating accessible cessation services within antenatal care can reduce tobacco use, mitigate adverse pregnancy outcomes, and address the normalization of the use of locally prepared smokeless tobacco products. Scaling such interventions can significantly enhance maternal and child health outcomes.
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Gaps and challenges in compliance with smoke-free area regulations in Indonesia: Exploring stakeholder perspectives

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BACKGROUND: Smoking and its harmful effects on public health has been a growing concern globally. The Smoke-Free Area (SFA) regulation aims to reduce public exposure to cigarette smoke and protect the rights of non-smokers. Surabaya City in Indonesia, has implemented the SFA regulation with the enactment of Regional Regulation Number 9 of 2019. The policy mandates SFA implementation in seven types of places, requiring 'no-smoking' signage by establishment representatives. TThis study investigates barriers to compliance with the SFA policy, aiming to identify enforcement challenges four years after its enactment and provide insights for achieving full compliance.
METHODS: The research is a cross-sectional study and employs interviews with the responsible individuals at 500 randomly selected establishments in Surabaya City conducted in 2023. Among these, 170 establishments were found to be non-compliant with the policy, specifically by failing to install 'no-smoking' signage. The result further explored the specific reasons for the lack of adherence, categorizing the responses into distinct factors that contributing to non-compliance.
RESULTS: The most common reason for non-compliance with the SFA regulation was lack of knowledge, reported by 30%, followed by policy resistance at 22.9%. Additionally, 16.5% overestimated public awareness of the policy, assuming people would refrain from smoking without enforcement, 10.6% cited insufficient socialization of the policy. Other reasons included perception of unsupportive environment (5.9%), renovation (5.3%), economic interest (5.3%), where establishments feared a loss in business from enforcing the policy, and no obligation (3.5%).
CONCLUSIONS: The findings emphasize the importance of improving socialization and awareness campaigns to address gaps in knowledge and to overcome resistance. The government should actively disseminate information about the regulation through media, events, and the distribution of signages. These would not only educate the public about the policy but also provide the necessary

tools for compliance, thereby improving the overall implementation of the SFA regulation.

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Gender differences and commonalities in experiences and perceptions of interventions for smoking cessation and alcohol reduction: A qualitative systematic review

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BACKGROUND: There are notable gender differences in smoking behavior and alcohol use, barriers to quitting and help-seeking, as well as variations in intervention effectiveness. It is therefore important to explore how interventions may need to be adapted to different genders. This review provides an overview of gender differences and commonalities in experiences and perceptions of interventions for smoking cessation and alcohol reduction.

METHODS: A qualitative systematic literature search was carried out in March 2024, using four electronic databases: Web of Science, PubMed, PsycINFO and CINAHL. Keywords included terms for gender, intervention, alcohol use or smoking behavior, and experiences and perceptions. The results sections were analyzed using a thematic synthesis.

RESULTS: In total, 38 articles were included. Experiences and perceptions of interventions appear to be similar between women and men. However, there are some notable differences regarding the support accessibility (e.g., women need childcare options, men believe support is ineffective), setting (e.g., women need a women-only group, men are positive about self-guided app), support components (e.g., women experience social network engagement as helpful, men need incentives and competition), content topics (e.g., women want to focus on self-empowerment, men need anger management and do not need self-reflection), support approach (e.g., women experience a lack of open-minded approach), and support results (e.g., women feel empowered). In addition, findings from three studies about gender diverse people closely align with women and men. However, they report more positive experiences with support that takes issues related to their gender diverse background into account.

CONCLUSIONS: Experiences and perceptions of alcohol and smoking interventions are similar across genders. However, it may be important to consider the unique experiences and perceptions of different genders in tailoring to their needs.

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Not Around Us Project in county Louth

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Not Around Us (NAU) Campaign, launched by Healthy Louth in collaboration with Dundalk FC and supported by the HSE, aims to reduce smoking and vaping, particularly among young people in Dundalk. The initiative focuses on raising awareness of the dangers of second-hand smoke, denormalizing smoking for youth, and creating a supportive environment for quitting.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The campaign engages with Dundalk FC to promote its message, with signage around the stadium and social media exposure to over 60,000 followers. Regular promotion on League Of Ireland TV ensures broad visibility as well as NAU merchandise used during children's half time games. Additionally, the campaign has partnered with local schools through the `Tri Little Birds` programme, distributing workbooks that explain the importance of the NAU initiative. The World Cup of Football event, held at Oriel Park recently, provided a unique opportunity for students to play football while learning about the risks of smoking and vaping.

The Health Promotion team were invited to the event by Healthy Louth and Dundalk FC to discuss the dangers of smoking and vaping with over 150 students. A post-event evaluation showed an increase in students' knowledge about these risks. Dundalk FC became the first League of Ireland team to join the NAU campaign, setting a precedent for other clubs to follow.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The campaign has reached thousands through its high stadium attendance, social media, and school programs. It has helped raise awareness, educated young people, and promoted quitting tobacco. The NAU campaign has created a healthier, safer environment for the community, fostering support for those wishing to quit smoking or vaping and encouraging physical activity.

CONCLUSIONS: In conclusion, the **Not Around Us Campaign** has successfully engaged the community, particularly youth, in learning about the dangers of smoking and vaping, creating a lasting impact on both health awareness and behaviour.

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Tobacco law compliance in retail and restaurant sectors across the Maldives: Insights for effective enforcement

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use remains a critical public health challenge in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) like the Maldives, where effective enforcement of tobacco control laws is vital for reducing consumption. Despite the ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the enactment of the Maldives Tobacco Control Law (Act No. 15/2010), enforcement gaps persist. This study provides insights not only for the Maldives but also for other small-island developing states (SIDS) and LMICs facing similar socio-cultural and

resource challenges.
METHODS: A cross-sectional study evaluated compliance in 390 retail and restaurant establishments across urban and rural areas of the Maldives. A systematic observational checklist assessed adherence to key tobacco control regulations, including age verification, product labeling, sale of single cigarettes, no-smoking signage, and non-smoking policy enforcement. Comparative analyses explored compliance differences between retail types (e.g., supermarkets, convenience stores) and dining establishments, as well as urban-rural disparities.
RESULTS: Overall compliance was moderate, with notable gaps. Age verification was observed in 62% of retailers, while 71% complied with product labeling regulations. Single cigarette sales persisted in 38% of retailers. Among restaurants, 65% displayed no-smoking signage prominently, but enforcement of non-smoking policies was inconsistent, especially in outdoor areas. Urban establishments showed higher compliance compared to rural counterparts, highlighting geographical disparities.
CONCLUSIONS: Enforcing tobacco control laws requires innovative approaches such as targeted staff training, routine inspections, and public-private partnerships. Technology-driven tools for real-time monitoring and community-driven awareness campaigns can further enhance compliance. Localized strategies are essential for addressing urban-rural disparities. Lessons from this study offer scalable solutions for SIDS and LMICs, supporting global FCTC objectives and reducing tobacco-related harm worldwide.
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Exposing the hidden alliances: Civil societies as tobacco industry front groups

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry strategically uses corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, to discreetly enter schools, promoting their agenda under the guise of social good. This practice violates Tamilnadu Government Order 242 and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3.
Exposing these connections is challenging as these front groups are often respected in the community and lack transparency, making it difficult to prove their ties to the industry. This complicates efforts to hold them accountable and enforce regulations designed to protect public health policies from conflicts of interest.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: We identified the non-profit association Residents Awareness Association of Coimbatore(RAAC) worked as a front group in the schools which violated the Tamilnadu Government Order 242 and the WHO FCTC's Article 5.3 by WOW (Well being out of waste) programme. Through our advocacy and lobbying we addresed this issue. Then we approached the members of Article 5.3 committee which are as follows: 1.Health Department, 2.Education Department, 3.Law Department, and 4.FSSAI.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: As a result of this intervention the the Directorate of Public Health requested the District Health Officer of Coimatore to submit the action taken report within 15 days. Simultaneously the education and law department requested to take necessary action. Tamilnadu Food Safety and Administration department passed a letter representing that all the district collectors do not allow the tobacco industry in the school campus in the name of CSR with the help of front groups.
CONCLUSIONS: In conclusion, the tobacco industry's use of civil societies as front groups poses a significant challenge to effective tobacco control. These well-known NGOs and associations, acting as fronts for the industry, mislead the public and policymakers. Therefore, the tobacco control community must remain vigilant and work to expose these deceptive practices to protect public health.
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#SmokeFreeNollywood: How a strategic alliance to combat tobacco promotion and protect youth from exposure worked in Nigeria

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2015, Nigeria enacted its National Tobacco Control Act and, in May 2019, passed its National Tobacco Control Regulations. These laws prohibit tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS), with a particular focus on protecting children under 18 years. However, the tobacco industry continues to circumvent them by leveraging Nollywood, Nigeria's film industry and Africa's largest movie platform, to glamorise smoking. With Nollywood ranking second globally in output and reaching millions worldwide through services like Netflix and Amazon Prime, its influence—especially on young viewers—is immense.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: CAPPA launched the #SmokeFreeNollywood campaign in 2020, mobilising strategic action to enforce the TAPS ban and break the tobacco industry's grip on Nollywood. The campaign collaborated with Nigeria's National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) and key Nollywood stakeholders, including producers and actors. Through advocacy meetings, targeted media activities, and social media campaigns, CAPPA encouraged the development of a Code of Practice and a film-specific Regulation to curb the promotion of smoking in movies.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: In 2024, the NFVCB enacted the first-ever independent Regulation in Africa targeting the glamorisation of tobacco products, smoking, and ritual killings in films and entertainment content. This Regulation enhances existing national tobacco control laws by mandating the display of health warnings at the start and end of films, on-screen warnings during scenes involving tobacco or nicotine use, and ratings for movies containing tobacco consumption scenes, as well

as disclaimers to prevent brand marketing. Additionally, filmmakers have adopted a self-regulatory Code of Conduct to ensure compliance.

CONCLUSIONS: These achievements reflect progress in curbing the tobacco industry's exploitation of entertainment platforms to target youth. A key takeaway from this development, which can serve as a best practice for replication, is the critical importance of public health advocacy organisations building strategic alliances with regulatory bodies based on strong mutual objectives.

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Strengthening tobacco control law implementation in Bangladesh: A comprehensive approach to capacity building and monitoring through digital innovation

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco control law implementation in Bangladesh faces several challenges, including limited law enforcement capacity, inconsistent monitoring, and inadequate communication between stakeholders. Sanitary Inspectors (SIs), as key field-level authorized officers for tobacco control (TC) law implementation, often lack the training and resources to navigate the complexities of TC laws, address lawsuits, and overcome field-level implementation challenges. This gap hampers effective implementation and monitoring, leading to partial compliance with TC regulations.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address these challenges, a comprehensive training program was designed and delivered to 444 SIs across Bangladesh, focusing on tobacco control law implementation in the field level. A WhatsApp group was established during the training to serve as a dynamic platform for SIs to share their field experiences, consult with advocates and higher authorities on legal matters, and discuss implementation challenges. Additionally, based on feedback from participants, two key initiatives were taken: revising the Terms of Reference (ToR) for tobacco control taskforces to enhance their functionality and creating an online reporting system with a standardized template to improve monitoring and reporting of TC law implementation activities.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The training have significantly strengthened the capacity of SIs to enforce tobacco control laws. The WhatsApp group facilitated real-time communication, enabling timely legal consultations and peer support. Taking initiatives for revising ToR for taskforces will streamline their operations, while the online reporting system will ensure more efficient and consistent monitoring. Collectively, these measures will improved compliance rates and bolster the overall implementation mechanism for TC laws in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSIONS: This initiative demonstrates the value of integrating training, digital platforms, and stakeholder feedback to address gaps in tobacco control law implementation. This approach empowered SIs and established sustainable mechanisms for effective monitoring and implementation, serving as a model for other low- and middle-income countries to strengthen tobacco control and public health.

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Does exposure to e-cigarette advertisement on social media increase susceptibility to e-cigarette use among Indonesian youth?

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BACKGROUND: Social media (SM) serves as a powerful vector in shaping behaviors and perceptions related to e-cigarette use. However, SM often bypasses tobacco control regulations, enabling tobacco companies to target youth through campaigns, influencer partnerships, and innovative strategies. This study examines the role of SM marketing exposure, individual factors, and peer and family influence on susceptibility to e-cigarette use among Indonesian youth. Susceptibility refers to the intention or openness to try e-cigarettes, an important precursor to initiation, making it a critical focus for prevention efforts.

METHODS: An online, cross-sectional survey was conducted from March to August 2023, involving Indonesian youth aged 15–24 from three provinces with the highest vaping prevalence (N=1,600; 37% male). The analytic sample consisted of 1,010 non-experimenters. Path analysis assessed proximal factors (exposure to e-cigarette ads on SM, peers' e-cigarette use) and distal factors (sex, age, school characteristics, sensation-seeking, siblings' e-cigarette use) influencing susceptibility to e-cigarette use among non-experimenters. Proximal variables were tested as mediators.

RESULTS: Age, male sex, a higher number of friends using e-cigarettes, public school enrollment, and higher sensation-seeking scores significantly predicted susceptibility to e-cigarette use. Conversely, exposure to SM advertisements and siblings' e-cigarette use were not associated with susceptibility. Path analysis showed that peers' e-cigarette use mediated the effects of higher sensation-seeking, male sex, and older age on susceptibility, while exposure to SM advertisements did not.

CONCLUSIONS: This study found that exposure to e-cigarette advertisements on SM did not predict susceptibility among non-experimenters. Further

research is needed to determine whether SM ads drive initiation or primarily sustain e-cigarette use among Indonesian youth. Culturally relevant tobacco control interventions should focus on mitigating peer influence and regulating digital tobacco marketing.

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Comparison of tobacco use behaviour and cessation outcomes during the pre-COVID and COVID period in Mumbai, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on India with over 531,000 deaths and nearly 45,000,000 cases. Evidence suggested that tobacco use was associated with higher infection rates and adverse COVID-19 outcomes, proving tobacco use more harmful than ever. LifeFirst, a tobacco dependence treatment programme offers tobacco cessation counselling in healthcare settings. This provided a unique opportunity to assess the changes in tobacco use behavior and cessation outcomes among tobacco users registered for LifeFirst before and during the first two years of COVID-19 pandemic.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Tobacco users were identified by the staff from nine healthcare facilities catering to urban slums of Mumbai. Current tobacco users willing to quit tobacco voluntarily enrolled in the six-month counselling service. During the preceding year of COVID-19 pandemic, 657 tobacco users registered for the LifeFirst programme while 284 registered in the first year of COVID and 881 in the second year.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The proportion of registered tobacco users who were smoking decreased during the COVID period from 20.9% to 14.5%. The reported importance of quitting was highest in the first year of COVID. Adherence to the counselling program and the 7-day point prevalence abstinence (PPA) at six months were highest during the first year of COVID (92.4% and 81.3% respectively) as compared to before COVID (78% and 62.4% respectively) and second year of COVID (89.8% and 78.8% respectively). The 7-day PPA was higher among smokers as compared to smokeless users during COVID.

CONCLUSIONS: Changes in tobacco use behavior were observed among users which can be attributed to the public health measures adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tobacco cessation intervention has been successful and should be replicated and scaled up with relevant public health education for promoted of tobacco cessation services.

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Policy gaps and implementation challenges in the Netherlands: Supermarkets sales ban and flavour ban on e-cigarettes

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Dutch adult smoking prevalence trend has stagnated at around 19%. Meanwhile, vaping rates among young people have quadrupled. A tobacco(-related) products supermarket sales ban (July 2024) and an e-cigarette flavour ban (January 2023) have been implemented to address these issues, however policy gaps have impacted their effectiveness. For instance, a registration obligation for tobacco points-of-sale remains unimplemented. This, coupled with a lack of a licensing system, has hampered the effectiveness and ability to monitor the supermarket sales ban. The flavour ban on e-cigarettes has been undermined by many factors: the illegal market, insufficient enforcement and compliance, and industry pressure. In the first half of 2024, 21% of shop inspections recorded violations of the flavour ban.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Civil society lobbies for a registration obligation and faster implementation of sales restriction to specialty tobacco shops to 1) reduce the time available to set up new tobacco points-of-sale and 2) enable implementation of a licensing system. Additionally, we have lobbied for increased powers for our national enforcement agency, and neutral packaging for e-cigarettes to facilitate enforcement. To raise social awareness among scholars and parents, we work together with other NGO's and doctors.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: These lobbying activities are ongoing and so many concrete results are yet to be seen, however, what we have realised so far is that the discussion surrounding the registration obligation has gained speed and the national enforcement agency has gained more resources and powers. Moreover, the government is currently working on an action plan against vaping, responding to calls from general public and civil society.

CONCLUSIONS: The recent supermarket sales and e-cigarette flavour ban show the pioneering role of tobacco control policy in the Netherlands. However, challenges remain. Further efforts remain essential to tackle smoking prevalence and the vaping epidemic.

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Barriers and opportunities in Zambia's health tax policy on tobacco, alcohol, and SSBs

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BACKGROUND: Zambia is facing a growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), necessitating policies targeting risk factors such as alcohol, tobacco, and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). Health taxes on these products can reduce consumption and improve public

health outcomes. This study examines Zambia's health tax policy, focusing on tobacco, alcohol, and SSBs, using a case study approach and the Policy Analysis Triangle Framework to explore political, economic, and social barriers to effective implementation, alongside the role of evidence in shaping these policies.

METHODS: Data were collected through document reviews of government priorities, public health policies, and parliamentary reports, complemented by semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from government, business, and civil society. Thematic analysis was applied to interview data, while document analysis combined keyword frequency analysis and qualitative content review.

RESULTS: The study finds that Zambia's policies align with some international best practices, such as including e-cigarettes in the tax framework. However, tax exemptions for locally produced cigarettes and differentiated alcohol tax rates raise equity concerns and may undermine health goals. Despite a growing focus on health in national development plans, tobacco, alcohol, and SSBs receive limited attention in public health policies, with economic considerations often outweighing health concerns.

Political will and leadership have facilitated health tax reforms, such as the adoption of the SSB tax. However, industry influence, policy incoherence, and the framing of health taxes as punitive hinder their full implementation. Evidence use in policy decisions is limited, relying more on international data than local evidence, further misaligning policies. Effective stakeholder engagement and clearer communication of local evidence are essential for improving policy outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS: This study offers recommendations to enhance cross-ministerial coordination, counter industry interference, and promote evidence-based policymaking for more effective health tax policies.

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Cigarette sharing and its association with smoking cessation in China, 2022: Findings from the China National Adult Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND: Cigrarette sharing, a China-specific social norm, has not been assessed at the provincial level or analyzed the degree of its association with smoking cessation in China. Such analysis would provide critial intelligence to make evidence-based tobacco control practices more culturally sensitive and targeted.

METHODS: Using the data of 120,220 adults from the China National Adult Tobacco Survey, we estimated the prevalence of past 30-day cigarette sharing for 31 provinces of China in 2022 accounting for the complex sampling design and created choropleth maps to visualize its geographical patterning by smoking status. We fitted two-level mutivariable regression models to examine the association between cigarette sharing and quit intention,cessation and relapse, respectively.

RESULTS: In 2022, the estimated prevalence of past 30-day cigarette sharing was 21.2% among the Chinese adult population, highest among current smokers (72.0%), followed by former smokers (13.6%), and lowest among never smokers (4.3%). There were wide geographical differences in the prevalence of cigarette sharing among provinces, ranging form 7.1% (Tibet) to 32.4% (Hubei). Among current and former smokers, provinces with higher prevalence of sharing were clustered in the central, southeast and south with denser populations or more developed economies. Among never smokers, the prevalence of sharing was higher in central and north provinces, while lower in economically developed coastal provinces and underdeveloped provinces. Cigarette sharing was negatively associated with quit intention and cessation and positively associated with relapse adjusting for potential covariates.

CONCLUSIONS: In China, cigarette sharing varies geographically, with notable differences in geographic patterns between ever smokers and never smokers. Cigarette sharing is negatively associated with smoking cessation, especially among light smokers, and positively linked to relapse. Therefore, improving public health education to change social norms around cigarette sharing is urgent. Implementing targeted policies such as graphic health warnings on cigarette package to reduce sharing and thereby promote cessation.

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Indoor air pollution among smoking households in urban slums of Cochin corporation, Kerala, India

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BACKGROUND: Indoor air pollution remains a significant public health concern in urban slums of developing countries, with tobacco smoke being a major contributor. This study aims to estimate indoor air pollutants and its associated factors in smoking households located in urban slums of Kerala (India).

METHODS: This cross-sectional analysis uses baseline data from a cluster randomized trial conducted in urban slums of Cochin Corporation, Kerala. Data were collected from 657 households with active indoor smokers and included details on household characteristics and smoking behaviors. Direct measurements of particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) and particulate matter 10 (PM10) were done using a real-time air quality monitor placed in the main living area of each household. Continuous variables were reported as median [Q1, Q3] and categorical variables as frequency with percentages. Multivariable logistic regression identified factors associated with pollutant

levels.

RESULTS: Among the 657 households surveyed, majority (63.9%) belonged to a lower socioeconomic status. Overcrowding was observed in 38% of homes, while inadequate ventilation was seen in 70%. The median concentrations of PM2.5 and PM10 were 29.6 [14.9, 48.7] $\mu g/m^3$ and 31.1 [16.4, 50.8] $\mu g/m^3$ respectively. Multivariable regression showed that lower socioeconomic background (AOR 1.7, 95% CI: 1.1, 2.5) and households without a multimorbid smoker (AOR 7.7, 95% CI: 1.0, 58.2) were more likely to get exposed to PM2.5 ⩾ 15 $\mu g/m^3$. Whereas households with an employed female (AOR 1.7, 95% CI: 1.1, 2.4) and where biomass was used as a cooking fuel (AOR 2.1, 95% CI: 1.2, 3.7) were more likely to get exposed to PM10 ⩾ 45 $\mu g/m^3$.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings from the study revealed elevated levels of PM2.5 and PM10. Interventions to reduce indoor smoking should target households with low socioeconomic background, with otherwise healthy smokers, with employed women, and households using biomass fuel, to protect vulnerable urban populations.

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Regulatory strategies for implementing tobacco/nicotine flavor restrictions: Comparative qualitative case studies of six jurisdictions

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BACKGROUND: Governments are adopting diverse approaches to restricting flavored tobacco/nicotine products. We aimed to understand the challenges of structuring and implementing regulations restricting flavors to inform jurisdictions considering these policies.

METHODS: Comparative, qualitative case studies of tobacco/nicotine product flavor restrictions across six jurisdictions (Canada, Netherlands, UK, California, Massachusetts, New York, inclusive of lower level governments). Integrated analysis of existing research/grey literature; relevant laws, regulations, policy documents; 42 semi-structured interviews with regulators and experts in advisory roles. Two independent researchers thematically coded transcripts across multiple iterations to reach agreement.

RESULTS: Governments classify flavors across two dimensions: Holistic (e.g., characterizing flavor) versus Additive (e.g., specific chemical) assessment of individual products; and Restricted versus Permitted approaches to building lists of what is or is not prohibited. Interviewees noted that Permitted Lists are likely to result in greater market restriction. This could impact switching behaviors. Permitted Lists were seen as potentially simpler for regulators contending with novel products amid resource constraints.

Three tools for flavor determination were commonly used: product testing; sensory evaluation; and use of attestations/written evidence. Each comes with trade-offs, e.g., product testing is accurate but is resource intensive. Interviewees noted the utility of being able to use a variety of industry statements and promotional materials as evidence of flavor, but expressed concern about related regulatory burdens.

Common challenges included the difficulty of maintaining accurate physical and online/social media retail information, coordinating domestic restrictions and import measures, and evasive practices, e.g., cash sales or stashing. Keeping up with evasive industry adaptations designed to evade regulations, e.g., 'Non-menthol' menthol products or redesigned disposable vapes, was a key concern.

CONCLUSIONS: This study affirms the usefulness of sharing policy practices and frameworks that focus on regulatory details. Moving forward, evaluation of practices such as Permissive Listing will be vital.

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Estimating the costs of tobacco waste prevention and mitigation in Costa Rica

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BACKGROUND: This study addresses the relationship between tobacco consumption and its environmental impact in Costa Rica, with a specific focus on tobacco product waste (TPW). Despite being home to approximately 5% of the planet's species while occupying only 0.03% of Earth's surface, Costa Rica faces significant environmental challenges stemming from TPW, including cigarette waste, and electronic devices. This waste is a source of pollution, affecting water quality, air, and ecosystems. Additionally, they impose substantial financial costs on communities and public institutions rather than the tobacco industry.

METHODS: The methodology employed in this study focuses on estimating the prevention and mitigation costs of TPW. This approach quantifies costs associated with three key dimensions: solid waste management, water pollution, and CO2 emissions. Data from official sources, such as the Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Statistics and Census, were used to estimate the environmental and financial impact of TPW between 2015 and 2023. Avoided costs were also projected under a scenario of a 30% increase in tobacco taxes for the same period.

RESULTS: The results show that between 2015 and 2023, TPW generated 122,029 metric tons of waste annually, contaminated 718,344,952 cubic meters of water, and produced 167.5 thousand tons of CO2. The total costs associated with TPW, including waste management, water treatment, and CO2 mitigation, amounted to over 936 million USD. If tobacco taxes had been increased by 30% in 2015, by the end of 2023, more than 168 million USD in TPW-related costs could have been avoided.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the need to strengthen public and fiscal policies to hold the tobacco industry accountable for the environmental costs of its products. This study underscores the urgency of adopting comprehensive measures, including tax increases, effective waste regulation, and the promotion of a circular economy, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

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The rise of toy and cartoon vaping devices as predatory marketing strategies targeting youth in Thailand

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BACKGROUND: Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) or E-cigarettes (e-cig) have been invented since the beginning of the new millennium. Their appearances have evolved into five generations during the past decade, from cigarette-like as 1st generation to sleek e-pens, from pens to refillable tanks, then to pre-filled mods as 4th generation. Recently, e-cig industry has marketed its latest vaping devices which resembled toys and cartoon miniatures as 5th generation design. The toy and cartoon vaping devices (toy vapes or cartoon vapes) are available in Thailand and went viral in late 2022, raising significant concern, particularly predatory marketing tactics enticing youth through discreet design.

METHODS: We have conducted online surveillance research from September 2023 to Feb 2024, tracking e-cig black market shops on websites and social media platforms and monitoring e-cig marketing strategies.

RESULTS: Results revealed 3 important key findings, toy vapes used famous cartoon characters and playful shapes as product design including Sponge Bob, Super Mario, Gloomy Bear, Molly, Tom & Jerry and Doraemon which may encourage youth to experiment. Toy vapes are disposable devices which cost 250-350 BHT with up to 8000-10,000 puffs when recharged. Retailers have claimed on their websites cartoon vapes were marketed to adults as collectibles, however, all black market online shops can be easily accessed and are open to public purchase.

CONCLUSIONS: The banning of electronic smoking devices has been in place in Thailand since 2014, including import and sales. Several studies, however, revealed thriving black markets through online and illegal onsite shops, suggesting lack of control of such products and failed enforcement of violations. The results of this study highlighted the need for a stricter oversight and enforcement of online tobacco retailers on every social media platform in Thailand.

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The smoke of war: Tobacco in conflict zones

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BACKGROUND: Ever since World War I, when the U.S. government defined the tobacco industry as 'essential' and included tobacco in soldiers' rations, the industry has taken advantage of the stress, disruption and instability caused by conflict in order to maintain and even increase its profits. The tobacco industry is currently operating in zones of active or recent conflict including Sudan, Israel-Palestine, and Russia-Ukraine. In 2018, the Convention Secretariat produced a report on WHO FCTC implementation in complex emergency situations. A COP decision later that year called upon Parties in these situations to continue to fulfil their WHO FCTC obligations as much as possible. This research builds on the report, asking to what extent tobacco control is viable during conflict. The aim is to show how tobacco control researchers may support governments to counter industry interference even in contexts of limited policymaking and enforcement capacity.

METHODS: A review of grey literature and internal tobacco industry documents, alongside online media monitoring of industry activity in conflict zones.

RESULTS: Tobacco control infrastructure may be destroyed in conflict zones; specialists may be killed or displaced. Pharmaceutical supply chains, including for products used to treat tobacco dependence, are often disrupted. War has a detrimental effect on mental health, which may lead to higher tobacco use prevalence. The tobacco industry continues to access policymakers, whilst adapting its supply chains to ensure flow of its products. There is also evidence that the tobacco industry has been complicit in the illicit trade in conflict zones.

CONCLUSIONS: The global tobacco epidemic remains a major public health threat even in times of war. Local public health communities and policymakers must be supported by their global counterparts, in order to resist tobacco industry interference, fulfil their WHO FCTC obligations, and make tobacco control a cornerstone of post-conflict reconstruction.

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Assessing the Influence of Single Cigarette Sales on Smoking Behavior: An empirical study of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: In Bangladesh, 15 million adults smoke cigarettes (GATS 2017). Despite the relatively high tax rates, cigarettes remain affordable due to lower base-prices,

contributing to increase in smoking prevalence, especially among youth. The higher smoking rates largely attributed to selling single-stick cigarettes, which significantly undermines the efficacy of tax measures. Furthermore, purpose of Graphic Health Warnings (GHW) has become ineffective due to selling single-stick cigarettes. This study assesses and addresses the purchasing habits and capabilities of smokers, with an emphasis on the frequency of single-stick cigarette purchases.

METHODS: This quantitative study surveyed through a structured questionnaire. A total 500 smokers responded through Google Forms from January to August 2024, 40% of them were 35+ years, and 60% of them were between 19 to 35 years.

RESULTS: The study found that 70.4% respondents purchased single-stick cigarettes, in contrast to 29.6% who purchased packs. Young groups 62% purchased single-stick cigarettes, compared to 38% of older groups. Also, distinct patterns and motivations associated with cigarette purchasing behaviors among different age groups. The motivations for purchasing single cigarettes included: evading GHWs on cigarette packs (12%), financial constraints preventing the purchase of full packs (51%), a preference to avoid storing or smoking at home (6%), the perception that single cigarettes may help to decrease smoking (25%), and the desire to avoid the burden of carrying full packs (6%).

CONCLUSIONS: Single-stick cigarette sales significantly undermine tobacco control efforts. The ability to buy a single stick rather than a full pack decreases the visibility of smoking habits, making it easier for young smokers to avoid detection by family and friends. The sale of single cigarettes must be prohibited immediately to reduce cigarette consumption, discourage non-smoker youth from initiation. This strategy could play a crucial role in public health initiatives aimed at reducing smoking prevalence and protecting the health of future generations.

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Youth nicotine product use and current regulations in the Nordic and Baltic countries

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BACKGROUND: The harmful impact of tobacco use on public health is well-documented. However, the emergence of new nicotine-containing products, such as e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches, has raised growing concerns. Reports across the Nordic and Baltic countries indicate an increase in the use of these products among young people. In response, several national regulatory initiatives have been introduced to address this rising trend. In a time of changes in both usage patterns and regulatory landscapes in the Nordic and Baltic countries, a comprehensive overview of use trends and emerging national regulations across the Nordic and Baltic countries, is strictly needed.

METHODS: Using prevalence data from 2018 to 2024, this project compared trends in use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and oral nicotine products among 14-29-year-olds across the Nordic (Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden) and Baltic (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) countries. National regulations are presented alongside use trends and compared across countries. Data were obtained through own searches and contributions from national ministries, health authorities, and scientific institutes.

RESULTS: While cigarette smoking among youth continues to decline, the use of e-cigarettes and oral nicotine products has risen. Notably, use of e-cigarettes has risen rapidly since 2021, particularly among girls. Oral nicotine products remain more common among boys, but the gender gap is narrowing. While cigarette regulations are relatively uniform across the countries due to frameworks like the Tobacco Product Directive and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, regulations for new nicotine products vary significantly, including variations in sales ban, taxation, flavor restrictions, advertising, and plain packaging.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the importance of maintaining a strategic and political focus on youth use of new nicotine-containing products within and between countries. Presenting how the Nordic and Baltic countries are addressing this critical public health challenge can help can inform policymakers and inspire effective preventive initiatives.

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Enforcement of the flavor ban on e-cigarettes and e-liquids in the Netherlands

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Youth are drawn to e-cigarettes for their sweet flavors. To tackle this, the Netherlands implemented a flavor ban on e-cigarettes and e-liquids, allowing only tobacco flavors. The regulation aims to curb youth vaping. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) led the enforcement. Challenges include illegal trade, proving non-compliant sales, and the sale of flavored accessories like aroma balls and mouthpieces. Enforcement began on January 1, 2024.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The NVWA led the enforcement in three phases:

1. Importers: Inspections included stock checks and audits. Violations led to fines, sales cessation, product recalls, and export restrictions.
2. Points of sale: Risk-driven inspections were based on public signals. Inspectors checked for (hidden) flavored products and conducted test purchases when needed.
3. Online: NVWA monitored online platforms and social media for illegal sales and advertisements. Violations were reported to platforms for removal, with ongoing collaboration for proactive action.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: In 2024, Inspections at importers blocked 3.5 million flavored products and led to the recall of 800000 more. Over 1200 inspections were conducted,

with violations of the flavor ban found in approximately 17% of cases. Hundreds of ads and social media posts were removed in collaboration with platforms. NVWA continues to monitor non-traditional sales channels. The flavour ban is increasing illegal trade, prompting the NVWA to focus its efforts on tackling this issue in the future.

CONCLUSIONS: The Dutch flavor ban is an important step in reducing youth access to e-cigarettes. However, addressing youth smoking and vaping requires more than enforcement. Parents, schools, and businesses must actively contribute to education and prevention efforts. At the same time, stronger and consistent legislation at the European level is critical to close gaps in enforcement and prevent cross-border trade in flavored products.

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Association between knowledge and attitudes towards child health and intentions to quit among adults who smoke in Japan: 2021 ITC Survey findings

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) constitutes a significant health risk for the nearly half of children worldwide who are exposed to it. Could increasing knowledge about the harms of SHS to children lead smokers to quit? This study is the first to examine whether knowledge of SHS harms to children is related to intentions to quit among adults who smoke in Japan.

METHODS: Data came from the 2021 (Wave 4) ITC Japan Survey, a prospective cohort survey of a nationally representative sample of Japanese adults who smoke cigarettes (n=2586). Weighted logistic regression accounting for sampling design was used to analyse the association between respondents' knowledge of child health (whether smoking causes harm and asthma in children), concern about setting an example for children (whether respondents worried that their cigarette smoking would influence children around them and whether they thought about quitting because they wanted to set an example for children), and their intention to quit.

RESULTS: 70.1% of respondents believed that SHS caused harm to children's health, while 64.5% believed that SHS caused children's asthma. Those who were more knowledgeable about the harms caused by SHS to children were significantly more likely to have intentions to quit (β=0.30, p=0.002). The results did not differ based on whether or not they had children. Those who believed their smoking behaviour influenced children to smoke cigarettes were much more likely to have intentions to quit (β=1.03, p<0.001), and for those who had children the relationship was even stronger (interaction β=0.31, p=0.046).

CONCLUSIONS: Concerns about the influence of smoking to children were significantly related to quit intentions, suggesting that interventions to increase awareness among adults who smoke may reduce children's exposure through increased quitting, especially among those with children.

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Tobacco endgame in India progress opportunities and challenges

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco epidemic remains a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases and economic burdens worldwide. The concept of a 'tobacco endgame' envisions a future free from the burden of tobacco use, requiring a systemic shift in structural, political, and social dynamics to phase out tobacco products. India, with over 267 million tobacco users, has made significant strides in tobacco control, yet faces persistent challenges in aligning with global endgame goals. This study examines India's progress, highlights opportunities, and identifies challenges in establishing itself as a tobacco endgame hub.

METHODS: A two-step modified Delphi technique was utilized. Firstly, a comprehensive literature review identified key milestones in India's tobacco control efforts. Subsequently, the Delphi method was applied to gather insights from a panel of experts representing government, NGOs, and academia during a session during a national consultation on Tobacco end game in India. These results were thematically analyzed, incorporating stakeholder feedback, policy reviews, and program evaluations, to develop actionable recommendations for enhancing tobacco control initiatives and advancing India's endgame objectives.

RESULTS: The Indian subcontinent has been actively advancing the endgame concept and demonstrating remarkable leadership in tobacco control, with numerous national and subnational achievements. India has achieved significant milestones in tobacco control, including the NTCP, bans on e-cigarettes, implementation of Tobacco vendor licensing and graphic health warnings covering

85% of packaging. Over 170 jurisdictions are smoke-free, protecting 400 million people. However, challenges like industry interference, limited collaboration, and low community awareness persist, emphasizing the need for stronger multisectoral efforts and expanded cessation services to achieve endgame goals.

CONCLUSIONS: Achieving a tobacco endgame in India necessitates political commitment, multisectoral collaboration, and community-driven approaches. Strengthening compliance with WHO FCTC guidelines, scaling up cessation services, and addressing industry interference are imperative.

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Illegal cigarette trade in Brazil: Low prices, accessibility, and challenges to control policies

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BACKGROUND: Brazil ratified the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products; however, the consumption of illegal cigarettes remains a concern in the country. This study aimed to estimate the consumption of illegal cigarettes according price, country of origin, and presence of health warnings.

METHODS: Two methods were used: (1) Collection of discarded cigarette packs from the streets of five capitals (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Campo Grande, and João Pessoa); and (2) Household survey with in-person interviews with a representative sample of smokers in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The study was conducted from January to April 2019, with an analysis of 8753 packs and 1278 interviews.

RESULTS: The proportion of illegal cigarettes ranged from 30.4% in Rio de Janeiro to 70.1% in Campo Grande. Most illegal cigarettes were from Paraguay (99.7%) and displayed health warnings that did not meet Brazilian standards, with low-quality images and foreign language text. Illegal cigarettes were significantly cheaper than legal ones. The average price of illegal cigarettes in the last purchase was approximately 25% lower than the minimum price set by Brazilian regulations (R$5.00).

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlight the need for effective implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, with increased collaboration between Brazil and Paraguay to combat smuggling and reduce the impact of smoking. While Brazilian cigarettes are already cheaper than those from other countries, the even lower price of illegal cigarettes increases accessibility, boosting consumption among the poorest and making control policies more difficult.

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From trendy to troubling: Prevalence of negative health effects among people who use e-cigarettes

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BACKGROUND: E-cigarettes are popular among youth due to their attractive designs and flavors. However, e-cigarettes contain harmful substances that cause negative health effects (NHE). Currently, there is limited data available on the prevalence of these NHE following vaping. This study aims to investigate the NHE experienced by Dutch e-cigarette users.

METHODS: A retrospective cross-sectional survey among individuals aged 13 and older who indicated to use e-cigarettes at least monthly. Participants were asked about their vaping behavior and if they had experienced any of 15 predefined NHE after or due to vaping (Tooth/gum problems, mouth irritation, throat irritation, coughing, hoarseness, hoarse voice, difficulty breathing, sore throat, chest pressure, headache, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, change in appetite, negative thoughts), and were provided an option to indicate any additional experienced NHE.

RESULTS: A total of 1005 ((39% male, 60% female, 1% other) respondents with an average age of 29 years old (range 13-99) participated in the study. Participants reported vaping frequencies of daily (27%), weekly (30%), or monthly (43%), and the plurality (46%) had been vaping for 1 to 2 years. Notably, 78% of respondents experienced NHE related to vaping. Among these, 68% reported experiencing more than one NHE, with an average of 7 NHE per affected respondent. The most commonly reported NHE were coughing (64%), throat irritation (52%), and sore throat (47%).

CONCLUSIONS: The study reveals a high prevalence of negative health effects among e-cigarette users, with a substantial proportion of users experiencing multiple symptoms. These results emphasize the need for increased awareness of NHE and further research into the long-term health implications of vaping, particularly among younger populations. The insights gained from this study should guide policy and educational efforts aimed at reducing e-cigarette use and mitigating its associated health risks.

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Factors influencing smokeless tobacco use and oral potentially malignant disorders among rural Indian adults

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BACKGROUND: The consumption of smokeless tobacco (SLT) is highly prevalent in various regions of India, especially in rural areas posing significant health risks. The oral potentially malignant disorders (OPMD) are also on the rise. This study investigated the various social and behavioral determinants of SLT use among adults and its association with the prevalence of OPMD in a district of Karnataka state, India.
METHODS: An oral cancer screening program was conducted in rural areas across Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka state, India. After obtaining ethical clearance, adult patients who were SLT users and consented to participate were included in the study. A pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data on SLT use, age of initiation, frequency and duration of use, oral and systemic health condition, etc. Clinical examinations were done to identify the presence of OPMD. Data was analysed using the Chi-squared test.
RESULTS: Among the 8181 participants screened, 683 participants gave a history of SLT use. About 69.4% of SLT users were males, predominantly (22%) in the age group of 51-60 years and 68.3% belonged to the lower socio-economic group. About 48.7% had initiated the habit at the age interval of 18-30 years. A vast majority (61.3%) consumed the SLT at a frequency of 3-5 times per day, and 33.8% consumed the SLT for more than 15 years. Among the various types of SLTs consumed, the consumption of betel leaf with areca nut, lime, and tobacco was most commonly noted (52.1%). About 75 % of them kept the SLT for duration of 5-10 mins in the mouth. About 272 (39.8%) individuals were found to have OPMD, of which Oral submucous fibrosis was the most prevalent followed by leukoplakia.
CONCLUSIONS: The rising consumption of SLT and the increase in OPMD among Indian adults are concerning, highlighting the need for strong tobacco control policies.
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Beyond the 'colonial' cigarette: A short history of the major 'indigenous' tobacco products in India (1600-1900)

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BACKGROUND: Much of the written history on tobacco has been European accounts of mostly cigarettes written from economic perspective. This bias reflects in global tobacco control strategies's focus on cigarettes. We aim to trace how major non-cigarette indigenous forms of tobacco evolved in India from 1600 to 1900.
METHODS: We write narratives about early forms of smoking (hookah, bidis) and smokeless tobacco industry in India using primary and secondary historical sources (literature, imagery).
RESULTS: Following the arrival of tobacco in India by Portuguese merchants at the start of the 17th century, the presence of diverse soil types and ingenuity of farmers created several varieties of tobacco in India. 'Hookah' evolved as a major form of smoking tobacco introduced/ invented in early 17th century Mughal India, wherein tobacco smoke is diluted by passing it through water. The end of 18th century witnessed the popularisation of tobacco infused 'paan', a traditional mouth freshener in Indian culture. 1860s saw the development of a fragrant form of chewable tobacco called 'zarda' and later 'khaini' that has raw tobacco mixed with slaked lime which continues to be the most consumed form of chewable tobacco in India. Hookahs were replaced by 'bidis' as more portable mean that also transcended caste/class barriers wherein tobacco is rolled in 'tendu' leaves. Bidi cultivation became prominent in India towards the end of 19th century following the great famine of Deccan of 1899. Bidi production and use was further facilitated by the Indian 'swadesi' movement that called for boycott of British goods.
CONCLUSIONS: This brief history suggests how many indigenous forms of tobacco use evolved in India and became prominent in the subcontinent over time. This implies the need for tobacco control strategies to consider the myriad forms of tobacco products and the linked social/cultural/economic contexts for them to be effective and meaningful.
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Make Big Tobacco Pay Campaign (MBTP): Mobilizing people power to hold the tobacco industry accountable

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

Each year, tobacco-related diseases result in the death of more than 8 million people globally. Meanwhile, the tobacco industry continues to rake in enormous profits, which it then uses to weaken tobacco control efforts and obstruct other life-saving policies aimed at protecting public health.
MBTP campaign aims to challenge the tobacco industry's harmful practices and to push governments to implement liability. The long-term goal is to introduce accountability measures that will curb corporate misconduct and help prevent diseases caused by tobacco consumption. The immediate objective during the first year was to advocate for the adoption of liability decisions at COP10.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: •Forming a coalition of organizations with a digital hub at https://www.makebigtobaccopay.org
• Launching a global petition, along with an international letter of support signed by civil society organizations and individuals with expertise in liability, reparations, and legal accountability.
• Organizing global training sessions for journalists to raise awareness of the importance of Article 19.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: •The campaign kicked off on World No Tobacco Day in 2022.
• The petition collected over 30,000 signatures, and more than 80 organizations and experts lent their support to the sign-on letter.
• Two global journalist training sessions on Article 19 were held in anticipation of COP10.
• COP10 adopted a decision that reinforces the implementation of liability measures under Article 19.
• During World Cancer Congress in 2024, the petition and sign-on letter were relaunched, to secure the implementation of the COP10 decision by COP11. Also, a civil society survey to document liability challenges in the 6 WHO regions was launched.
CONCLUSIONS:
• Public mobilization is essential for influencing international policies.
• Tools like global petitions, sign-on letters, and journalist training are highly effective in building visibility and demonstrating broad support to policymakers.
• Collaboration across civil society organizations is fundamental for achieving meaningful change.
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Case study: Marketing and sales strategies for hookah tobacco on YouTube in Brazil

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: YouTube is one of the largest video-sharing platforms in the world, encompassing all types of audiences, from the youngest to the oldest. Review videos are increasingly common on the platform, where consumers share their opinions and analyses about a product, and viewers seek this content to make better decisions based on the experiences of those who have already used the product.
In Brazil, tobacco advertising is prohibited, meaning that any direct or indirect advertisement encouraging the consumption of these products is considered illegal.
This case study aims to present and analyze the marketing strategies of a YouTube channel that promotes and sells hookah tobacco through weekly posted videos and a sales website.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The channel displays review videos of various hookah tobacco brands, where the host uses the product and shares their opinion, from the product packaging to impressions about sensory experiences, such as taste and smell, while using the product. The website of the account administrator is also disclosed, along with contact methods and partnership promotions with brands registered with ANVISA (Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency).
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The channel has more than 180000 subscribers, with videos receiving up to 56000 views, demonstrating a large audience and influence over its viewers. Analyzing the comments on the platform revealed significant engagement from followers, evident in comments expressing interest in prices and purchasing methods, requests for more reviews, and compliments on the content.
CONCLUSIONS: Therefore, it is possible to observe that the video format used is effective in attracting and retaining the audience, and this practice represents a significant challenge for tobacco control. Analyzing the elements used in this and similar channels is crucial for the development of more effective strategies to combat this type of practice.
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Mapping the interplay between pH and nicotine in smokeless tobacco: A bibliometric analysis

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BACKGROUND: Smokeless tobacco (SLT) products, comprising carcinogens, flavours, additives, pose significant health risks, including addiction, oral diseases, and cancers. Nicotine absorption in SLT products is strongly influenced by pH, as alkaline environment enhances nicotine's bioavailability and addiction potential. Despite their prevalence in low- and middle-income countries like India, the relationship between pH, nicotine absorption, health impacts remains underexplored. This study aims to generate evidence on pH's role in SLT product nicotine absorption, addiction, and toxicity to inform regulatory policies under WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10.
METHODS: A bibliometric analysis was conducted using data from Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed to identify

trends, influential contributors, and thematic areas related to pH-nicotine relationship in SLT products. Search terms included combinations of 'smokeless tobacco,' 'pH,' 'nicotine absorption,' and related keywords. Biblioshiny (R package) was used to evaluate co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence, thematic maps, and research trends.

RESULTS: A total of 42 studies were identified after removing duplicates, 29 articles were analysed. The analysis identified 29 relevant articles spanning 17 years, with an average annual growth rate of 5.2% in publications. A co-occurrence network revealed 34 unique keywords, with 'pH dependency' and 'nicotine absorption' being the most frequently associated terms. The USA contributed the highest number of studies (40%), followed by India (25%) and Sweden (15%). Lotka's law showed that 10% of the authors accounted for 50% of the publications. Thematic mapping identified four major clusters: nicotine bioavailability, pH modulation, health impacts, and regulatory implications. Temporal trends showed a 60% increase in publications on nicotine pharmacokinetics over the past five years.

CONCLUSIONS: This bibliometric analysis underscores highlights pH's role in nicotine bioavailability in SLT products, driving addiction and health risks. Findings support setting pH and nicotine thresholds to reduce harm and aid WHO FCTC Articles 9 and 10 implementation, with further research needed to strengthen regulations.

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Smoking survivors - powerful stories inspiring quitting

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Fresh (Making Smoking History) has led the way in the UK in delivering effective media campaigns since 2005 in an eight-strand programme - a key driver for achieving the largest smoking rate reduction in any English region. Key priorities are increasing quit rates and improving the quit success rate through promoting evidence-based ways to quit.

In line with MPOWER recommendations, Fresh employs graphic and hard-hitting anti-tobacco mass media campaigns.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Our Smoking Survivors campaign (2023-25) aims to trigger population quits using themes of harm and hope. Through co-creation we worked with real 'survivors' to detail the harm of tobacco on health, lives and families.

We ran a multi-channel TV-led campaign focusing on risks like cancer, while harnessing outdoor, TV streaming and online to drive responses to quit support. Earned media was part of the strategy with strong news and social media engagement.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Evaluation found 73% of smokers / recent quitters saw or heard the campaign, 91% found it easy to understand, 61% more motivated by quitting and 46% taking a quit-related action. The campaign across six phases 2023-24 also prompted more than 80000 visits to our online quit support platform FreshQuit.co.uk.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings add further evidence to the effectiveness of campaigns with real peopel narratives memorable for smokers and prompting conversations from loved ones.

Our first TV advert, featuring cancer survivor Sue, was used across England in 2024, with evaluation showing it increased urgency of quitting intentions. It also showed how quitters can become policy champions, calling on the UK Government to raise age of sale for tobacco and impose a levy on tobacco companies. She was honoured in the Kings New Year Honours awards 2025.

As the UK now prepares to take forward world-leading legislation on tobacco, campaigns like Smoking Survivors can play an important role helping increase overall quitting.

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Collaborative efforts for tobacco-free educational institutions in Chhattisgarh, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco uses among youth remains a pressing concern in India. 8% of the school going children of the Chhattisgarh state use tobacco in some form (GYTS - 4). A collaborative initiative by the Health and Education Departments of Chhattisgarh has led to significant progress in creating tobacco-free educational institutions (ToFEI), promoting a healthier future for students in the state.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To declare educational institutions tobacco-free by enforcing stringent regulations, raising awareness, and fostering behavioural change among students and staff.

Key strategies implemented include:

1. Interdepartmental Collaboration: Joint efforts by the Health and Education Departments to align policies and resources.
2. Tobacco-Free Certification: Schools undergo inspections to ensure compliance with the COTPA 2003 provisions as well as the ToFEI guidelines.
3. Awareness Programs: Workshops and campaigns targeting students, teachers, and parents to highlight the harms of tobacco.
4. Monitoring Mechanisms: Periodic assessments to

evaluate compliance and sustain the initiative.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: 33% (18899) educational institutions in Chhattisgarh have been certified as tobacco free. This achievement reflects the success of coordinated efforts and robust implementation strategies for implementing TOFEI guidelines in the state of Chhattisgarh. GoCG has integrated health awareness with education policies in Chhattisgarh that marks a transformative approach toward achieving tobacco-free educational institutions. By introducing a streamlined, portal-based certification process for school principals, the Education Department has taken ownership of this vital public health initiative.

CONCLUSIONS: This collaborative effort underscores the importance of institutional accountability and decentralized implementation, paving the way for a sustainable, student-centric model that protects the younger generation from the harms of tobacco. The initiative serves as an innovative blueprint for similar endeavors nationwide and globally.

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Complexities and challenges in enforcing the Prohibition of Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) law in India

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BACKGROUND: TAPS remains a significant challenge in tobacco control of India. Despite the robust provisions in Section 5, Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act(COTPA)2003, which prohibits advertisement of tobacco products; many products like Pan Masala and Elaichi continue to be strategically advertised with tobacco brands across kiosks, print, outdoor and digital media. This study was initiated to address the lack of literature on the challenges in implementing Section 5 in India

METHODS: This study examined the challenges at national and state level in enforcing Section 5 of COTPA by reviewing State-level reports and challans issued from 2022-2025, petitions-filed under the section in last 15 years in the country and the enforcement measures prescribed by the act/rules.

RESULTS: Feedback gathered from 15 State partners using validated questionnaire via google spreadsheet and focused group discussions with 4 states identified key issues. Non-compoundable nature of Section5 hampers Tobacco Control Cells to seize advertisement materials and present in court. Misconceptions about Trademark Act and lack of clarity with courts further complicates enforcement. Notably, the number of challans issued under Section 5 is not reported in the government's system; only violations are recorded. In the past three years, 4692 violations were reported under Section 5, compared to over 519 million challans under Section 4 (smoking prohibition in public places), with over 40% of states reporting no violations under Section 5. Review of 105 court cases filed in 15 years in courts highlighted ongoing legal challenges, including petitions from Pan Masala companies, tobacco wholesalers and over health warnings in media. While some rulings upheld the law, several cases are still pending.

CONCLUSIONS: Enforcing Section 5 is challenging at point of sale and media platforms. The tobacco industry exploits loopholes to target youth. Clearer, practical provisions, stronger support from judiciary and police and global measures like vendor-licensing are crucial for effective enforcement.

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Transforming tobacco control through reduction in Tobacco advertisement Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS): A municipal model of Jharkhand, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use in India causes 1.3 million deaths annually, impacting 270 million users. Prevalence of tobacco use in Jharkhand (38.9%) exceeds the national average (28.6%), despite a significant 11.2% decline from 50.1% (GATS 1) to 38.9% (GATS 2). Unregulated sale of tobacco and pervasive advertisement at Point of Sale (POS), with high vendor density (68 vendors/sq. km in Ranchi vs. 10 in New York City) heighten youth vulnerability and demand urgent intervention.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Ranchi (Capital city of Jharkhand) Municipal Corporation (RMC), with technical support from SEEDS, launched India's first Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL) system under the ambit of Jharkhand Municipal Act 2011. Key initiatives under the TVL system included appointing a dedicated Nodal Officer, forming City Enforcement Squads, and establishing operational guidelines with details of licensing mechanism and enforcement procedures. Weekly drives inspected over 400 Points of Sale (PoS), removed TAPS material at 191 locations, and penalized 105 violators. SEEDS' expertise in public awareness and stakeholder engagement strengthened community campaigns, while capacity-building efforts equipped enforcement officers with necessary tools and skills.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: RMC introduced online licensing system and developed a ready reckoner for enforcement officers. Over 200 license applications were processed, with 103 exclusive licenses issued. Achievements included a 40% reduction in TAPS at PoS and 9% decline in vendor between 2020 and 2022. Enhanced interdepartmental coordination, robust stakeholder engagement, and awareness campaigns improved compliance with COTPA 2003. National recognition reinforced The State's commitment to tobacco control and served as an inspiration for other states and cities in India to adopt the licensing policy.

CONCLUSIONS: RMC's strategic approach demonstrates municipal leadership's transformative power in public

health. By integrating vendor licensing, enforcement, and community engagement, Ranchi has set a benchmark for tobacco control. The scalable TVL model offers cities nationwide a proven framework to combat tobacco's devastating impact.

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Microplastics and tobacco supply chain: Environmental and health impacts

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BACKGROUND: Microplastics (MP) from tobacco products, especially cigarette filters made of cellulose acetate (CA), are an emerging environmental and public health threat. This study aims to gather evidence on a neglected but relevant topic and raise awareness for the negotiations and implementation of Article 18 by Parties to the WHO FCTC and UN Member States in negotiating the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty through the Article 17 and 18 Knowledge Hub.

METHODS: A narrative review was conducted using primary and secondary sources, including scientific articles, technical reports, international guidelines, meta-analyses, and conference resolutions. The analysis focused on tobacco waste, such as filters, plastics, and metals, and their environmental and health impacts. The review also considered discussions from COP10 and the UN Treaty negotiations on Plastic Pollution.

RESULTS: Cigarette filters, commonly discarded as litter, release CA fibers and harmful chemicals over time, posing significant risks to ecosystems and human health. In addition to traditional cigarette waste, heated tobacco products (HTPs) and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) generate additional plastic and metallic waste, complicating disposal. Recent evidence shows that smokers may inhale microplastics (MP), highlighting an underrecognized health risk. Despite existing regulatory frameworks, mechanisms to address tobacco-related MP remain insufficient.

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights the urgent need for comprehensive regulations on tobacco waste, including bans on cigarette filters and the adoption of extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies. Strengthening Article 18 of the WHO FCTC, focusing on environmental protection, could foster synergy between public health and plastic pollution mitigation. Integrating tobacco waste into global treaties addressing MP will protect ecosystems and human health.

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Child labour in tobacco farming: State negligence and challenges to effective eradication

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BACKGROUND: Child labour in tobacco farming is considered one of the worst forms of child and adolescent exploitation. In Brazil, the world's leading exporter of tobacco leaves and one of the top three producers globally, this human rights violation deprives children and adolescents of healthier lives. This study investigated the public policies and initiatives undertaken by government authorities in tobacco-growing municipalities.

METHODS: This exploratory study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods and was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved the application of an online questionnaire, which was sent to occupational health services covering municipalities involved in tobacco production across the country's main producing regions. The second stage comprised in-depth interviews with representatives of these services. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of ENSP/Fiocruz.

RESULTS: A total of 586 tobacco-producing municipalities and 35 occupational health services were identified. Only 1.2% of these municipalities did not implement actions in this area. Among the services, 6 participated in the study; 33.3% reported being unaware of child labor cases in tobacco cultivation, while 66.6% indicated activities such as surveillance, preventive campaigns, continuous education, and health promotion, albeit with limited impact. The most frequently cited barrier was the lack of political will (100%), followed by the absence of data, a shortage of trained personnel, institutional weaknesses, insufficient infrastructure, and economic and cultural challenges. Although child labor is prohibited in sales contracts, many producers, burdened by debts and high labor costs, rely on family labor. This dynamic perpetuates a cultural cycle in which involving children in production is perceived as necessary.

CONCLUSIONS: The study emphasized the need to strengthen measures to combat child labour in tobacco-growing areas, focusing on capacity-building initiatives for municipal public agents and addressing the strategies employed by the tobacco industry.

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Paving the way to smoking cessation: Emphasis on people who use novel tobacco products

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BACKGROUND: Given that novel tobacco products (NTPs), including heated and electronic cigarettes, are becoming more and more popular while data on smoking cessation in NTPs users are scarce, more studies are

needed to support data-driven guidelines and enhance understanding of this population needs.

METHODS: Between November 2022 and November 2023, a cross-sectional study was conducted in 'Evaggelismos Hospital, Athens' smoking cessation clinic that included 59 users of conventional tobacco products (CTPs) and 59 NTPs users. Data collected included: demographics, addiction, previous cessation attempts, motivations, readiness to quit and success rates at 3 months. The program comprised of five sessions including behavioral support and pharmacotherapy.

RESULTS: 59 NTPs users had mean age of 49 years old, 51% were women and the mean consumption was 37.4 packyears (no statistically significant differences with CTPs users). 88.2% of NTPs users also used CTPs and 62.7% were highly addicted (Fagerstrom score 7-10). 74.6% of NTPs users (vs 81.4% of CTPs users, p=0.377) had previously attempted to quit at least once: 54.5% alone, 34.1% with gradual reduction, 52.3% with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), 65.9% with varenicline, 20.5% with bupropion, 18.2% with psychological support and 6.8% with acupuncture. Their current motivations included: 1.Personal health (66.1%), 2.Costs reduction (15.3%), 3.Sense of freedom (6.8%), 4.All the above (6.8%), 5.Family health (5%). 69.1% showed high readiness to quit. 22.9% and 34.3% of NTPs users showed mental health comorbidities and COPD respectively, likewise CTPs users (p>0.05).

During this program NTPs users were supported with behavioral and pharmaceutical treatment: NRT (64.4%), bupropion (16.9%), gradual reduction (13.6%) or NRT and bupropion (5.1%). Success rate reached 74.5% in NTPs users (vs 63.6% in CTPs users, p=0.216).

CONCLUSIONS: Paving the way to smoking cessation guidelines for NTPs users, this study showed that a program combining behavioral support and pharmacotherapy can be highly effective in supporting this population to quit.

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Economic insights into the illicit tobacco trade in central India: The role of non-regulated products and innovative solutions

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BACKGROUND: India's tobacco control efforts, driven by the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Product Act (COTPA) of 2003, face significant enforcement challenges. Despite efforts, loopholes exploited by tobacco industries have resulted in the widespread sale of non-regulated and banned products. This study examines the economic dynamics of tobacco sales at Pan kiosks in Central India, investigating the role of illicit tobacco products and offering innovative solutions to curb this growing issue.

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach was employed. Surveys were conducted across 1690 Pan kiosks categorized into three income groups: low-income (< ₹20,000/month), middle-income (₹20,000–₹50,000/month), and high-income (> ₹50,000/month). Data collected included types of tobacco products sold and profit margins. In-depth interviews with kiosk owners explored sales practices. Statistical analysis, including chi-square tests, was used to assess the relationship between shop categories and sales patterns of illicit products.

RESULTS: The results revealed that 95% of kiosks sold non-regulated tobacco products. High-income kiosks, accounting for 30% of the sample, derived 60% of their profits from hookahs, alternative tobacco products and banned products like e-cigarettes. Middle-income kiosks (30% of the sample) earned 45% of their profits from selling single cigarettes without health warnings, which is in violation of regulations. Low-income kiosks (40% of the sample) generated 55% of their revenue from selling kharra, and gutkka a banned product in Central India.

CONCLUSIONS: The widespread sale of non-regulated and banned products presents a severe threat to public health and undermines tobacco control efforts. Immediate actions, such as implementing blockchain technology for tracking sales and incentivising vendors to transition to legal products, are critical to curbing this illegal market. These regulatory innovations be prioritised to safeguard public health and mitigate the economic impact of the illicit tobacco trade, as the situation has reached a tipping point that demands prompt intervention.

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Youth-driven advocacy leads to historic e-cigarette ban in Bangladesh: A model for grassroots tobacco control efforts

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Bangladesh, with a youth population of approximately 65 million, has faced a growing challenge from the rising prevalence of e-cigarette use. While the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (Bangladesh)-2017 reported a low e-cigarette usage rate of 0.2%, this number has surged over the past seven years. Cunning e-cigarette traders have exploited young people through social media campaigns, vape fairs, and proximity to educational institutions, increasing the risk of widespread addiction. Pratyasha Anti-Drug Club, a prominent voluntary organization, along with the Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) and Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA), spearheaded efforts to counteract this threat through youth engagement, awareness campaigns, and advocacy.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Pratyasha initiated a series of impactful activities, including school campaigns, youth seminars, and public events like the 'Youths Against E-Cigarette'' Football Tournament, signature campaign, social media campaign, cycle rally, and skating rally. Memorandums were submitted to policymakers, and sit-

ins and leaflet distributions were organized, notably at the Ekushey Book Fair. These programs galvanized public awareness and created pressure on the government to act. Despite resistance from e-cigarette traders promoting these products as harm-reduction tools, persistent advocacy prevailed.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The advocacy initiatives led to heightened awareness among students regarding the health hazards of e-cigarettes. Notably, on January 1, 2025, the Bangladesh government prohibited e-cigarette imports by including them in the banned import list through an SRO, marking a significant milestone in tobacco control.

CONCLUSIONS: Pratyasha's youth-focused initiatives demonstrate the power of grassroots advocacy in combating emerging tobacco threats. These strategies can serve as a model for other regions seeking to address e-cigarette challenges through public engagement and policy advocacy.

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Institutionalisation of tobacco control programme at Grassroot level - experiences from Jharkhand, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In Jharkhand, prevalence of tobacco is a serious concern as its 50.01% (n=19.5 million) of adults are edicted to tobacco as against national average of 34.6% as per GATS 2010. Government of India launched National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) IN 2010-11 in two districts of Jharkhand i.e. Dhanbad and East Singhbhum as pilot basis. Enforcement of Indian tobacco control law, capacity building, awareness generation, school health programs and cessation are main components of NTCP.

Currently Jharkhand State Tobacco Control Cell in technical collaboration with SEEDS and Vital Strategies is implementing a project on tobacco control in all 24 districts of state.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Several effective strategic interventions were undertaken. All primarily revolved around institutionalization of efforts, value systems, management practices and administrative structures. Institutional framework was developed through four pronged strategies i.e. intense advocacy, capacity building and follow up with government officials, effective monitoring at state and district level and consistent media mobilization without losing out to capture even a smaller event related to tobacco control issues.

Collaborative and systematic efforts were made. Meetings, workshops, trainings and brainstorming sessions were conducted in collaboration with District Administration.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: These results in sensitization of program managers, law enforcers and media resulting in noticablely high commitment to the cause. Innovatively, formation of anti-tobacco squads, inter-departmental State and Districts Tobacco Control Coordination Committees' meetings, enforcement reviews in monthly crime review meetings were conducted. This provided distinctive outcomes:

- Appointment of nodal officers at- state level,
- Appointment of three nodal officers in each district,
- Synergy between efforts of health, police and general administration,
- Review by Deputy Commissioners in their monthly meetings of all departments.

CONCLUSIONS: It is established that successful enforcement and implementation is achieved only through well-established institutionalization of tobacco control within existing system. Enabling Institutional Structure is indeed Key to Sustained Results.

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Prevalence and correlates for shisha smoking among school going adolescents in Zambia: Evidence from the 2021 Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND: The harmful effects of shisha (hookah or waterpipe) tobacco smoking are similar to those of cigarette smoking, including lung cancer and lowering immunity levels. Shisha smokers inhale carbon monoxide, metals, cancer causing chemicals and more nicotine than cigarette smokers. Countries in the Southern Africa sub-region, including Zambia have had no data on the prevalence and correlates for shisha smoking. This study presents first ever results on the prevalence and correlates for ever smoked shisha among school going adolescents in Zambia.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional study, stratified by region (Lusaka, Tobacco growing and rest of country). In each region, the required sample sizes were 25 schools and 1875 students. A total of 8336 students were selected using a stratified two-stage cluster sampling method. Data were collected using an adapted Global Youth Tobacco Survey questionnaire. Associations were established using adjusted odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals.

RESULTS: A total of 6499 students participated in the survey, giving an overall response rate of 75.1%. The prevalence for ever smoked shisha was 17.5%. By the age of 15 years 74.1% of the students had tried smoking shisha. Major factors associated with ever smoked shisha were: <12 years of age (AOR=3.38, 95% CI: 3.25, 3.51), ever used smokeless tobacco (AOR=2.45, 95% CI: 2.42, 2.48), having no closest friend who smoke tobacco (AOR=0.61,

95% CI: 0.60, 0.62), and ever smoked cigarettes (AOR=2.16, 95% CI: 2.13, 2.19).
CONCLUSIONS: The results indicate that shisha smoking may be common in Zambia. It is important to establish its current prevalence and its correlates in order to suggest interventions to curtail shisha smoking in the country.
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Penetration of illicit cigarette trade in the greater Metropolitan Area of Costa Rica

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BACKGROUND: In Costa Rica, tobacco consumption has remained stable in recent years. The tobacco industry often argues that tobacco taxes—the most cost-effective measure to reduce consumption—increase illicit trade, exaggerating its magnitude to hinder fiscal policy discussions. This study independently estimates the penetration of illicit cigarette trade in the San José Great Metropolitan Area and analyzes the characteristics of these products.
METHODS: A stratified survey by province, sex, and age was conducted with 614 smokers over 18 years old in the Greater Metropolitan Area, covering the provinces of San José, Alajuela, Cartago, and Heredia. The survey identified the type of purchase (single cigarettes or packs) and captured information and photographs of the products, allowing their classification as legal or illegal.
RESULTS: Illicit trade accounted for 31% of cigarette consumption in the Great Metropolitan Area, with a higher incidence in Cartago (48%) compared to other provinces (18%). Most of the illicit cigarette packs came from United States (60%) and South Korea (17%). Some illicit cigarettes sold included brands registered with the Ministry of Health sold legally. Retail stores (pulperías) operating licitly accounted for 52% of illicit cigarette sales.
CONCLUSIONS: The penetration of illicit cigarette trade is significantly lower than reported by less transparent studies. Retail stores are the primary points of sale for illicit cigarettes, highlighting the need to strengthen controls in these locations. Costa Rica ratified the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products in 2016. Still, key measures such as licensing actors involved in these products' production, distribution, and marketing have yet to be implemented.
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Communicating e-cigarette risk uncertainty: A randomised trial comparing text and pictorial warnings

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BACKGROUND: Communicating about the relative risks of e-cigarettes compared to cigarettes is challenging in part due to uncertainties around risks of using e-cigarettes. This experiment assessed how adults who smoke respond to different relative risk information formats.
METHODS: In November 2024, we recruited 1501 Canadian adults who ever smoked from an online consumer panel. Participants were randomized to view a photo of one of four e-cigarette packages with a standard nicotine warning ('Nicotine is highly addictive.') and contrasting relative-risk information: none (control); 'Use of this product is less harmful than smoking'(text-only); a thermometer with an arrow showing a 70% lower risk level (fixed-risk imagery); or thermometer with bracket showing a 50%-90% lower range risk (risk range imagery). Participants rated the relative harm of e-cigarettes versus smoking (recoded: 0=equally/more harmful/'don't know'; 1=less harmful), willingness to try the product presented (recoded: 0='not at all'/ 1='a little' to 'extremely'), and motivation to switch completely from cigarettes to e-cigarettes (recoded as: 0=none; 1=any). Logistic models estimated treatment effects (vs. control) and their interactions with current e-cigarette use.
RESULTS: Text-only messages showed no effect versus control. Participants only exposed to fixed-risk imagery were more likely than those in the control group to view e-cigarettes as less harmful than cigarettes (OR=1.40, 95% CI=1.01–1.94, p-value=0.04). Those exposed to risk range imagery reported greater willingness to try (OR=1.58, 95% CI=1.17–2.13, p-value=0.01) and switch to e-cigarettes (OR=1.51, 95% CI=1.12–2.05, p-value=0.01) than those in the control group. Vaping status did not moderate these effects. Results remained consistent after adjusting for demographics and tobacco use variables.
CONCLUSIONS: Pictorial representations of relative risk can influence smokers' perceptions and intentions, whereas text-only descriptions do not. Risk range imagery that captures the uncertainties around e-cigarette risks promoted behavioral intentions. Future research should evaluate how such messages influence behaviors under natural exposure conditions.
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Misperceptions regarding secondhand smoke exposure: A key to understanding exposure of children? Findings from the 2022 ITC Israel Survey

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure causes 1% of global mortality. Biomarker evidence shows that young children in smoking families have substantially higher rates of SHS exposure than do children in nonsmoking homes. While lack of knowledge

of SHS dangers may play a role, misperceptions of how and when exposure occurs may also be contributing, if the parents think that the children are safe when they are not. Our qualitative work showed that many parents do hold misperceptions about SHS exposure. We aim to quantify the proportion of adults who hold misperceptions regarding tobacco smoke exposure in a nationally representative survey.

METHODS: Data were from 659 adults (aged 18+) who participated in the 2022 International Tobacco Control (ITC) Israel Survey. A telephone survey was conducted in March-June 2022 among a random sample of the adult population. Data were weighted for population characteristics and smoking status.

RESULTS: 59.4% of adults did not understand that SHS exposure can occur even when the smoke cannot be seen or smelled, or the smoker cannot be seen. 46.3% of adults, including 53.5% of smokers, did not understand that smoking on a porch can harm others. 45.7% of adults, including 56.9% of smokers, did not understand that smoking outdoor at least one meter away from a child does not protect the child from the dangers of exposure.

CONCLUSIONS: Misperceptions of exposure, whereby people incorrectly believe that no exposure to tobacco smoke occurs, are common among Israeli adults. The necessary distancing of others in order to protect them is not well understood. Effective messages and campaigns should be developed in order to change social norms regarding distancing from others during and after smoking in outdoor as well as indoor areas. This has the potential to reduce secondhand smoke exposure, active smoking, and to improve public health.

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Implementation of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Project 2030 In Ghana

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Ghana has over the years implemented the Articles of the FCTC through the enactment of the Public Health Act 2012 and the Tobacco Control Regulations, 2016. However, there have been challenges with implementation including absence of comprehensive national tobacco control strategy (NTCS), non-functional national coordinating mechanism (NCM), and lack of knowledge on the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (ITP). Implementation of the FCTC Project 2030, aims to strengthen tobacco control efforts in Ghana, in partnership with key stakeholders.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A thorough desk review of existing tobacco control policies and documents locally and internationally was conducted, analyzing Ghana's Public Health Act, Non-Communicable Diseases Policy, and Needs Assessment Report. Expert meetings identified key implementation bottlenecks, stakeholder consultations gathered input and built consensus on key components. This collaborative approach, led by the WHO consultant, UNDP, and the FDA, ensured that the resulting strategy and Terms of Reference for NCM reflects the needs and priorities of various stakeholders in Ghana.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The project led to development of NTCS, reconstitution of NCM and Development of Terms of Reference (TOR), review of Ghana's excise tax stamp system and training of enforcement officers across the country on the ITP. This resulted in a reference document to guide stakeholders on various tobacco control activities ensuring efficient collaboration and accountability. Training led to capacity building of stakeholders to effectively eliminate illicit trade activities across the country.

CONCLUSIONS: The FCTC 2030 project successfully led to the development of a strategy, re-constitution of the NCM effective stakeholder coordination and collaboration, training of stakeholders Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, review of excise tax stamp system comparing to international best practices in Track and Trace systems, and examining successful implementations and development of an Enforcement Guide for comprehensive tobacco control efforts in Ghana.

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WHO FCTC Article 11 Index: Measuring progress on tobacco warnings and labels

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BACKGROUND: At least 138 countries have mandated pictorial health warnings (PHWs), and 26 have adopted standardised packaging (SP) in compliance with Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance developed the Article 11 Index based on the FCTC Article 11 implementation guidelines adopted by the Conference of Parties to measure progress, identify gaps and challenges, and allow regional comparisons in complying with these measures.

METHODS: A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on FCTC Article 11 guidelines and completed by focal points in the ten ASEAN countries according to existing laws and regulations.

RESULTS: All ASEAN countries have implemented PHWs and allow copyright-free sharing of PHW images regionally; however, some countries have yet to apply these warnings to all types of tobacco products, and PHW rotation has been delayed in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Tax stamps partially obscure PHWs in most countries, despite regulations prohibiting this. Thailand has the largest PHWs (85% size), followed by Brunei, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Singapore (75% size). Except for

the Philippines, all countries require PHWs on the upper principal areas of packaging.
Thailand was the first in Asia to require SP (2019), followed by Singapore (2020), Myanmar (2022), and Lao PDR (2024), but the industry continues to delay the full implementation of SP in Myanmar and Lao PDR. Misleading descriptors are banned in all ASEAN countries, except Brunei. Emission yield figures are prohibited in Brunei, Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand, but Vietnam allows printing of an expiry date on packages. SP and PHWs are mandated for tobacco products sold in duty-free outlets.
CONCLUSIONS: The Article 11 Index is a useful tool for assessing compliance with FCTC Article 11 and its guidelines and for advocating for stronger national policies and their implementation.
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Characterisation of illicit trade in tobacco products in Metropolitan Area Montevideo

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BACKGROUND: Uruguay's tobacco control policies have significantly reduced consumption, but illicit trade remains a concern. Since 2017, figures on illicit trade have come from industry-funded studies, raising doubts about their objectivity and undermining some control policies. This study aims to provide independent evidence to analyze consumption patterns and estimate the illicit cigarette trade.
METHODS: A stratified survey by sex and age was conducted with 801 adult smokers in the Metropolitan Area of Montevideo, using traffic-related and household data for sampling. Respondents reported purchasing patterns, socioeconomic information, and product characteristics, verified through photographs of cigarette packs. Illicit cigarettes were identified based on brands and the absence of mandatory plain packaging.
RESULTS: Illicit trade represented 21% of consumption in Montevideo and the Metropolitan Area, with most products originating from Paraguay and Brazil. The study found that 54% of illicit cigarettes were purchased in legal outlets, such as neighbourhood stores, warehouses, kiosks, and supermarkets.
CONCLUSIONS: The penetration of illicit cigarette trade has increased compared to previous measurements. While the tobacco industry argues that taxes increase smuggling, it often raises prices independently, showing a strategy to undermine control policies. The high involvement of legal outlets in selling illicit cigarettes and the foreign origin of these products from neighbouring countries highlights the need to regulate distribution channels and strengthen border controls. Implementing the Protocol to Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products is essential to consolidate tobacco control policies in Uruguay.
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Challenges and strategies in the control of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs): The Brazilian experience

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Brazil achieved a 64% reduction in smoking prevalence among adults ≥18 years (from 34.8% in 1989 to 12.6% in 2019)[1] through multisectoral tobacco control approaches aligned with the WHO FCTC. Since 2009, the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) has prohibited the commercialization, importation, and advertising of ENDS/HTPs, contributing to lower prevalence rates than in countries where these products are commercialized. Challenges include tobacco industry lobbying, industry-driven legislative proposals to legalize ENDS/HTPs justified by revenue generation, tax evasion, and illicit trade, as well as attempts to relax additive restrictions. Additional challenges include promoting these products on social media, online sales, and the dissemination of corporate social responsibility narratives. The governmental National Commission for Implementation of the WHO FCTC (CONICQ), established by federal decree, plays a central role in articulating responses to these challenges through the mandate of its diverse Members.
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INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: CONICQ members' articulated response has been essential in raising awareness of the dangers of ENDS/HTPs, ensuring regular monitoring of consumption, implementing the Protocol on Trade, updating regulations, and coordinating operations for the seizure and disposal of ENDS/HTPs among others. AI-powered chatbots were created to remove websites selling ENDS/HTPs as well. Technical analyses, public hearings, and EVALI case notifications complement these efforts. Research supported by governmental funding and a targeted cooperation agreement between INCA and Fiocruz complements the response.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: These actions have supported the continuity of ANVISA's prohibition of ENDS/HTPs. From 2019 to 2023, the prevalence of ENDS/HTPs declined slightly (from 2.3% to 2.1%), with higher rates of use observed among young adults (18–24 years)[2].
CONCLUSIONS: Maintaining ANVISA's regulation and implementing robust intersectoral strategies to monitor consumption and combat illicit trade is essential to consolidating tobacco control progress, preventing setbacks, protecting public health, and providing a critical

approach to counteract tobacco industry strategies.

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Evaluating strategies to reduce effects of e-cigarette social media posts on risk perceptions susceptibility among youth

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BACKGROUND: Social media frequently promotes e-cigarette use, and strategies are needed to counter these effects.

METHODS: An online experiment was conducted with 18-24 year old Mexicans (N=699) who were current users of or susceptible to use only cigarettes (23.9% and 7.6%, respectively), only e-cigarettes (2.1% and 3.6 %), or both products (26.9% and 35.9%). Participants were randomized to one of four social media posts from an influencer endorsing a disposable e-cigarette with a brand hashtag: 1) post only Control; 2) post with Nicotine Warning; 3) post with Advertising Disclosure (i.e., #Ad and #PaidPartnership); and 4) Combination: post with nicotine warning and advertising disclaimer. Participants responded to questions about the product: susceptibility (curiosity and accepting friend offers to use it), positive expectancies (would enjoy using it), and risk perceptions (addictiveness, harmfulness), with responses dichotomized to indicate No ('definitely not' or 'probably not') or Yes ('probably yes' or 'definitely yes'). Separate logistic models regressed each of these outcomes on treatment (reference=control).

RESULTS: Participants exposed to the nicotine warning either alone or combined with the ad disclosure were less likely to be curious to try the product (OR=0.54, 95% CI 0.35–0.83 and OR=0.54, 95% CI 0.34–0.84, respectively), would try it if offered by a friend (OR=0.59, 95% CI 0.39–0.90 and OR=0.55, 95% CI 0.36–0.85, respectively), or would enjoy using it (OR=0.64, 95% CI 0.42–0.97 and OR=0.65, 95% CI 0.43–1.00, respectively). No experimental condition was associated with risk perceptions.

CONCLUSIONS: Including a nicotine warning on a social media post promoting e-cigarettes reduced youths' susceptibility to and positive expectancies about e-cigarette use but not risk perceptions. Ad disclosures did not increase these effects. These findings suggest a potential for using nicotine warnings to reduce e-cigarette use, but further research is needed to assess behavioral effects under ecologically valid conditions.

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Prevalence of tobacco smoking and associated burden of disease: An analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023

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BACKGROUND: Addressing the epidemic of tobacco use remains a public health priority around the globe. Comprehensive estimates of the prevalence of smoking and the burden of disease attributable to smoking are essential to inform and guide tobacco control interventions.

METHODS: In the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023, we used spatiotemporal Gaussian process regression to estimate the prevalence of current and former smoking across 204 countries and territories, stratified by age and sex, from 1990 to 2023. Estimates were based on 3217 nationally or sub-nationally representative surveys. Population attributable fractions were calculated and applied to generate updated estimates of global deaths and disability-adjusted life-years lost (DALYs) attributable to smoking.

RESULTS: In 2023, we estimated 1.10 billion (95% uncertainty interval 0.98, 1.27) individuals aged fifteen and older were current smokers. Though the prevalence of current smoking has significantly decreased among both males (-29.9% [-18.8, -39.3]) and females (-42.8% (-23.3, -57.6]), increases in global population mean that the total number of current smokers has increased by around 120 million since 1990. Most current smokers reside in the East/South Asia and Oceania regions (43.3% [40.5, 45.5]). Globally, in 2023, smoking was attributable for 5.81 million (4.92, 6.82) deaths and 161.3 million (135.6, 190.9) DALYs. Smoking was the 2nd leading risk factor for death among males (15.3% of deaths [13.0, 17.7]) and 8th among females (3.1% of deaths [2.4, 4.0]).

CONCLUSIONS: Initiatives to strengthen tobacco control are essential to curb the global epidemic; in their absence, the sizable burden of deaths and DALYs will continue to grow. Reductions in smoking prevalence are not limited by geography or wealth but by the success of implementation of tobacco control policies. If the World Health Organization's evidence-based MPOWER goals can be achieved, countries stand to enjoy economic and health benefits that will compound far into the future.

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Changes in tobacco use prevalence in Lusaka, Zambia: 2002 - 2021

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BACKGROUND: The enacting of the tobacco control statutory instruments into law and the tobacco control interventions in the Lusaka suggest that the prevalence of tobacco use in Lusaka may have declined. The objective of the study was to examine changes in the prevalence of tobacco use in Lusaka in the period 2002-2021.

METHODS: Zambia has conducted 4 Global Youth Tobacco Surveys (GYTS) in 2002, 2007, 2011 and 2021. The 2011 GYTS had a low response, and the data from the 2011 GYTS

has been excluded from the analysis. We used secondary GYTS data obtained in 2002, 2007 and 2021. Adjusted odds ratios and their 95% Confidence Intervals were used to establish associations.

RESULTS: The age distribution across all surveys was similar. However, the sex distribution changed from more males in the 2002 sample to more females in the subsequent surveys. The rates of current cigarette smoking and tobacco use in general were similar in 2002 and 2007 but reduced by half from about 10.2% to 5.2% cigarette smoking, and from 17.9% in 2007 to 5.3% in 2021. After adjusting for age and sex, students in 2002 (AOR =1.23, 95% CI [1.19, 1.27]) and 2007 (AOR = 1.34, 95% CI [1.30, 1.38]) were more likely to currently smoke cigarettes than students in 2021. Comparing with students in 2021, students in 2007 were 1.96 (95% CI [1.92, 2.00]) times more likely to use tobacco.

CONCLUSIONS: Ongoing interventions on tobacco control in Lusaka might have had an impact on the reduction of the prevalence of tobacco use in Lusaka. In sustaining the reduction in prevalence of tobacco use in the country, factors obtained in the current study should be considered in designing interventions.

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The bidirectional associations between tobacco-related content online and youth e-cigarette use: Results from a prospective cohort study, 2019–2021

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BACKGROUND: The increase in youth vaping remains a public health concern because exposure to vaping-related content influences initial e-cigarette use. However, youth already engaged in e-cigarette use could also be susceptible to seeing e-cigarette advertisements online. This study examined the bidirectional association between exposure to e-cigarette content on social media and e-cigarette use.

METHODS: The study sample included U.S. adolescents from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health Study of waves 5 (n=12098; 2019), 5.5 (n=7129; 2020), and 6 (n=5652; 2021). Univariable and multivariable weighted logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the bidirectional effect of exposure to e-cigarette advertising and e-cigarette use.

RESULTS: Exposure to e-cigarette advertisements in Wave 5/Wave 5.5 was significantly associated with past 30-day use in Wave 6 (adjusted odds ratio (AOR)=2.02, 99.17% CI=1.13 to 3.62). However, the association between adolescents who used e-cigarettes in the past 30-day e-cigarette at Wave 5/Wave 5.5 was not linked to subsequent exposure to e-cigarette advertisements on social media at Wave 6 (AOR=1.27, 99.17% CI=0.72 to 2.24). In contrast, a dose-response relationship was observed between past 30-day e-cigarette use at Wave 5/Wave 5.5, and the frequency of exposure to combined tobacco and e-cigarette advertisements compared to no exposure in Wave 6 (AOR for daily/near daily exposure=2.37; AOR for weekly exposure =2.16; AOR for occasional exposure=1.37).

CONCLUSIONS: Adolescents' exposure to e-cigarette advertisements is associated with an elevated risk of vaping, and among those who vaped, they are also likely to encounter tobacco-related content on a regular basis on social media. These findings suggest a potentially reinforcing cycle in which individuals already using e-cigarettes more frequently encounter e-cigarette advertisements.

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Young Australians' perceptions of nicotine pouches and the potential impact on smoking cessation

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BACKGROUND: Nicotine pouches are a new product created by global tobacco companies that are growing rapidly in popularity. Preventing uptake of nicotine pouches, especially among those who are nicotine-naïve, is critical to minimising risk of dependence and addiction. Despite risk perceptions being key determinants of behaviour, relatively few studies have explored perceptions of nicotine pouches. Accordingly, we sought to explore perceptions and attitudes towards nicotine pouches in an environment that prohibits the retail sale of the products.

METHODS: Australians aged 16-39 years (n = 1230) completed an online survey assessing their risk perceptions and attitudes towards nicotine pouch use. Regression analyses assessed correlates of perceptions and attitudes (sociodemographic characteristics, exposure to pouch advertising, use of pouches among family and friends, and use of nicotine and tobacco products).

RESULTS: Nicotine pouches were perceived to be less harmful/addictive or equivalent in harm/addictiveness compared to other tobacco and nicotine products. A substantial minority considered pouches to be equivalent to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Attitudes towards nicotine pouch use were generally unfavourable or neutral. Men, those who currently use pouches, and those who had a greater number of family members and close friends who use pouches were more likely than their counterparts to hold positive product perceptions.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite the considerable unknowns in relation to nicotine pouch use, favourable perceptions of the products appear to be forming. Of particular concern is the finding that a substantial proportion of respondents considered pouches to be equivalent in harm/addictiveness or less harmful/addictive than NRT. With an increasing number of novel nicotine products created by tobacco companies hitting the market, often alongside claims stating that these products assist with smoking cessation, informing those who smoke of evidence-based

smoking cessation treatments and removing any barriers to receiving such treatments is critical.

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Trends and correlates of purchasing illicit tobacco: Findings from the 2016-2022 International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco taxation is a cost-effective intervention for reducing smoking prevalence. However, with increasing financial hardship in recent years, price-sensitive individuals who do not quit smoking in response to price increases may seek cheaper tobacco such as illicit tobacco. This study examines trends in illicit tobacco purchasing and its associations with participant characteristics among people who smoked cigarettes between 2016 and 2022 in England, Canada, Australia, and the US.

METHODS: Data from individuals who smoke (≥monthly) in four waves (2016-2022) of the International Tobacco Control Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys across four countries (N=27,248; observations=35251) were analysed. Logistic regression with generalised estimating equations was used to estimate the associations between participant characteristics, survey wave, country, and the purchase of illicit tobacco (smuggled, lacking health warning labels, or without full taxes paid) in the past 6 months.

RESULTS: Prevalence of illicit tobacco purchasing increased in Canada (from 10.2% in 2016 to 16.0% in 2022), England (from 8.7% in 2016 to 13.7% in 2022) and Australia (from 6.0% in 2016 to 21.2% in 2022), with an overall increase across all countries (from 8.3% in 2016 to 13.7% in 2022, p for trend<0.001). Significant survey wave-country interactions were observed (p<0.001), but non-significant survey wave-income interactions (p=0.476). Factors associated with purchasing illicit tobacco included young adult aged 18-34 years (AOR=2.38; 95% CI=1.82-3.12, vs. 55+), male (AOR=1.75; 95% CI=1.49-2.05, vs. female), low income (AOR=1.41; 95% CI=1.15-1.72, vs. high), higher nicotine dependence (AOR=1.08; 95% CI=1.02-1.14), financial hardship (AOR=1.95; 95% CI=1.62-2.35, vs. no), higher perceived stress (AOR=1.11; 95% CI=1.03-1.9), and lower smoking cessation self-efficacy (AOR=1.09; 95% CI=1.02-1.16).

CONCLUSIONS: Greater focus on controlling the illicit tobacco trade is needed, especially in Australia. We identified several factors associated with greater likelihood of purchasing illicit tobacco that could be used to target educational efforts to discourage purchasing illicit tobacco.

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Curbing vaping among young Australians: Associations with education, campaigns and sales restrictions

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BACKGROUND: Following rapid increases in youth vaping from 2020, education and campaign activities surged from late-2022 to late-2023 across Australian states. In May 2023, the Australian Government announced plans for a range of reforms, including restricting vape sales. These were implemented in early 2024 with the ban of disposable vapes, supported by a national youth anti-vaping campaign. Further reforms followed, allowing access to therapeutic vapes – with limited nicotine concentration (≤20 mg) and flavours (mint, menthol and tobacco) – through pharmacies only with a prescription from 1 July, and without a prescription if certain conditions were met from 1 October. This research examines associations between vaping prevalence and the timing of these activities and policy changes.

METHODS: Using a representative population survey of Australians aged 14+ years (N=222,229; Feb 2018 – Dec 2023), we examine past month vaping prevalence among young Australians (14-17 years; 18-24 years). The 2024 data will be available by the time of presentation.

RESULTS: After sharp increases from Jan-Jul 2020 (1.6%) to Jul-Dec 2022 (14.5%) among those 14 to17 years, vaping prevalence plateaued through to Jul-Dec 2023 (13.4%). Among those 18 to 24 years, vaping rose steeply from Jul-Dec 2020 (7.2%) until the Jul-Dec 2022 (22.7%) and stabilised through to Jul-Dec 2023 (22.0%).

CONCLUSIONS: The plateauing of vaping among youth appears to have coincided with heightened state education and campaign activities and the announcement of Australian Government vaping reforms. Monitoring of 2024 prevalence will be critical for evaluating success of Australia's unique regulations aimed at curbing youth vaping.

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A study on the factors influencing the communication effectiveness of 'World No Tobacco Day' campaigns on social media

platforms

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BACKGROUND: Existing research indicates that in China, World No Tobacco Day represents the peak period of attention and dissemination on tobacco control topics. During this time, tobacco control organizations launch a series of thematic communication campaigns. However, the effectiveness of these campaigns and the factors influencing their success have not been thoroughly and objectively evaluated.
METHODS: This study examines the thematic communication campaigns surrounding 'World No Tobacco Day' on Weibo from 2021 to 2023, analyzing a dataset of 40 704 related posts through content analysis and big data text mining. Drawing on the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of dual-process theory, the study hypothesizes that influencing factors include systematic processing factors (e.g., textual features and content characteristics) and heuristic processing factors (e.g., authority, timeliness, proximity, and emotional experience). A multiple regression analysis of 12 variables was conducted using SPSS.
RESULTS: The findings reveal that factors such as text length, thematic consistency, thematic salience, verified accounts, spokesperson involvement, timeliness, clear advocacy targets, and emotional experience are significantly correlated with communication effectiveness, supporting the hypotheses. In contrast, factors such as content modality, hashtag usage, appeal type, and follower count were not significantly related to effectiveness, disproving certain assumptions. Using the HSM model as a theoretical framework, the study demonstrates that a dual influence of systematic factors (e.g., text and content features) and heuristic factors (e.g., authority, timeliness, proximity, and audience emotional engagement) can enhance the effectiveness of tobacco control communication on new media platforms.
CONCLUSIONS: Future tobacco control campaigns on social media should emphasize content consistency and thematic salience, leverage opinion leaders and anti-tobacco spokespersons, target specific advocacy groups, and evoke stronger emotional experiences to achieve better communication outcomes.

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Tobacco Industry Interference in Undermining Indonesia's Health Law No. 17/2023 and Government Regulation No. 28/2024

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BACKGROUND: The right to health is guaranteed by Indonesia's Constitution. However, the 2023 Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index, with Indonesia scoring 84, reveals pervasive tobacco industry influence in policymaking, weakening tobacco control and compromising public health. Law Number 17 of 2023 on Health includes provisions to regulate addictive substances, yet the law and its derivative Government Regulation face persistent disruptions, stemming from tobacco industry lobbying and internal government opposition. This study aims to identify strategies used by the tobacco industry to undermine health regulations, analyze arguments presented to weaken these regulations, and map the key entities involved in these disruptions.
METHODS: Data was collected from March to December 2023 through news articles, meeting presentations, and official correspondence related to the deliberation of the Health Law and its derivative government regulations. The information was categorized by event type, arguments, and organizations involved, enabling a detailed analysis of the interventions and their impact on the legislation.
RESULTS: The tobacco industry employs strategies such as spreading misleading and manipulative information, using third parties to shape public opinion, and conducting seminars, press conferences, and direct correspondence to interfere the policy-making process. Key actors include politicians, high-ranking government officials, researchers/academicians, and religious groups who are aligned with industry interests. These tactics have undermined key provisions regulating addictive substances in health law and government regulation, including the removal of bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, which are crucial for protecting children from industry marketing.
CONCLUSIONS: TII undermines Indonesia's public health policies, including efforts to protect children from tobacco marketing. Preventing this requires clear guidelines for managing conflicts of interest with the tobacco industry and adopting international best practices within government institutions, such as Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), to ensure that public health remains a priority over industry interests.

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Tobacco access and availability in Tunisian middle school adolescents, 2024

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BACKGROUND: The availability of tobacco products in schools' close environment is a key driver of early

smoking initiation alongside other psychological, financial and environmental influences. We aimed to study tobacco access and availability among middle school adolescents in Tunisia.

METHODS: The 2024- Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is a national, cross-sectional, school-based survey. A clustered two-stage stratification approach was used for random sampling, and the survey targeted middle school adolescents aged 13–15 years. Data were anonymously collected using a standardized questionnaire containing core questions about six majors tobacco related topics, including accessibility and availability of cigarettes in the last 30 days. Percentages were presented with 95% Confidence Interval (CI).

RESULTS: A total of 2745 middle school adolescents were enrolled, with a participation rate from private schools equal to 35.9% and a sex-ratio (M/F) equal to 0.98. More than half (60.3%, 95% CI 55.3-65.0) of current cigarette smokers purchased their cigarettes from a store, shop, street vendor, or kiosk in the past 30 days. Almost third of cigarette smokers (27.7% %, 95%CI 23.4-32.3) acquired cigarettes from someone in their social environment, significantly higher in boys (30.0% Vs 19.3%, p value=0.04). Regarding the ban on selling cigarettes to minors, only (23.8%, 95%CI 19.7-28.2) of current smokers were banned from purchasing cigarettes in the past 30 days.

CONCLUSIONS: This study revealed several gaps in Tunisian legislation regarding the sale of tobacco products to minors and its availability in schools surrounding environment. The revision of the current legislation to prohibit retail sales, sales to minors, and enforce a safety distance for selling tobacco products are key elements to reduce accessibility, protect the school environment and prevent early smoking initiation.

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Identifying the dynamics between tobacco control measures and their association with tobacco use prevalence: FCTC and MPOWER

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BACKGROUND: The MPOWER package was introduced to facilitate the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). However, evidence on the relationships between their components and associations with tobacco use remains limited. We aimed to explore how FCTC articles and MPOWER measures are grouped by implementation levels and examine their associations with tobacco use prevalence.

METHODS: Using the WHO data, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify FCTC-MPOWER measure combinations based on country-specific implementation levels (2020, 2022). Regression models examined associations between factor scores and adult cigarette smoking (CS), smoked tobacco use (ST), and smoked/smokeless tobacco use (SST) prevalence. Income levels and Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index were included as covariates.

RESULTS: EFA was conducted on data from 76 countries after excluding missing values, identifying five factors(policies arranged by factor loadings): (1) Government-led policy initiatives (Articles 16, 11, and R), (2) Infrastructure-based empowerment policies (Articles 14, 12, 5, 20, and O), (3) Protection from tobacco smoke exposure (Article 8 and P), (4) Regulation on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (Article 13 and E), and (5) Content and disclosure regulations (Articles 9-10). The results of regression analysis after adjustment(n=44) showed the factor scores of (2) had negative associations with female tobacco use across all years and types of tobacco use (2020 ß[SE]: CS=-0.346[0.125], ST=-0.348[0.132], SST=-0.341[0.153], all p<0.05). For males, the factor scores of (3) demonstrated negative associations with tobacco use in 2022 (ß[SE]: CC=-0.302[0.156], p=0.06; ST=-0.316[0.157], p=0.05; SST=-0.385[0.154], p<0.05).

CONCLUSIONS: The correlation between factor scores and tobacco use prevalence indicates a significant connection linking the underlying structural components of detailed policy implementations to the observed prevalence. This study showed that MPOWER functions cohesively with FCTC in P, O, and E, and the combinations like (1) and (2) showed gender-specific associations with tobacco use, indicating a need for potentially more effective policy groupings.

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The impact of Shanghai Tobacco Control Regulations on hospital admission and mortality rates for COPD: An interrupted time series analysis

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BACKGROUND: Smoking and secondhand smoke are major global health threats, significantly contributing to the burden of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Despite the implementation of tobacco control policies worldwide, limited evidence exists on the health impacts in Shanghai. This study evaluates the effects of Shanghai's 2017 smoke-free regulation on COPD hospital admission and mortality rates.

METHODS: Data on COPD-related hospital admissions and deaths in Shanghai from July 2013 to December 2021 were analyzed. Interrupted time series analysis was used to assess the trends in hospital admission and mortality rates following the implementation of the Regulations. Adjustments were made for population structure based

on Shanghai 2013 demographic data, and sensitivity analyses were conducted to control for confounding factors, including temperature, humidity, PM2.5 levels, and seasonality.

RESULTS: A total of 402912 COPD hospital admissions and 71922 deaths were recorded during the study period. Following the implementation of the Regulations, the long-term effect on hospital admission rates showed a significant decline (β = -0.51, p < 0.01), preventing an estimated 622 hospital admissions annually among residents aged 35 years and older. Although the short- and long-term effects on mortality rates showed a downward trend ($β_{short}$=-0.59 p>0.05; $β_{long}$=-0.015 p>0.05), the changes were minimal and not statistically significant. Subgroup analysis showed that the population aged 65 years and above exhibited a more pronounced decreasing trend in long-term admission rates (β = -1.20, p < 0.05) and short-term mortality rates (β = -2.16, p > 0.05).Population-standardized results and sensitivity analyses aligned

CONCLUSIONS: This study provides valuable evidence on the health benefits of the Shanghai Tobacco Control Regulations. The implementation of the Regulations significantly reduced hospital admission rates among COPD patients, although the impact on mortality rates was limited.

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Tobacco product use behavior and suicidal ideation among Korean adults with poly-tobacco use

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BACKGROUND: Adolescents who use multiple tobacco products are at an increased risk of suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts. However, little is known about the link between poly-tobacco use and suicidal ideation in adults.

METHODS: A survey was conducted with 800 Korean adults aged 19 and older who use tobacco products to assess their tobacco use behaviors and mental health indicators, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. Poly-tobacco users were categorized into groups: conventional cigarette(CC)+heated tobacco product(HTP), CC + electronic cigarette(EC), HTP+EC and CC+HTP+EC. The survey included measures such as the Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence (FTND), electronic FTND (e-FTND), Beck Anxiety Inventory, Patient Health Questionnaire-9, and suicidal ideation assessments. Urinary cotinine tests were conducted on 100 participants to validate the findings.

RESULTS: Among participants, 77.6% were male, and 22.4% were female, with an average age of 43.3 years and 42.5 years respectively. Of the 800 participants, 217 were poly-tobacco users. In the CC+HTP group (123 participants), the first tobacco product used in the morning was CC (52.8%) or HTP (47.2%). In the CC+EC group (32 participants), it was CC (62.5%) or EC (37.5%). For the HTP+EC group (13 participants), it was HTP (30.8%) or EC (69.2%). In the CC+HTP+EC group (49 participants), the distribution was CC (53.1%), HTP (22.0%), and EC (16.9%). Nicotine dependence (FTND or e-FTND) scores were as follows: CC (3.23), HTP (3.23), EC (3.75), CC+HTP (3.67), CC+EC (3.25), HTP+EC (4.50), and CC+HTP+EC (3.78). Poly-tobacco users exhibited poorer scores for suicidal ideation compared to single-product users. Urinary cotinine levels were 1,032 ng/ml for CC users, 2,846 ng/ml for HTP users, 890 ng/ml for EC users, and 2,395 ng/ml for poly-tobacco users.

CONCLUSIONS: Among adult tobacco users, poly-tobacco users demonstrated worse outcomes for suicidal ideation compared to single-product users. Comprehensive screening is necessary to address the mental health needs of poly-tobacco users.

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The power of networks drives the prevention of youth smoking and vaping

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The 2022 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) reported a sharp increase in e-cigarette use among Thai youth, with usage rising from 3.3% in 2015 to 17.6% in 2022. This surge is linked to e-cigarette marketing targeting young people. The tobacco and e-cigarette industries have lobbied the government to lift the ban on e-cigarette sales and imports, falsely presenting e-cigarettes as safe. In response, the Tobacco Control Foundation, supported by various partners, mobilized efforts to educate the public and policymakers on the risks of e-cigarettes. They emphasized the dangers of lifting the ban, which would increase addiction among children and youth.

Objective:

- Raise awareness of the dangers of e-cigarettes
- Educate the public on the impacts of e-cigarette use
- Encourage opposition to the legalization of e-cigarettes.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Methods:

- Capacity building for Tobacco Control Alliances
- Advocacy targeting youth, parents, health professionals, and media
- Social media campaigns
- Media toolkits for communication strategies.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Results: The campaign successfully disseminated knowledge about e-cigarette risks and mobilized support through networks such as teachers, local governments, media, and youth groups. A national petition against the legalization of e-cigarettes garnered over 600000 signatures. Network partners engaged in forums, meetings with policymakers, and advocacy efforts, ensuring sustained communication through platforms like Facebook and TikTok.

CONCLUSIONS: The network-driven campaign significantly raised awareness about e-cigarette dangers and reinforced public support for the law banning

e-cigarette sales in Thailand. The broad participation of various civil society groups has effectively influenced policy discussions, reinforcing opposition to e-cigarettes and promoting stronger preventive measures.

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Financial collaborations between big tobacco and the state: A mechanism for tobacco industry interference in Zambia's public health policy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Zambia, with a high prevalence of tobacco use, faces significant challenges in developing effective tobacco control legislation. Since ratifying the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2008, the country has struggled with industry interference and limited resources. The tobacco industry's financial collaborations with the state have further complicated efforts to implement robust public health policies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Tobacco Free Association of Zambia (TOFAZA), through its oversight of the Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Response team, has produced investigative reports that expose financial linkages between the government and major tobacco corporations. These findings indicate that the tobacco sector has received both financial and non-financial incentives, which have supported its expansion and operations within Zambia. Furthermore, TOFAZA's research has revealed that public pension funds have been allocated to the production of tobacco by a prominent tobacco company listed on the Lusaka Stock Exchange. This scenario illustrates the profound connections between the government and the tobacco industry, presenting considerable obstacles to effective tobacco control initiatives in the nation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: TOFAZA's intervention has significantly heightened awareness of the financial collaborations between the state and Big Tobacco. Their investigative reports exposed fiscal and non-fiscal incentives granted to the tobacco industry and public pension funds invested in tobacco manufacturing. This exposure, along with TOFAZA's input in the Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report for Zambia, has driven policy reforms and strengthened tobacco control measures, empowering youth-led advocacy and fostering long-term initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS: TOFAZA's efforts have unveiled the deep-rooted financial ties between the state and Big Tobacco, driving policy reforms and empowering youth-led advocacy. This comprehensive approach is essential for overcoming industry interference and ensuring effective tobacco control in Zambia.

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Tracking the evolution of youth vaping in Australia: Signs of success from generation vape

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BACKGROUND: Vaping among Australian young people, like many other countries, has accelerated over the past decade. Given the growing rates of use among young people in Australia, it was crucial to track this information over time to detect behaviour change and inform effective policy, programs and education initiatives. Commencing in 2021, the Generation Vape research project is the first and largest study to track vaping among young Australians over time.

METHODS: The Generation Vape study examines vaping attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours through 6-monthly online cross-sectional surveys among young people aged 14-24 years. Since February 2022, the study has included a national sample of >25000 young people. This abstract presents survey findings from Wave 2 (February 2022) through to Wave 7 (November 2024). All data for Wave 7 was collected following the 01 October 2024 national legislation changes.

RESULTS: Vape use among 14–24-year-olds has decreased from 22% in 2022 to 16% in 2024. Young people have consistently reported accessing vapes through friends or retail stores and awareness on the harms of vaping has increased over time. Fewer young people in 2024 report that they would vape if one of their best friends were to offer them a vape than in 2022 (23% in W2 vs 15% in W7) and significantly fewer reported that most of their friends vape (11% in W2 vs 8% in W7).

CONCLUSIONS: Australia is among the first countries in the world to show early signs of success in slowing the rise of youth vaping. While stronger vaping regulation has been adopted in Australia, ongoing enforcement is critical in ensuring these early indicators of success become a long-term trend. Studies like Generation Vape are instrumental in tracking behaviour change over time and monitoring the impact of policy. Learnings from the project could be replicated by advocates and researchers internationally.

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Nicotine replacement therapy for tobacco cessation: Harm reduction or harm re-distribution

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality globally. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is propagated as a harm-reduction strategy for tobacco cessation and mitigate withdrawal symptoms. However, long-term safety and efficacy of NRT products, their carcinogenic potential and their role in sustaining and propagating nicotine addiction arouse concerns. Commercial nicotine products such as e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco impair cessation

efforts by promoting dual use of nicotine consumption and off prescription abuse. This paper evaluates NRT's efficacy, limitations, and implications for public health policies.

METHODS: A review of literature, clinical trials, and WHO guidelines compared NRT and non-nicotine cessation products and interventions like varenicline, bupropion, clonidine and behavioural therapy (CBT) for safety, efficacy, and compliance. This paper assessed nicotine delivery products and their impact on cessation outcomes. Strategies to optimize NRT usage and integrate CBT cessation were identified.

RESULTS: NRTs deliver controlled doses of nicotine. Supervised prescription is effective in reducing withdrawal symptoms and doubling quit rates when combined with CBT. Prolonged use of NRT perpetuates nicotine addiction and leads to adverse effects on Cardiovascular System/ oropharyngeal irritation. The industry-driven nicotine products, marketed as safe alternatives, have significant health risks and undermine cessation efforts. Non-nicotine pharmaceuticals are effective in addressing nicotine withdrawal symptoms in combination with CBT. Faster nicotine metabolism in women, unique cessation barriers in pregnancy, low compliance and high risks of misuse in resource limited settings need structured programs for pharmacological and CBT.

CONCLUSIONS: NRT, although effective for tobacco cessation, can perpetuate nicotine addiction. Non-nicotine products and CBT offer a robust alternative, addressing both physiological and psychological aspects. Regulation of NRT products and industry-driven nicotine delivery devices is crucial to prevent nicotine abuse.

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A global fellowship programme to establish sustainable funds for tobacco control and health promotion

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Health taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and sugar-sweetened beverages are the most cost-effective measure for reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by discouraging consumption while generating sustainable, long-term financing for health and development.

Existing health promotion funds were set up after years of consistent evidence-based advocacy. Experience-sharing and technical support from countries that have successfully gone through this process is instructive for countries currently advocating for their own sustainable financing mechanisms.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) and Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) jointly organized a fellowship program offering policy-focused technical assistance to countries in the development, legislation, and implementation of a sustainable national financing mechanism for health promotion.

The program supported two fellows per country in ten countries, nominated by their government or SEATCA. It included a study visit to ThaiHealth in Bangkok, mentorship, and seed grants for evidence generation, policy analysis, and advocacy.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Despite facing political unrest, including post-election instability, military coups, and government restructuring, fellows in six countries - Bangladesh, Georgia, Niger, Senegal, Vanuatu, and Vietnam - made significant progress in achieving policy objectives and sustaining advocacy efforts.

Fellows have conducted situational analyses, engaged key stakeholders, conducted multi-sectoral advocacy, produced evidence-based policy documents, amplified their messages via the media, and drafted/reviewed health promotion legislation. For example, the fellows in Bangladesh have written a background paper detailing health promotion challenges and opportunities, aiding stakeholder consultations for the drafting of a future Health Promotion Foundation Act. In Georgia, fellows mobilized key stakeholders, including health officials and the WHO, to develop a comprehensive policy document outlining a sustainable financing model for health promotion

The fellowship concluded in November 2024, but SEATCA continues supporting the six countries' advocacy.

CONCLUSIONS: South-South cooperation has advanced work towards sustainable financing mechanisms for tobacco control and health promotion in more countries, but more must be done.

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Patterns of illicit tobacco use among a representative sample of Australians who smoke tobacco

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BACKGROUND: Illicit tobacco products are those for which required taxes or duties have not been paid. The Australian Taxation Office estimates that Australia's illicit tobacco market in Australia grew from 5.4% of the overall tobacco market in 2016/17 to 18% in 2022/23. Despite this, the last survey to comprehensively investigate Australians' patterns of illicit tobacco use was conducted in 2007.

METHODS: We recruited a representative sample of 2551 Australians who smoke using a Qualtrics market research panel. Participants completed a 15-minute survey about their use of various tobacco products. Those who indicated at least weekly illicit tobacco use answered questions about their patterns of illicit tobacco use (e.g., amount used, product(s) used, source, reasons for use, factors that may deter use).

RESULTS: 509 (20%) participants indicated current daily or weekly use of illicit tobacco products. These participants most commonly reported buying branded cigarette packs (42.1%) from a tobacconist (33.4%) or convenience store (17.4%). Common reasons for purchasing illicit products

were their cheaper price compared to legal products (43.4%) and/or not wanting to pay more taxes to the government (14.5%). Factors that may deter participants from using illicit tobacco products included a criminal charge (16.9%) or a large fine (>AUD$500; 14.4%), while 10.8% reported no intention to stop using illicit tobacco.
CONCLUSIONS: This study is the first to comprehensively investigate Australians' patterns of illicit tobacco use since 2007. Our prevalence estimate (20%) closely aligns with that of the Australian Taxation Office (18%). These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions that address illicit tobacco's availability in legal retail settings and aim to deter its use through complementary supply and demand-side measures.
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Influence of tobacco industry undermines public health in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Despite government efforts to control tobacco consumption, the industry's manipulation of laws, policies, and public opinion continues to obstruct progress. The primary obstacle to effective tobacco control in Bangladesh is the strategic interference by tobacco companies, especially British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB), which employs various methods to maintain its market dominance and weaken public health initiatives.
METHODS: This study employs a mixed-method research approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of tobacco industry interference in Bangladesh. The mixed-method design allows for a holistic analysis, integrating numerical data with in-depth contextual insights to capture the multifaceted nature of the issue. Qualitative data will be collected through interviews and document analysis.
RESULTS: Most events in 2023 and 2024 involving tobacco industry interference aimed to undermine public health measures by obstructing the ongoing amendment initiative of the tobacco control law by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The industry employed several well-known tactics, including using third-party or front groups to advocate on its behalf, misleading policymakers with industry-affiliated so-called experts, and directly approaching government bodies to advance its agenda
CONCLUSIONS: The repetition of these tactics by tobacco companies indicates that the government has not updated its policies to safeguard public health measures despite public outcry. This persistent interference underscores the need for stronger regulatory frameworks and increased transparency to protect public health initiatives from being undermined by the tobacco industry.
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Harnessing public opinion to strengthen tobacco control advocacy in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Effective leadership and advocacy are essential in addressing tobacco control challenges. In the lead-up to Indonesia's 2024 presidential election, the country faced a critical juncture with three prominent candidates, none of whom prominently addressed health issues in their campaigns—particularly non-communicable diseases (NCDs) or tobacco control. Despite Indonesia's high tobacco consumption and its severe health impacts, political attention to this issue remained limited. To inform strategic policymaking and advocacy, a national survey was conducted to explore public perceptions of health issues, tobacco control, and the responsiveness of prospective presidential candidates.
METHODS: A quantitative survey was conducted from May 2–10, 2023, using multistage random sampling. A total of 880 respondents, representative of Indonesia's population aged 17 years or older, participated. The survey assessed public perceptions of tobacco consumption, support for tobacco control policies, and preferences for candidates prioritizing this issue.
RESULTS: A total of 76.8% of respondents viewed tobacco consumption as highly concerning, and 81.2% recognized the significant health impacts of smoking. However, only 38.9% believed presidential candidates showed significant attention to reducing smoking rates. Additionally, 74.6% supported stricter policies to curb tobacco use, and 63.5% expressed a willingness to vote for candidates prioritizing tobacco control. These findings highlight a gap between public awareness and political commitment to tobacco control.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings emphasize the need for presidential candidates to address public health issues, including tobacco control, to clarify their positions and commitments. Advocacy strategies should leverage public opinion to hold policymakers accountable and foster collaboration between civil society and government. This study highlights the importance of evidence-based advocacy in strengthening public health policies and aligning political leadership with community priorities.
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Retailers' views on selling tobacco, tobacco control policies, and phasing out tobacco sales: A scoping review

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco retailers play a dual role in tobacco control: they act as the gateway for the supply

and promotion of tobacco products and are instrumental in implementing tobacco control measures in the retail environment. This scoping review synthesises the global evidence base on tobacco retailers' attitudes towards selling tobacco, tobacco control measures, and the potential phase out of tobacco retailing.

METHODS: We searched eight databases covering health, social science, and business disciplines to identify peer reviewed qualitative and quantitative research (2000–July 2024) conducted with retailers from various store types. The review followed the JBI Scoping Review Methodology and the PRISMA-ScR checklist for reporting scoping reviews.

RESULTS: Fifty-two studies were included, with the USA (29%) and India (21%) contributing the most research. Most retailers demonstrated a strong understanding of existing tobacco control measures, although knowledge varied by country and retailer demographics. Retailers largely opposed tobacco control policies such as taxes, product display bans, underage sales restrictions, and standardised tobacco packaging. Despite recognising tobacco as a low-profit product for their business, most retailers cited customer attraction and retention as key reasons for continuing tobacco sales. Ten studies from high-income countries (Australia, New Zealand, and the USA) indicated that stringent tobacco control measures, along with personal ethical considerations, were key factors motivating retailers to discontinue tobacco sales. This review underscores that in addition to regulatory pressures, voluntary cessation of tobacco sales can be encouraged through appealing to personal values, ethical concerns, and incentives, supported by education and retailer engagement. These could also be used to inform communications about government-led phase outs of tobacco retailing.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco retailers typically hold negative attitudes about tobacco control regulations. However, messaging that highlights personal ethical and business reasons for not selling tobacco could increase support among retailers for ending tobacco sales.

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Tobacco prevalence among the women in Tripura State, India: A cross-sectional study from West Tripura District

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is a significant health risk, particularly in rural regions where socio-cultural factors heavily influence tobacco use patterns. In West Tripura district, tobacco use among women remains understudied, despite its serious health consequences. This study aims to assess the prevalence, patterns, and health consequences of tobacco use among rural women in West Tripura.

METHODS: The total sample administered to 200 women aged 18-65 years from three locations- Agartala Municipal Corporation (n=60), Dukli block (n=70), and Old Agartala block (n=70). A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure adequate representation from each area. Data were collected on socio-demographic characteristics, tobacco consumption patterns, and associated health consequences to assess factors associated with tobacco use.

RESULTS: The overall prevalence of tobacco use among women in the study was 42%, with significant variation between the areas. Tobacco use was highest in the rural blocks of Dukli (54%) and Old Agartala (50%), compared to the urban area of Agartala Municipal Corporation (25%). The most commonly used form of tobacco was smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco), reported by 65% of users. Socio-demographic factors such as lower educational levels (OR=2.5, 95% CI: 1.6–3.9) and lower household income (OR=2.2, 95% CI: 1.3–3.7) were significantly associated with higher tobacco use. Health consequences included chronic respiratory issues (32%), gum disease (28%), and an increased incidence of oral cancer (11%) among tobacco users. Additionally, 57% of tobacco users reported a deterioration in their overall health.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use among rural women in West Tripura is alarmingly high, particularly in rural blocks like Dukli and Old Agartala. There is an urgent need for targeted public health interventions, including tobacco cessation programs and awareness campaigns for rural women in Tripura. Comprehensive policies addressing both the prevention and treatment of tobacco-related diseases are essential for improving women's health in these communities.

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Beyond wildest dreams and greatest hopes: Māori sovereignty and resistance in shaping tobacco policy

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BACKGROUND: Driven by the commercial tobacco industry, tobacco-related disease and death are linked to colonisation and violations of health rights. In response, advocacy, activism, and a Māori-led parliamentary inquiry into the tobacco industry influenced groundbreaking legislation aimed at ending tobacco use. Following the repeal of the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act (SERPA), ongoing Indigenous leadership and initiatives are essential to decolonising approaches and improving health and well-being outcomes for Māori. Our goal was to better understand and document the contributions of Māori perspectives, expectations, and values in shaping the tobacco control landscape in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

METHODS: We conducted nine in-depth interviews with Māori health leaders from diverse sectors including public health, community services, research, and advocacy.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide. Embedded within Kaupapa Māori principles, a reflexive thematic analysis was conducted.
RESULTS: Participants responses were framed within a Māori worldview and grounded in the obligations guaranteed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori wellbeing aspirations were shaped by cultural values, accountabilities back to Māori communities, and driven by relationships, whakapapa (genealogy, kinship ties) and intergenerational responsibilities. Protecting Indigenous values, confronting indifference to Māori conceptions of health and wellbeing, and using narratives to provoke and support shifts in thinking, reinforced resolve that achieving a tobacco-free future is a matter of sovereignty, health equity, and Te Tiriti rights. Participants highlighted challenges posed by competing power dynamics, worldviews and narratives around what is acceptable and achievable, particularly addressing threats to sovereignty such as industry interference and nicotine addiction.
CONCLUSIONS: This Indigenous sovereignty response highlights the necessity of Indigenous voices in defining tobacco control outcomes and policy, in a way that is consistent with aspirations and worldviews that will ensure flourishing Indigenous futures. These findings can help hold the commercial Tobacco Industry and governments to account while protecting Māori rights to health.
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South Australian tobacco-free generation policy: Action towards generation-based age restrictions on tobacco product sales

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite some encouraging progress, Australia faces the challenge of ongoing tobacco use with persisting inequities with high smoking prevalence among Indigenous peoples. Hence stronger regulation and policy innovation is required.
South Australia is considering introducing a Tobacco-Free Generation (TFG) policy to prohibit the sale and supply of tobacco products and e-cigarettes to individuals born after 1 January 2007. A Bill to introduce the policy was passed by the State's Legislative Council in 2024, and will likely be considered by the State's House of Assembly in 2025. The policy is consistent with new federal and state tobacco control strategies and responds to recent increases in teenage smoking and use of e-cigarettes in Australia.
However, TFG policies face complexities of legislative approval and determined opposition; the tobacco industry and its allies strongly oppose the TFG by questioning its moral justification, feasibility and effectiveness.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The TFG policy is grounded in theory and evidence suggesting that this approach will maximise reductions in smoking uptake by progressively denormalising smoking, eliminating tobacco product availability to young people and ending the 'rite-of-passage' effect introduced by fixed age restrictions.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Modelling studies internationally suggest TFG policies will lead to substantial and highly equitable reductions in smoking prevalence. TFG policies attract strong public support. South Australia would be the first jurisdiction in Australia to successfully enact such a measure, aligning with current regulatory momentum in the United States and United Kingdom. We will provide an update on the status of the TFG policy and lessons learnt to date for advocacy and policy development.
CONCLUSIONS: The South Australian TFG policy represents a key public health intervention with the potential to protect future generations of young people from addiction and harm of tobacco products and contribute to achieving minimal smoking prevalence in Australia.
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Price dynamics and affordability of tobacco products in India: A study on the impact of GST implementation

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco consumption poses a major public health challenge in India, with affordability and pricing significantly shaping usage patterns. This study analyzes trends in the affordability and pricing of tobacco products, including Bidi, Cigarette, Hookah, and Zarda, Kimam and Surti, from 2013-2014 to 2022-2023. It further examines the impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) by comparing tobacco price growth in the pre- and post-GST periods, offering insights for effective taxation and control policies.
METHODS: To understand the price dynamics and significance of GST for price variations, a log-linear regression and dummy variable model is applied respectively. The monthly Price indices data for all these tobacco products is available on the official platform of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. For affordability, growth in per capita Gross Domestic Product and growth in prices of tobacco products is compared.
RESULTS: Pre-GST, the instantaneous growth rates of tobacco product prices were: Bidi at 0.66%/month, Cigarettes at 0.74%, Hooka at 0.61%, and Zarda, Kimam and Surti at 0.77% (95% CI), showing rapid increases. Post-GST, growth rates decelerated to 0.36%, 0.29%, 0.40%, and 0.21% (95% CI), respectively. This reflects a significant moderation in price escalation, particularly for Zarda, Kimam and Surti. Despite this, GST caused a structural break, pushing prices upward overall, except for Hooka. Economic accessibility of tobacco products increased substantially during 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, while the composite CPI rose faster post-GST, decoupling it from the slower tobacco price growth.
CONCLUSIONS: The implementation of GST initially raised tobacco product prices, but price growth slowed in the

post-GST era, significantly increasing their affordability. This rise in affordability underscores the need for effective central tax and pricing policies. To address the negative externalities of tobacco consumption, the government must implement stronger measures to curb tobacco prevalence and protect public health.

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Challenges and barriers to the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in tobacco control: A qualitative study from India

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BACKGROUND: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are crucial for fighting India's tobacco epidemic through advocacy, cessation services, and public education. However, systemic, logistical, and socio-cultural barriers impede their effectiveness. This study explored the challenges faced by NGOs in tobacco control and provided actionable recommendations to enhance their participation in national efforts.

METHODS: The qualitative study was conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with NGO representatives on the challenges that NGOs in tobacco control are facing across India. Fifteen NGO representatives were selected through purposive sampling, to ensure the maximum diversity of geographical locations and organizational focuses. Snowball sampling was then applied to reach additional participants who were relevantly experienced. The interviews and the focus group discussions were conducted via Zoom for 30-60 minutes and guided by a pre-tested interview protocol. All sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The qualitative data were analysed thematically employing the Framework Method. Systematic coding and identifying themes were further facilitated by making use of the Atlas.ti software. Members checking and debriefing process was incorporated during the study to measure credibility.

RESULTS: Five key barriers affecting NGO participation were identified: Policy and Structural Barriers: Exclusion from decision-making and restricted access to government support; Resource Constraints: Financial instability, understaffing, and lack of technical training; Socio-Cultural Challenges: Community resistance, and cultural normalization of tobacco use; Coordination Gaps: NGOs and government agencies are not well aligned, resulting in fragmented efforts and Advocacy Challenges: Difficulties engaging policymakers and countering tobacco industry influence.

CONCLUSIONS: Overcoming these barriers requires strengthened NGO-government collaboration, increased financial and technical support, and active inclusion of NGOs in policymaking. Enhanced advocacy training and targeted strategies to address community resistance and cultural norms are essential. Integrating NGOs into policymaking processes, enhancing capacity-building efforts, and fostering cooperation with government departments will significantly strengthen tobacco control actions and accelerate progress toward national goals.

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Tobacco use among indigenous population: A study based on large scale survey

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BACKGROUND: India is the second-largest consumer and third-largest producer of tobacco globally, with tobacco use being a major cause of morbidity and mortality. This study examines inter- and intra-social disparities in tobacco consumption and identifies key factors contributing to smoking and smokeless tobacco (SLT) use among tribal populations.

METHODS: Cross-sectional data from 74037 adults (≥15 years) were analyzed using the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) India (2016–2017). Descriptive statistics with the Chi-Square test, multivariable logistic regression, and a non-linear multivariable logit Oaxaca decomposition model were employed to measure social disparities in smoked and SLT use. The analysis explored associations between tobacco use and socio-demographic characteristics across various social groups.

RESULTS: Tobacco use was significantly higher among tribal men, with 14.4% consuming smoked tobacco and 33.7% using SLT, compared to Scheduled Caste (SC) men (14.3%, 26.4%) and men from other castes (12.2%, 21.4%). Gender differences were stark: 12.8% and 23.4% of men used smoked and SLT, respectively, compared to 1.5% and 12.3% of women. Men were 16 times more likely to smoke [AOR: 16.449; 95% CI: 14.56–18.59] and 1.4 times more likely to use SLT [AOR: 1.417; 95% CI: 1.34–1.50] than women. Smoking prevalence was 64% higher and SLT use 29% higher among tribal men compared to men from other castes. Men from other castes were 19 times more likely to smoke than their female counterparts, while tribal men were 12 times more likely.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use is disproportionately high among tribal older males, individuals with low education levels, the poorest households, those experiencing disrupted marriages, and rural residents in Central, Eastern, and Northeastern regions of India. Targeted preventive interventions, awareness campaigns, and policy measures should prioritize tribal populations to align with Sustainable Development Goal 3.a.

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Advancing sustainable tobacco control in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In Pakistan, an estimated 19.1% of adults use tobacco (GATS-2014). Whereas, in Punjab 29.1% male and 3.6% female are tobacco users (PDHS 2017-18). Tobacco consumption kills almost 163000 persons in Pakistan per year, 31000 of these deaths are due to secondhand smoke (GBD-2019), indicating a margin to enhance compliance on tobacco control laws.

The economic cost of smoking in Pakistan is Rs.615.07 billion (US$3.85 billion), equal to 1.6% of Pakistan's GDP, which is about five times greater than the revenue from the tobacco industry (PIDE-2021).

In Punjab, there was no dedicated tobacco control program. Rather tobacco control was part of NCD program and was confined to mass awareness events. There was no Provincial or District Focal persons to work exclusively for tobacco control. No mechanism was in place for enforcement of Tobacco Control Laws.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The project has pursued the initiative for advancing Sustainable Tobacco Control in Pakistan to counter the sustainability challenges at sub-national level. It demonstrates innovative strategies for combating tobacco-related public health challenges.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: ABP facilitated the development of sustainable tobacco control policy framework, integrating cross-sectoral efforts to strengthen governance and legislative enforcement. As a result, first-ever provincial and eight district focal-persons have been nominated to ensure dedicated leadership and localized implementation of tobacco control policies.

As an innovative approach, the project facilitated integration of tobacco control with the TB control program, leveraging existing healthcare infrastructure to enhance sustainability, efficiency and outreach.

Issuance of tobacco vendor licenses in 8 partner districts marked a significant policy innovation, regulating the sale of tobacco products and ensuring compliance on laws at point of sale. Complementing this was the deployment of mobile application that enables citizens to report violations of tobacco control laws in real-time.

CONCLUSIONS: The program achieved significant milestones that establish a sustainable, replicable and scalable foundation for tobacco control in Pakistan.

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Examining the spatial variations in tobacco use among young men: A multi-level analysis based on 8526 communities across 707 districts of India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among young men (aged 15–24 years) is alarmingly high, with two-fifths of men consuming tobacco, and one-fifth of these being from this younger age group. While prior studies have focused on single-unit level variations in tobacco consumption, these fail to capture the complex within- and between-unit variations across different geographical levels. This study aims to analyze the extent of spatial heterogeneities at the community, district, and state levels in tobacco consumption among younger men.

METHODS: Data from 31070 young men (aged 15–24 years) sampled in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) were analyzed. These individuals represent 25155 households, 8526 communities, and 707 districts across 36 states and Union Territories (UTs). Multi-level regression models were employed to estimate variations in the consumption of smoked and smokeless tobacco. Robustness checks were conducted by controlling for individual characteristics.

RESULTS: Overall, 22.5% of young men consumed some form of tobacco, with higher prevalence in rural areas (25.1%). Among these, 17.8% used smokeless tobacco. Adjusted models revealed that the largest variance partitioning coefficient (VPC) was attributed to community (57.5%) for any tobacco use, followed by states (26.5%) and districts (15.9%). For smoked tobacco, community accounted for 58.2% of the variation, states 30.2%, and districts 17.8%. In smokeless tobacco use, states exhibited the highest VPC (53.1%), followed by community (34.4%) and districts (12.5%). Similar patterns were observed among rural young men. State-specific analyses confirmed the predominance of community -level variation in most states.

CONCLUSIONS: Community exhibited the highest contribution to variation in overall tobacco consumption, with states playing a significant role in smokeless tobacco use. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions at the community level, particularly in rural areas, to address the factors driving tobacco consumption among young men.

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Prevalence of chewing tobacco use and associated burden of disease: An analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023

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BACKGROUND: Chewing tobacco is both harmful and common globally. It is essential to understand both the current state and temporal patterns of chewing tobacco use to inform goal setting and policy implementation.

METHODS: In the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2023, we used spatiotemporal Gaussian process regression to estimate the prevalence of chewing tobacco use among males and females across 204 countries and territories, from 1990 through 2023. Models utilized

811 nationally or sub-nationally representative surveys. The burden of proof approach was used to estimate the relative risks between chewing tobacco and stroke, as well as cancers of the lip and oral cavity, esophagus, larynx, pharynx, and nasopharynx, from which the burden of disease was derived.

RESULTS: Globally, 241.3 million people (95% uncertainty interval 164.1, 353.1) 15 years and above used chewing tobacco in 2023. The age-standardized prevalence of current use was 4.0% (2.2, 6.7): 5.4% (3.9, 7.5) among males and 2.6% (1.4, 4.3) among females. Prevalence has not significantly changed since 1990 (3.4% increase [-48.6, 94.3]). Most current users resided in South Asia (80.1% [71.5, 87.2]), with the majority in India (61.8% [54.0, 68.5] of global users). Of the ten countries with highest prevalence, only two – Nepal and India – showed a decline since 1990, though neither was significant. We estimated 255.9 thousand (157.4, 384.1) chewing tobacco-attributable deaths and 6.61 million (4.14, 9.89) disability-adjusted life-years lost in 2023. For both males (0.5% [0.3, 0.7]) and females (0.4% [0.2, 0.6]), chewing tobacco was attributable for around one in two hundred deaths.

CONCLUSIONS: Chewing tobacco poses a significant health burden yet has not received the attention of smoking. Subsequently, the prevalence of chewing tobacco use remains unchanged since 1990. Reducing stroke and cancers of the head and neck attributable to chewing tobacco will require policies targeting adoption and use, especially in South Asia.

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Tobacco use and cognitive health among older adults? A propensity score matching analysis based on a large-scale survey from India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco is a well-established risk factor for cancer, but its association with other morbidities needs consideration. The low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) with unprecedented demographic transformation lack evidence on tobacco use and its impact on cognitive health

METHODS: Using a propensity score matching approach, we utilized data from the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India. Study employed 1:1 nearest neighbor matching with the replacement methodology. We estimated the odds of the poor cognitive score and tobacco use among older adults based on five different models for ever tobacco user, former tobacco user, current tobacco user, current smokers, and current smokeless tobacco users with reference to never tobacco users.

RESULTS: The estimated average treatment effect for the treated and the untreated group has shown a higher likelihood of cognitive decline among ever (OR -0.26; 95%CI -0.43 to -0.09), current (OR -0.28; 95%CI 0.45 to -0.10), and former (OR -0.53; 95%CI -0.87 to -0.19) tobacco users compared to never tobacco users. The finding further suggests the odds of lower cognitive scores among older adults who were smokers (OR -0.53; 95%CI -0.87 to -0.19) and smokeless tobacco users (OR -0.22; 95%CI -0.43 to -0.01) as compared to never tobacco users.

CONCLUSIONS: Interventions designed to prevent the incidence of cognitive impairment should focus on limiting the use of tobacco. Strategies under the tobacco-free generation initiative should be amplified in order to prevent future generations from productivity loss, premature ageing and to promote healthy aging.

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Self-reported exposure of Indonesian students to online and offline tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS): Study in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco control in Indonesia faces significant challenges due to the high exposure of adolescents to tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS), both through online and offline media. The tobacco industry actively targets young individuals with marketing strategies that utilise social media, sports events, and strategic locations such as educational institutions and markets.

METHODS: A study conducted in four Indonesian cities from March to December 2024 involved 1600 students aged 10-18 years. The survey found that in cities with partial outdoor tobacco advertising restrictions (TAPs), tobacco advertising is permitted under certain conditions, while in cities with full bans, no exceptions are made. The study involved 20 public high schools and middle schools, with seven schools not participating due to national examinations. The survey also inquired about students' exposure to tobacco product advertisements on various media platforms, including streets, near school entrances, public transportation, shopping centres, minimarkets, parks, and places of worship. Adolescents were categorised into three age groups and their smoking status was determined by the number of cigarettes they consumed in the past 30 days.

RESULTS: The study reveals that 79.9% of respondents in Indonesian cities never engage in e-cigarette use, whilst 14.5% do so in cities without regulatory measures. Increased exposure to cigarette advertisements on social media platforms is associated with increased electronic smoking behaviour. While more stringent regulations in some cities mitigate the impact, digital media exposure

in cities lacking regulations is more significant. The study underscores the necessity for comprehensive tobacco advertising regulations to safeguard society, particularly adolescents.

CONCLUSIONS: Regulations on cigarette advertising may serve to protect against electronic smoking behaviour in urban areas; however, exposure to advertisements on social media platforms continues to significantly influence this behaviour. More stringent regulatory approaches are required to mitigate the impact of advertisements on electronic smoking behaviour.

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Tobacco-free Gram Panchayat: Transforming nangli kithore in meerut into a role model for Uttar Pradesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Under the National Tobacco Control Program, the Tobacco-Free Gram Panchayat (TFGP) initiative in Nangli Kithore, Meerut aimed to combat widespread tobacco use and its harmful effects. This village faced challenges such as cultural acceptance of tobacco, low awareness of its risks, and weak enforcement of COTPA 2003. Targeting a population of 2868, the program sought to foster a tobacco-free culture through stakeholder engagement and strict policy enforcement.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A community-driven approach was adopted to address the challenges. Starting with stakeholder sensitization workshops with Gram Panchayat members, Anganwadi workers, educators, and community leaders about the health hazards of tobacco use and COTPA 2003 provisions. A village-level tobacco control committee was formed to develop and monitor action plans.

Awareness campaigns featured innovative activities like the 'Holi of Tobacco Products', where shopkeepers and users publicly burned tobacco as a commitment to change. Public spaces displayed tobacco-free zone signage, and schools adhered to ToFEI guidelines.

COTPA enforcement was strengthened through inspections and FDGs. Health camps supported users in quitting tobacco, while the village Pradhan served as a tobacco control ambassador, fostering community ownership and collective responsibility.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Nangli Kithore earned Tobacco-Free Gram Panchayat status through a self-evaluation scorecard and certification by district authorities. The initiative significantly reduced public tobacco use, raised awareness, and became a model for other districts, with media coverage inspiring replication across Uttar Pradesh.

CONCLUSIONS: The success of Nangli Kithore underscores the potential of grassroots initiatives in public health promotion. By leveraging community engagement, and strict enforcement of laws, the TFGP initiative serves as a scalable model for reducing tobacco use. Future recommendations include sustaining the program through continuous monitoring and expanding its scope to address other public health issues.

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The impact of passive smoking on complications in type 2 diabetes mellitus patients: A case-control study in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco and nicotine product consumption causes harmful effects, including impaired bodily functions such as diabetes, and increases the risk of complications related to other conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, kidney failure, and blindness. Complications not only worsen health status but also increase the burden on healthcare services, as more intensive treatment and care are required. This case-control study aimed to analyze the association between smoking behavior and complications among DMT2 patients at Tanah Kalikedinding Public Health Center, Surabaya, Indonesia.

METHODS: A total of 92 respondents, with an equal ratio of cases and controls (1:1), were selected through simple random sampling to ensure unbiased representation. The research was conducted at January-February 2024. Data from these respondents were analyzed using chi-square and logistic regression tests to assess the association between smoking behavior and the occurrence of complications in DMT2 patients. The analysis provided a clearer understanding of how smoking—both active and passive—could exacerbate complications among those already diagnosed with DMT2

RESULTS: Among passive smokers, 25 experienced complications, while 16 did not. Active/passive smokers who experienced complications numbered 15, with 6 not experiencing complications. Conversely, the majority of non-smokers did not experience complications (24), with only 6 experiencing complications. Overall, complications were more common among passive smokers (54.3%). Passive smokers had a 6.25 times higher risk (OR = 6.25, 95% CI = 2.10–18.64), and active/passive smokers had a 10 times higher risk (OR = 10.0, 95% CI = 2.72–36.79) of complications compared to non-smokers (p-value < 0.001).

CONCLUSIONS: Smoking significantly increases the risk of complications in DMT2 patients, highlighting the urgent need for education, improved screening programs, effective management strategies, and enhanced healthcare accessibility, particularly in remote areas.

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Initiation and reasons for initiation: Waterpipe and e-cigarette use among university students in South Africa

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BACKGROUND: The use of waterpipe and electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) is an emerging health crisis. These products have become increasingly popular among young people despite their addictive nature and health risks. This study explored South African university students' accounts of how and why they initiated waterpipe and e-cigarette use

METHODS: Qualitative exploratory research design with semi-structured interviews conducted among 30 key informants who currently use waterpipe and/or e-cigarettes. Ten students aged 18-25yrs were purposively selected each from 3 universities located in the metro cities of Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg in South Africa. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data with the aid of NVivo v14.

RESULTS: Results were categorized under three major themes: How use was initiated, reasons for initiation and, use status of significant others. Participants described initial exposure to waterpipe and e-cigarettes through peer and familial interactions. The most common setting for initial exposure included social gatherings such as clubs, family gatherings, parties and the university environment. Reasons for initiation included peer and familial influence, as a coping mechanism used to 'escape from reality' or university stress, as a socialization tool, curiosity and experimentation and perception as an alternative to using other substances. Lastly participants reported observing the use of waterpipe, e-cigarettes, traditional cigarettes and other substances by their family members and friends hence the normalization of the use of these products.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings of the study reveal multiple ways and reasons in which students get exposed to initiating waterpipe and/or e-cigarette use. Influences such as peers and family remain influential routes to initiation. Efforts to de-normalize the use of these products in society would protect young people from initiating use.

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Advancing tobacco control laws through multi-stakeholder engagement at world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims: Tobacco-free Kumbh Mela, Haridwar, India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Kumbh Mela, a significant Hindu pilgrimage and the largest gathering of religious pilgrims in the world, attracts millions of devotees. In April 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Haridwar's Kumbh Mela witnessed an estimated 9.1 million visitors within 14 days. Given the scale of the event and the ongoing health crisis, implementing tobacco control laws was crucial to fostering a tobacco-free environment. The challenge of ensuring compliance with these laws in such a massive congregation necessitated a robust, coordinated multi-stakeholder approach.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A multi-tiered capacity-building program was implemented for law enforcement agencies, and strategic coordination with government stakeholders led to the issuance of a notification reinforcing tobacco control laws. Mass awareness campaigns, including Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) material distribution, were launched, with support from 250 volunteers and the engagement of 300 religious leaders, media houses, and civil society organizations.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Through coordinated efforts, a robust tobacco control policy was implemented at the Kumbh Mela, prohibiting the use, sale, and advertisement of tobacco. Over 160 enforcement drives ensured compliance across all Mela sites, covering 156 square kilometres across three cities. The campaign had a remarkable impact: tobacco advertisements were eliminated and tobacco sales were reduced by 90%. Furthermore, substantial amounts of tobacco-related waste were prevented from polluting the environment.

CONCLUSIONS: Successfully implementing tobacco control laws at the Kumbh Mela amidst the COVID-19 pandemic was a monumental challenge. The Tobacco-Free Kumbh Mela stands as a landmark achievement, demonstrating the power of multi-stakeholder engagement in advancing tobacco control in large-scale, culturally significant events. This initiative highlights the importance of collaborative efforts in shaping public health outcomes in diverse and complex settings. It serves as a model for replicating similar strategies in other large gatherings to ensure healthier environments.

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Harnessing youth power: Youth led tobacco control in Singapore

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use among adolescents remains a significant public health concern in the South-East Asia. Traditional teacher-delivered interventions have shown limitations (Shinde et al., 2018, 2020), highlighting the need for alternative approaches.

Recent evidence supports the effectiveness of youth-led advocacy in tobacco control. A research training done in Appalachian Kentucky demonstrated that engaging youth in education, community assessment, policy advocacy, peer outreach, and media campaigns significantly reduced tobacco use and increased support for control policies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: As part of World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), Singapore's Health Promotion Board (HPB) partnered with St John Ambulance Brigade

(SJAB) on a peer education programme. HPB trained 48 cadets from 19 secondary schools to become tobacco-free lifestyle advocates.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As part of the collaboration, the youth advocates amplify the vape-free messages across 19 schools during the period of WNTD and this form the scalable model for HPB to explore wider efforts in coming years.

Youth advocates also reflected that peer-led education allowed for relatable, in-depth explanations that resonated with students, potentially driving attitudinal and behavioural changes.

Youth advocacy emerges as a crucial component in future-proofing tobacco control efforts. In Singapore, this presents an opportunity to enhance its strategy by:

1. Developing comprehensive youth advocacy programmes in schools and communities.
2. Providing resources and training including in social media amplification for youth to become effective tobacco control advocates.
3. Fostering collaborations between youth groups, health organizations, and government agencies.

CONCLUSIONS: By empowering youth as active agents in tobacco control, Singapore can create a more resilient and cost-effective approach to combat evolving tobacco use patterns and industry tactics, potentially setting a model for other countries to follow.

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Leveraging blockchain for transparent tobacco policy tracking: Opportunities and challenges in under-served regions

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BACKGROUND: Monitoring tobacco control policies effectively is crucial to advancing the global fight against tobacco use, as emphasized in the MPOWER framework and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). However, under-served regions face persistent challenges, such as weak governance, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure, which impede effective policy tracking and enforcement. Blockchain technology presents a promising solution by providing transparent, tamper-proof, and decentralized systems for monitoring and accountability. This study seeks to critically examine the opportunities and challenges of using blockchain technology to strengthen the 'Monitor' (M) component of MPOWER, focusing on implementing and enforcing tobacco control policies in under-served regions.

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach included a systematic review of blockchain applications in public health, regulatory compliance, and policy monitoring. Case studies of blockchain-based initiatives were analyzed to identify best practices and insights relevant to tobacco control. The study also reviewed two major surveys, the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), to provide additional context. Key barriers and enablers were assessed through content and thematic analysis of leading authorities.

RESULTS: The study reveals that blockchain technology can improve transparency, ensure data integrity, and build stakeholder trust in monitoring tobacco policies. Case studies from other public health domains showcase its scalability and adaptability. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, inadequate technological infrastructure in underserved regions, and the need for stakeholder capacity building persist. Overcoming these barriers will require collaborative efforts between state and non-state actors to implement the technology effectively.

CONCLUSIONS: Blockchain technology offers a transformative opportunity to enhance the monitoring and enforcement of tobacco control policies under the MPOWER framework. Strategic investments in infrastructure, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building are essential to realize its full potential, especially in underserved regions. This study provides practical insights to help policymakers leverage digital solutions to combat tobacco use.

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A living lab approach to vaping in Trinity College Dublin from October 2022 to March 2025

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: After a six-year negotiation, Trinity became a tobacco-free campus and showed a 79% reduction in observed smoking from 2016 to 2020. Smoking was observed through a Living Lab approach that employed student Ambassadors to count smokers on campus 6-8 times per week during semester, while reminding them of the tobacco-free policy. Post COVID-19, Ambassadors observed increased vaping but had no remit to approach vapers because the protracted negotiation to become tobacco-free excluded e-cigarettes.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Living Lab approach to tobacco-free Trinity already in place was extended to include vaping. Ambassadors added a count of vaping to their weekly campus circuits from October 2022 onwards; an all-university online survey of vaping prevalence and attitudes was sent to 22362 students/staff; stop-smoking courses were re-designed with health service partners to incorporate stop-vaping; student led communications were launched; anti-vaping assignments were incorporated into curriculum; and government lobbying for stronger regulation was undertaken.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Preliminary results found that from Oct2022-Oct2024, 47% of observed nicotine use on campus (n=2608) was vaping. Data collection is ongoing. The vaping prevalence survey (n=2683, 14.2%) found extremely high vaping on campus (paper complete, expected publication March 2025); student-led communications and assignments are ongoing (100 Social Marketing students have completed assignments) and two submissions using the activity to date have been made to government consultations on vaping, recommending

disposable and all vaping be phased out of Ireland using the Precautionary Principle to achieve Healthy Planet, Healthy People.

CONCLUSIONS: A Living Lab approach to Tobacco-Free Campus has been flexible enough to incorporate vaping and is a recommended vehicle for lobbying government to protect young people from addiction to nicotine via e-cigarettes.

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Successful Implementation of Smoke-Free Cities in Cambodia through the tourism sector

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Royal Government of Cambodia's Tobacco Control Act, aligned with WHO FCTC Article 8, mandates smoke-free indoor public places. However, enforcement in the hospitality sector has been challenging. To address this, the multi-sectoral Smoke-free Environments in Tourism working group (SFET) was established, led by the tourism sector.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2022, SFET introduced the Guidelines for Smoke-free Tourism Cities to support local authorities in effectively enforcing tobacco control laws. This initiative strengthened enforcement through a tourism-focused strategy by engaging local authorities and stakeholders, raising awareness, building capacity for compliance assessments, and promoting smoke-free measures. The goal was for Battambang, Kampot, Kampong Cham, Sihanoukville, and Siem Reap to achieve 'Smoke-free Tourism City' (SFTC) status by meeting compliance benchmarks.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: In 2023 and 2024, awareness and capacity building activities were conducted in these cities in line with the SFTC compliance assessment, which focuses on no-smoking signage, smoking prohibitions, advertising bans, and tobacco sales restrictions. Across 322 sites assessed, all cities exceeded 80% compliance, earning the Ministry of Tourism's SFTC designation. This success highlights the effectiveness of multisectoral advocacy and capacity-building, particularly in addressing challenges in the hospitality sector.

CONCLUSIONS: By leveraging the tourism sector, this initiative demonstrated how targeted efforts in high-impact areas can significantly improve compliance and foster healthier environments. The designation of 'Smoke-free Tourism City' status underscores the potential of coordinated strategies to advance public health goals, serving as a replicable model for other regions striving for smoke-free environments.

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Foxy five: Demystifying bidi industry tactics in India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco smokers in India make up 10.7% of the population, with bidi smoking being the most prevalent method. The bidi industry, primarily in household settings, operates in an unorganized sector due to stringent government regulations and gain tax exemption. However, challenges such as health hazards, economic exploitation, limited social security benefits, long working hours, low wages, and contractualization pose a challenge to industry regulation. This study aims to unveil the complexities operating in the local bidi market ecosystem, the omnipresence of the unregistered bidi enterprises, interplay between bidi rollers, middlemen and industry, socio-economic conditions and exploitations of bidi rollers.

METHODS: The study employed a qualitative approach, involving household surveys with bidi rollers and in-depth interviews with middlemen (munshis), labour union leaders, and youth club representatives, using a non-probabilistic purposive sampling method, during December 2023 and January 2024. VEED.IO platform (2023 and SPSS v 27 (2020) were used for translation and data analysis.

RESULTS: Five major tactics were identified: child labour, sabotaging government policies, inequity, illegal trade, and authoritarian middlemen. The involvement of young adolescent girls in bidi-making, exploitative practices like patti -retaining an extra share of rolled bidis by the munshis, high rejection rates, low wage rates, fraudulence with provident fund accounts, and illicit trade, were largely reported during the study. Interestingly, a favourable portrayal of bidi companies through social welfare initiatives, undertaken with the help of clubs, (to mask their exploitative practices), emerged as an important finding.

CONCLUSIONS: The bidi industry is plagued with exploitative practices including intermediaries like munshis exploiting bidi rollers to maximize production while minimizing wage rates. Such critical evidences make the case stronger for expedited adoption and implementation of WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 policy guidelines at all levels.

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Predictors of current cigarette smoking and second-hand smoking among school going

adolescents in Zambia: Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2021 study

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BACKGROUND: Adolescent's smoking remains a significant public health concern. In Zambia the tobacco industry has specifically targeted adolescents with the aim of getting them to become life-long smokers and, consequently, long-term customers. Inadequate public smoking policies have led to a significant increase in second-hand smoke exposure, posing a substantial public health risk. The aim is to determine the predictors of current cigarette smoking and second-hand smoking in Zambia.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional study involving two-stage cluster sampling. Logistic regression was used to obtain unadjusted (AOR) and adjusted odds ratios (AOR) at 95% confidence interval (CI).

RESULTS: Of the 2008 students interviewed, 8.0% (9.5% of male and 6.3% of female) were current cigarettes smokers. Predictors were <13 age (AOR = 1.60; 95% CI: 1.52-1.68), being male (AOR = 1.31; 95% CI: 1.31-1.34), Current smokeless tobacco use (AOR = 3.61; 95% CI: 3.53-3.71), having a father who smoke every day in the house (AOR = 1.63; 95% CI: 1.57-1.69) and having closest friends smoke cigarettes (AOR = 1.83; 95% CI: 1.74-1.93). Overall, 59.2% were exposed to second-hand smoke; 27% at home, 42% in an enclosed public place and 45.4% outdoor public exposure. Predictors of second-hand smoking were <12 age and 12 years (AOR = 1.19; 95% CI: 1.16-1.23) and (AOR = 1.17; 95% CI: 1.15-1.20) respectively, having close friends who smoke (AOR = 1.70; 95% CI: 1.66-1.74) and seeing or hearing anti-tobacco media messages on television or radio, (AOR = 1.24; 95% CI: 1.23,1.25). Males were less likely to be exposed (AOR = 0.91; 95% CI: 0.90-0.91).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive smoking prevention intervention in schools, coupled with the reinforcement of smoking policies to curb smoking in public spaces and homes. These measures are crucial to mitigate the risks associated with second-hand smoke and protect public health.

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Compliance with COTPA Section 4: A study on smoking prohibition in public places in Amroha District, Uttar Pradesh

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BACKGROUND: Amroha district established in 1997, comprises 1133 villages, 4 tehsils, and a population of 1.84 million as per the 2011 Census. A study aimed to evaluate the compliance level with Section 4 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, which prohibits smoking in public places in December 2023. The research addressed the challenge of ensuring adherence to tobacco control laws and assessed the impact of enforcement and awareness initiatives in the Amroha district.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted over four weeks in 2-3 clusters per administrative block of Amroha district. Public places were categorized into seven types, including accommodation facilities, eating establishments, workplaces, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, commonly visited venues, and public transport. A minimum sample of 250 venues was surveyed. Data collection focused on indicators such as the presence of 'No Smoking' signage, absence of active smoking, lack of visible smoking aids, freedom from the smell of recent smoke, and absence of cigarette butts.

RESULTS: Compliance with Section 4 was recorded at 94.16%. Specific indicators included: 'No Smoking' signage (81%), absence of active smoking (97.7%), non-visibility of smoking aids (96.7%), absence of cigarette butts/bidi stubs (97.7%), and no smell of recent smoke (97.7%). These findings indicate robust adherence to the law in Amroha district.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore the success of enforcement and awareness measures in promoting compliance with COTPA Section 4 in Amroha. Key recommendations include strengthening signage installation at public venues, enhancing regular monitoring and enforcement, and sustaining public awareness initiatives to ensure continued adherence.

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Correlates for smokeless tobacco use and its prevalence in Zambia

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BACKGROUND: Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use has been associated with ill health such as oral diseases, various cancers, cardiovascular diseases, mental illnesses and addiction. Whilst some information is available at regional level, there is no information on prevalence and correlates for smokeless tobacco at national level in Zambia, hence, this study.

METHODS: This was a stratified cross-sectional school based survey. The sample size was estimated under the technical advice of WHO and CDC. The required sample sizes were 25 schools and 1875 students for each region. Overall, the sample sizes were 81 schools and 8336 students. PC Sample software for the GYTS was used to select students. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20, Release 20.0.0. The data was weighted considering different nonresponse rates. Adjusted odds ratios and 95% Confidence intervals were used to adjust for confounding factors.

RESULTS: The current smokeless tobacco user rate among students in Zambia was 7.5% (7.5% among males and 7.4% among females). Age was inconsistently associated with current smokeless tobacco use with students age <13, 14 and 15 (AOR=1.23; 95% CI: 1.19, 1.27) years being more likely to currently use smokeless tobacco, and students aged 13 (AOR=0.68; 95% CI: 0.65, 0.70) and 16 years being less likely to currently use smokeless tobacco

compared with students aged 17 years or older. Students who currently smoked cigarettes were 2.88 (95% CI: 2.83, 2.94) times more likely to be current smokeless tobacco users compared to students who were non-cigarette smokers.

CONCLUSIONS: Cigarette smoking is a significant risk factor for SLT use among school going adolescents in Zambia. Although the prevalence of SLT is relatively low, interventions are needed to further curb the smokeless tobacco use by targeting adolescents who smoke.

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Prevalence and determinants of secondhand smoke in Lusaka, Zambia: Findings from the 2021 Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND: Secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure can cause morbidity such as lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, including heart attack. However, there is little information on SHS exposure among adolescents in Zambia. The study assessed the prevalence of SHS and its determinants among school-going adolescents in Lusaka.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Lusaka. Totals of 25 schools, 47 classes with 2569 students were selected using two-stage cluster sampling method. Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) Core Questionnaire was used to collect data. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was conducted to adjust for confounding variables at 5% significance level.

RESULTS: Total of 2027 students participated in the survey, representing 78.9% of the 2569 students; 52.2% were female. Majority of students were aged 13-15. Approximately half of the students were exposed to second-hand smoke in enclosed public places (46.4%) and outdoor public areas (46.4%), while 18.7% experienced exposure at home. Overall, 60.2% of the students were exposed to SHS. Factors positively associated with SHS were: seen or heard anti-tobacco media messages on television (AOR = 1.24, 95% CI [1.21, 1.26]), favours banning smoking inside enclosed public places (AOR = 1.14, 95% CI [1.11, 1.16]), taught in class about dangers of tobacco use (AOR = 1.17, 95% CI [1.15, 1.20]), seen people using tobacco on television (AOR = 1.10, 95% CI [1.08, 1.13]), and currently use any form of smokeless tobacco product (AOR = 1.31, 95% CI [1.24, 1.37]).

CONCLUSIONS: The prevalence of exposure to SHS among school-going adolescents in Lusaka is high. Despite the existence of statutory instrument that prohibit smoking of tobacco in public places, tobacco smoke still poses a huge risk on public health particularly for adolescents due to weak enforcement.

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Health literacy and factors associated with smoking status and sex among South Korean adults

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BACKGROUND: Health literacy is defined as the ability to understand and utilize health information. South Korea exhibits a significant sex difference in smoking rate among OECD countries. This study aimed to analyze the factors associated with health literacy among smokers and non-smokers, with a focus on sex differences.

METHODS: This study used the 2023 KNHANES database in South Korea. The analysis was based on the four determinant domains described in the Lalonde Report. We analyzed data from 2086 South Korean adults. Descriptive statistics and generalized linear regression with complex sampling design were performed using SAS 9.4.

RESULTS: Overall, a high education level was positively associated with high health literacy. For non-smokers, age and marital status were significantly associated with health literacy in both sexes. Among female non-smokers, the absence of unmet healthcare needs and positive subjective health status were significantly associated with high health literacy. For smokers, performing strength exercises at least twice a week was positively associated with high health literacy exclusively among male smokers. Additionally, male smokers with positive subjective health status and female smokers who were widowed, separated, or divorced were less likely to have high health literacy.

CONCLUSIONS: This study explored differences in health literacy by sex and smoking status. Male smokers showed higher health literacy with increased physical activity, likely reflecting sex differences in activity levels. Smokers recognized the benefits of exercise despite engaging in health-risk behaviors. Male smokers with positive subjective health status were less likely to seek health information, possibly due to positive health perceptions. Female smokers who were divorced, widowed, or separated showed lower health literacy, likely influenced by life transitions, and diminished social support. This study highlights the need for health information intervention that considers sex differences, potentially contributing to smoking cessation interventions.

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Effectiveness of health warning labels on cigarette packages: Evidence from low- and middle-income economies

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BACKGROUND: In compliance with World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) Article 11, health warning labels (HWLs) on unit packets of tobacco products serve as an

essential element of enforcing tobacco control policies and disseminating anti-tobacco messaging. This study attempts to find if there is an association between HWLs on cigarette packages and prevalence of smoking among adults in low- and middle-income economies (LMICs).

METHODS: Country-level data on age-standardized prevalence rates for adult daily smokers of tobacco (both sexes combined) and HWLs on cigarette packages were taken from regional summary of WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2023. Country classification by World Bank for fiscal year 2025 was used to identify LMICs across regions. Score of 1-4 was assigned to health warnings set by individual countries and a cut-off rate was considered to demarcate low and high prevalence. Descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis were used to draw comparisons across regions and examine associations between HWL scores and prevalence rates.

RESULTS: A moderate association exists between HWL scores and prevalence rates in lower middle-income countries with Cramer's V of 0.33. Prevalence rates were <15% in three-fourths of LMICs across all regions and 41% of them had large HWLs with all appropriate characteristics. More than 70% of LMICs in East Asia and Pacific region had large HWLs. Nonetheless, three-fourths of them had prevalence rates between 15%-30%. Every LMIC in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and Caribbean region had a prevalence rate of <15% irrespective of individual HWL scores. Region-specific analysis incorporating country indicators helps to capture underlying association between HWLs and prevalence rates.

CONCLUSIONS: Countries' demographic characteristics are important factors in explaining observed prevalence rates. Implementation of HWLs necessitates appropriate policies especially in highly populated countries albeit with low prevalence rates e.g. India due to greater reach in absolute number of smokers.

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Strategies of tobacco industry to undermine tax system: Economic and health impacts

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BACKGROUND: This abstract epitomizes the impediments that the interference of the tobacco industry into taxation systems presents, with emphasis on the economic impact of export duty exemptions on tobacco leaf. It flags how the industry manipulates, evades taxes, and exploits policy loopholes to maximize profits at the expense of public health and government revenue. The exemption of export duties on tobacco leaf since 2017 has caused massive revenue loss and undermines Bangladesh's commitment under the FCTC to protect and promote public health.

METHODS: The study is based on secondary data sourced from National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and reports published by different organizations. The study reflects on tax compliance trends, revenue, and the tobacco industry's practices with regard to public health. It further explores the legal frameworks with regard to the patterns of tax evasion, industry interference and economic impacts due to the changes in export policy.

RESULTS: Tobacco companies like British American Tobacco Bangladesh evade taxes by forcing MRP violations and hoarding products. Whatever the company may exaggerate in contribution to national revenue, it paid only 1489 crore BDT in customs duty and income tax combined in the year 2024, while deceptive campaigns fueled fear of smuggling to block tax hikes. Tobacco leaf export duty exemptions since 2017 have cost Bangladesh around 50000 crore BDT in revenue.

CONCLUSIONS: Revisiting the export duty exemption will be key to recovering revenue and incentivizing crop diversification that can help reduce the cultivation of tobacco crops. Better functioning of pricing and taxation, introducing digital tax systems, and countering misinformation campaigns can also improve compliance. Along with this, strong compliance with FCTC guidelines will improve fiscal sustainability and public health, thereby aligning economic priorities with health and long-term development goals.

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Fighting tobacco industry interference: Mapping and mobilizing political action in Indonesia's gubernatorial elections

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2019, Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) uncovered corruption involving regional heads and the Directorate General of Customs and Excise over cigarette excise issues, reflecting the tobacco industry's interference in public policy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, governors from Central and East Java lobbied the President in 2020 to prevent excise tax increases, aligning with industry interests. Later, a staff member at the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, implicated in a corruption case, turns out he was one of man behind the roadmap on tobacco industry.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Indonesian Youth Coalition for Tobacco Control (IYCTC) conducted systematic media monitoring of Governor and Vice Governor candidates participating in the 2024 regional election. Subsequently, we mapped out key actors connected to regional leaders, as well as organizations and tobacco companies. We also disseminated our findings through

public discussions and challenged prospective regional leaders to pledge political commitments in tobacco control.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Among the 206 participating governor and vice-governor candidate duo in 37 provinces of Indonesia, 7 opposed TC, 16 supported it, 17 were undecided, and 166 had no recorded stance.These findings are presented on www.pilihantanpabeban.id. It helps us to identify champions of TC, potential allies, and members whose actions may hinder progress in tobacco regulation. Besides, we were successfully shared with over 5500 unique accounts across various social media platforms with youth engagement discussion. We even secured commitments in support of tobacco control in West and Central Java, where prospective regional leaders pledged to prioritize pro-tobacco control policies.

CONCLUSIONS: Systematic mapping of political stances on TC is a vital tool for advocacy in Indonesia. By identifying supporters and opponents within the government, tobacco control advocates can develop targeted strategies to prioritize public health over TI interests. This approach enhances the TC network's ability to influence policy changes with youth leading the way on political commitment.

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From Box Office to Browser: OTT platforms and the regulatory lag

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a surge in the popularity of OTT streaming platforms. A major concern is the increased exposure of children and young audiences to unregulated content, including tobacco-related advertising, raising significant public health issues regarding its influence on younger generations. To address this, GSR 400 (E) was introduced, requiring disclaimers, health spots, and messages on all online content depicting tobacco products.

Enforcing GSR 400 (E) on OTT platforms posed challenges due to the vast amount of content and the platforms' global nature. Monitoring compliance and addressing violations in most popular movies required continuous oversight and collaboration with regulatory authorities to ensure effective enforcement.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: OTT platforms through Section 5 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) violates other sections in COTPA. This violation led Tobacco Monitor to report the issue. We identified these violations, collected evidences, promptly documented, reported to grievance cell and submitted to government to take necessary action.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As a result, The Central Government proposes to make certain rules further to amend the 'Rule 11 of the COTPA Amendment Rules, 2023 – OTT Rules'. The draft Rules of COTPA Amendment Rules, 2024 have been prepared and approved by the Competent Authority and they also asked to submit any suggestions and objections regarding the amendment rule. We have sent the representations regarding the amendment rule.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite the implementation of regulations like GSR 400 (E), there should be particular guidelines framed for Editorial Justifications and we are demanding a complete ban of smoking scenes on the screen. Strengthening these efforts is crucial to protect public health, particularly among vulnerable populations like children and young people.

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Understanding Bidi industry diversification and transformation in South Asia

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BACKGROUND: South Asia's shared colonial history has led to the establishment and large-scale industrial production of tobacco in the region. Smoking prevalence is presently reported to be 46.2% (2017) in Bangladesh, 36.2% (2020) in Sri Lanka, 19.1% (2014) in Pakistan, and 19.1% (2016-17) in India. The bidi industry predominantly operates in household settings as an unorganized sector. Interestingly, to compete with global cigarettes, bidi brands in South Asia have expanded into food, textiles, and wholesale businesses.

METHODS: The study used secondary data from the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System to enlist bidi brands from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Nepal. A literature search on Google Scholar was added to the list and constituted a study sample. Social media handles of the sampled brands were explored for bidi brands' diversification to other businesses.

RESULTS: The popular bidi manufacturers from all five countries have diversified into successful businesses such as fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), agri-business, hospitality and hotels, textiles, etc. Operating under the same or different names, they gain market influence and improved brand reputation which can positively impact the perception of their bidi products. Nonetheless, this narrative pertains solely to the recognized and registered brands, while a more substantial segment of the market in South Asia remains unregistered unlike the cigarette industry.

CONCLUSIONS: The diversification and transformation of an informal sector such as bidi creates a deceptive impression of welfare, a trend similar to the cigarette industry. This scenario highlights the need for regulatory norms in the region by the national governments for responsible business conduct. And to protect such norms and policies and tobacco control largely, from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry, adoption of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 policy guidelines is the way forward.

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Breaking the smoke screen: Framing the fight against tobacco industry interference in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco industry interference remains a significant obstacle to effective tobacco control in Pakistan. The industry employs manipulative tactics to influence policy decisions, undermine public health, and weaken regulatory frameworks. Despite commitments under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), particularly Article 5.3, the socio-political complexities and enforcement gaps make addressing these challenges difficult.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Our qualitative research analyzed strategies to counter tobacco industry interference, drawing on successful case studies in Pakistan. Key interventions included grassroots mobilization with civil society, legal advocacy, and strengthening international collaboration. These efforts emphasized the need for improved legal frameworks, transparency, and accountability mechanisms in policy development.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The findings highlighted diverse strategies to expose and counter the industry's manipulative practices. Achievements included landmark legal victories, increased public awareness, and community engagement demanding stricter regulations. Examples include the removal of the 'kiddy pack' order, vaping bans in cities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the declaration of Gutka as illegal in Sindh Province. These successes demonstrate the power of coordinated advocacy in promoting public health. However, challenges such as limited resources and opposition from entrenched allies underscore the importance of sustained advocacy and capacity building.

CONCLUSIONS: In Pakistan's unique socio-political context, advocacy is vital to protecting public health from tobacco industry interference. This study offers a roadmap for policymakers, advocates, and civil society organizations by sharing effective strategies and solutions. Sustained, transparent, and collaborative efforts are essential to prioritize health over corporate interests, fulfilling Pakistan's WHO FCTC commitments and safeguarding the population's well-being.

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Monitoring compliance with tobacco control legislation: A cross-sectional assessment of cigarettes and other tobacco products act (COTPA), 2003 in Rajasthan, India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death globally, with over 80% of users in low-income countries. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, aims to regulate tobacco use in India. Rajasthan has been at the forefront of implementing COTPA in the country. This study assesses compliance with key COTPA provisions in 13 districts of Rajasthan in January, 2024.

METHODS: A cross-sectional observational study was conducted to assess compliance of Sections 4 (public use of tobacco products), 5 (TAPS Ban), 6 (Tobacco-free educational institutions and sale to minors), and 7 (PHW compliance) of COTPA across 13 districts in Rajasthan, using a cluster sampling approach, representing rural and urban areas within selected districts. Assessment was done through a checklist derived from COTPA provisions and observational data were gathered through site visits along with photographic evidence.

Indicators included the presence of prescribed 'No Smoking' signages, tobacco advertisements, observed sales to minors, and packaging health warning compliance. Observers followed a non-intrusive protocol and noted violations without direct interaction. Quantitative analysis was performed to evaluate adherence levels and identify gaps in enforcement.

RESULTS: The study found 93% compliance with prescribed 'No Smoking' signage in public places, and 96% adherence at transportation hubs and government offices. Tobacco advertisements violated norms at 11% of the locations. Sales to minors were rare, but observed at 2 separate locations, while tobacco products were sold near 21% of educational institutions surveyed, indicating enforcement gaps.

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights significant compliance with COTPA in transportation hubs and government offices but reveals enforcement gaps near educational institutions and in regulating tobacco advertisements. Strengthened monitoring and targeted interventions for the identified gaps are essential to ensure full adherence and advancing Rajasthan's progress towards comprehensive tobacco control and public health protection.

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Can alliances be sustained?

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: It is a relatively easy matter to start an alliance or coalition. The bigger challenge is to sustain it over a lengthy period and to be able to work together to achieve important

tobacco control goals.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA) was founded in 1999. Fortuitously the first major activity was a success: countering a major advertising campaign of British American Tobacco, the Voyage of Discovery. Since then, BATA has successfully worked together to advocate for a comprehensive tobacco control law and to work on its enforcement from the local to national level across the country. More recently, BATA is making strides towards the achievement of greater attention and (we hope) funding for health promotion.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: In order to survive for 25 years, BATA had to overcome challenges and learn lessons about how to sustain an alliance and creative positive opportunities for collaboration, while continually working to overcome personal conflicts, professional jealousies, and other common challenges to alliances. Another challenge has been, ironically, the influx of significant funding into tobacco control. Initially BATA members were working voluntarily. With the presence of funding came the question of who deserved such funding. It is more difficult to enlist voluntary help when people are distracted by fulfilling the requirements of funded projects. Competition, rather than cooperation, is also intrinsic in the funding mechanism.

CONCLUSIONS: Alliances create tremendous opportunities to influence governments towards strong tobacco control action. But alliances also require a significant investment of time and resources. If those resources are not invested, and if various challenges and conflicts are not addressed in a timely fashion, they can easily fail. When properly nursed, coalitions can become a powerful force for good. BATA is an example of the kinds of strategies that can prove useful in maintaining a strong and effective alliance.

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'Most of us smoke'; challenges and insights for closing the smoking prevalence gap among people experiencing homelessness

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BACKGROUND: Overall declines in smoking prevalence in many developed countries mask enormous disparities for some populations. Homelessness exemplifies this, with smoking rates 5 to 7 times higher than the general population. Homelessness also intersects with other predictors of tobacco dependence, including mental health, addiction, trauma and poverty. The average age of death for people who've been homeless is just 50 years, and tobacco use is a risk-factor for many of the common health conditions. Understanding barriers to smoking cessation for homeless populations is crucial to addressing these inequities.

METHODS: This paper draws on two pieces of complementary research in Western Australia (WA). Firstly, through a collaboration with a large primary healthcare provider for people experiencing homelessness, medical records were analysed to examine smoking status, cessation advice, attempts and quitting obstacles. Secondly, a project with the Cancer Council WA involved qualitative research (survey, focus groups/interviews) with community service organisations, many of which have clients experiencing homelessness. Cessation barriers and enablers were explored.

RESULTS: Current smokers comprised 77% of a cohort of 1082 Homeless Healthcare patients, with 31% smoking 20+ cigarettes/day. The medical note review identified a range of cessation barriers, including basic day-to-day survival, other health priorities, cost of cessation aids and the normalcy of smoking among peers. Similar barriers emerged in the research with community service organisations. Additionally, mainstream tobacco campaigns and materials were seen to have less traction with homeless and vulnerable populations, and staff can feel conflicted raising smoking as they view client rapport, choice and non-judgementalism as paramount.

CONCLUSIONS: Being mindful of the additional barriers and complexities to smoking cessation is an important starting point for broaching quitting with people experiencing homelessness and frontline services supporting them. Tailored strategies to tackle access and cost barriers to cessation support are needed to reduce disproportionate smoking and health inequalities among homeless populations.

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Tobacco Use Monitoring Application: An Innovation for systematic data collection by Smoke–Free Local Administration Organizations and Community Personnel

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BACKGROUND: Data-driven tobacco control policies are essential for effectively managing Local Administration Organizations (LAOs). This research aimed to develop and implement the Tobacco Use Monitoring (TUM) mobile application to facilitate the systematic and convenient collection of high-quality tobacco use data.

METHODS: The TUM application is a data entry tool designed through focus group discussions addressing LAOs' challenges in formulating tobacco control policies based on data-driven approaches. Development included drafting the layout regarding features and their operational design, validation, pilot testing, and refinement for actual use through free download via iOS and Android. The application was developed from October 2021 to June 2022.

RESULTS: TUM features a user-friendly interface with

menus for interviewing tobacco use, observing compliance with tobacco control law, monitoring daily data collection, and generating reports on progress by collectors and LAOs, along with summary statistics, news, and contact information. It functions online and offline, allowing data collection even in remote areas without internet access. Once reconnected to an internet-enabled area, data is automatically stored and transmitted to the admin. In 2022 – 2023, 86 LAOs in the smoke–free LAOs project under ASH, covering 32 provinces throughout Thailand, voluntarily participated. 780 LAO personnel were trained as quality control supervisors and community data collectors to ensure data accuracy and reliability. 74.0% of villages from 86 LAOs were surveyed. Daily monitoring through LINE groups and video calls focused on application use and accessing target samples. Each LAO achieved the development of a smoke-free community plan based on data from TUM.

CONCLUSIONS: TUM has proven to be an effective and user-friendly tool for systematically collecting high-quality data to inform tobacco control policies in LAOs. To enhance its scalability and sustainability, TUM should be refined by incorporating additional features for field preparation, such as sample size calculation and sampling techniques.

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How does the life expectancy of individuals who smoke tobacco compared to individuals who do not smoke tobacco? Evidence from India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco smoking correlates with heightened risks of lung cancer, other malignancies, cardiovascular problems, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and other respiratory disorders. It results in 480000 deaths annually, with males constituting 60% of these fatalities.

METHODS: The study compares life expectancies of smokers and non-smokers in India in 2019, employing life tables and two distinct scenarios. One scenario presumes uniformity of death occurrence, while the other assumes occurrence in increasing numbers within an age interval. The population of smokers was sourced from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS-2) and mortality figures from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) database. Mortality linked to smoking is documented starting from the age of 30. Life expectancy was calculated starting from age 30 using five-year age intervals. Sensitivity analysis was conducted considering upper and lower thresholds of deaths.

RESULTS: The life expectancy difference between smokers and non-smokers progressively increases with individual age, with an average difference of 2.7 years for males and 4.2 years for females. Significant variations were noted through the application of upper and lower limits. Considering the upper bound for smokers, the difference increases to 6.4 years and 8.8 years for males and females, respectively. The observed variance between the two scenarios, where death-related risk factors are assumed to manifest uniformly or exponentially, is negligible.

CONCLUSIONS: The observed difference in life expectancies between smokers and non-smokers, particularly when accounting for upper bound, provides substantial justification for enhancing tobacco control and cessation initiatives in India.

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The value of sponsored media partnership in mass-media campaigns: The example of Mois sans tabac

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BACKGROUND: Mois sans tabac is a social marketing campaign inspired by the British Stoptober. Organized in France since 2016, it invites smokers to quit for 30 days in November through a mass-media campaign across traditional and digital platforms. In addition to classic TV spots featuring actors and encouraging participation in the challenge, a partnership is sought each year with one or more TV channels to mobilize presenters (mainly through promotional spots and editorial integration). The purpose is to raise awareness of the operation, to support participants by addressing them towards effective cessation helps or to show collective mobilization in favor of quitting smoking. The present study evaluates the contribution of sponsored media partnerships to the immediate impact of the campaign.

METHODS: Quantitative post-test surveys were conducted every year from 2018 to 2023 on samples of about 2000 adults. Data collected included the assisted recall of each media content as well as perceived effectiveness of the whole campaign on thinking about own smoking and on quitting. Among smokers, associations between perceived effectiveness and the recall of each content were estimated using multivariate logistic regressions adjusted for age, gender, socioeconomic status (SES) and heaviness of smoking index.

RESULTS: Recall of media partnerships on TV varied from 40% (in 2018) to 63% (in 2019) and was significantly higher in low SES respondents. The partnerships made it possible to increase the overall recall of the campaign on TV between +10 and +28 percentage points depending on the editions. In 2019, recall of partnership was associated with perceived effectiveness of the campaign.

CONCLUSIONS: Sponsored media partnerships in social marketing campaigns promoting smoking cessation can strongly increase their notoriety, in particular among low

SES populations where smoking prevalence is the highest. Their specific and direct impact on smoking behaviour may be more limited.

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A comprehensive analysis of tobacco retail vendor compliance with tobacco control policy implementation in an education city of Rajasthan

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BACKGROUND: Sikar, Rajasthan, a prominent educational hub in India with over 50000 students, faces challenges in access and exposure of minors to tobacco products. High vendor density, easy access, and proximity to educational institutions (EIs) fuel violations of COTPA. Lack of warning signage, unsupervised minors, and inadequate monitoring further complicate COTPA enforcement. Coordinating enforcement efforts and raising awareness among vendors and residents remain critical hurdles.

METHODS: To address tobacco availability and COTPA violations in Sikar, the municipal corporation, with technical support from SRKPS and District Tobacco Control cell (DTCC), adopted a Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL) policy on May, 2023. The policy includes a prohibition on the sale of tobacco products near EIs and areas with high density of students. A baseline survey assessed 233 vendors across 65 wards, revealing a vendor density of approximately 90 vendors per square km. The survey also identified significant non-compliance issues, such as advertisements, product accessibility to minors, and lack of health warning signage at PoS. Awareness campaigns for vendors, regular monitoring, and collaboration between municipal authorities, DTCC, SRKPS strengthened enforcement.

RESULTS: Effective implementation of the TVL policy in Sikar has yielded significant progress in tobacco control. Post-implementation survey revealed a decline in tobacco advertisements from 64% to 9.5% and a reduction in the display of products accessible to minors from 89.27% to 35.1%. These results demonstrate the policy's success in promoting a tobacco-free environment and safeguarding the health of Sikar's youth.

CONCLUSIONS: The TVL policy in Sikar has proven instrumental in reducing tobacco advertising, improving compliance with regulations, and limiting tobacco product accessibility to minors. By addressing vendor density and proximity to EIs TVL helps in preventing access and exposure of tobacco products to minors, highlighting the importance of robust municipal policies in advancing tobacco control objectives.

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Joint efforts to advocate for the ban on e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products: Lessons learned from Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Vietnam faces significant challenges in controlling the spread of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs), especially among children and youth, due to aggressive marketing, tobacco industry-led misconceptions framing these products as 'harm reduction', widespread illicit trade and inadequate legislation. E-cigarette use among Vietnamese adolescents has risen alarmingly from 2.6% in 2019 to 8.1% in 2023.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A multi-faceted strategic communication campaign was implemented to facilitate the passage of a ban on e-cigarettes and HTPs. Key activities included providing technical support to the Ministry of Health, consolidating data, integrating international best practices, and disseminating evidence to policymakers, particularly National Assembly (NA) members. To build a unified front, the campaign engaged diverse stakeholders, including ministries, the WHO, UN agencies, NGOs, social organizations, and youth groups. Grassroots efforts targeted youth, parents, and teachers, raising awareness of the dangers of e-cigarettes and HTPs. These were amplified through public forums, social media, and media outreach. The campaign also countered tobacco industry interference by monitoring and exposing tactics aimed at undermining the legislation and misinforming the public.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Efforts to call for legislative action to control e-cigarettes and HTPs in Vietnam have gained significant momentum. The MOH's proposal to ban these products received strong support from NA members, ministries, and the public, despite intensive opposition and interference from the industry. On November 30th, the NA passed a Resolution banning the manufacture, trade, import, storage, transportation, and use of e-cigarettes and HTPs, effective January 2025.

CONCLUSIONS: This experience highlights the importance of coordinated multi-sectoral efforts and social mobilization in advancing tobacco control policies. Strengthening international collaboration, enhancing public education, and building long-term stakeholder alliances are essential for addressing similar challenges in other countries.

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Relationship between social norms and quitting intention among people who smoke in China: Mediating role of identity and rationalisation beliefs

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BACKGROUND: Previous research has demonstrated that social norms influence quitting intention, with smokers being less likely to quit when they perceive higher smoking prevalence and greater acceptability of smoking behavior. Moreover, smokers' identity may lead them to adopt attitudes that rationalize smoking, thereby inhibiting cessation. This study aims to explore the relationship between smoking social norms and quitting intentions, as well as the chain mediating role of identity and smoking rationalization beliefs.

METHODS: A cross-sectional online survey was conducted in China among 835 current smokers using the self-developed Smoking Social Norms Scale, which includes four dimensions: descriptive norms (DN), injunctive norms (IN), moral norms (MN), and tobacco culture norms (CN), as well as the adapted Smoker Identity Scale ('I have a lot in common with other smokers'...) and a simplified version of the Smoking Rationalization Belief Scale('Smoking can eliminate fatigue and be refreshing'...). Participants were recruited through proportional sampling stratified by regional population to ensure representativeness.

RESULTS: While the public demonstrated strong anti-smoking attitudes toward IN and MN, they tended to overestimate smoking prevalence in DN and exhibited high approval rates for CN. Mediation analysis revealed that both the direct effect (95% CI: -1.10 to -0.15) and the indirect effect (95% CI: -0.60 to -0.10) were significant. The indirect effects occurred through two pathways: one through identity and smoking rationalization beliefs (effect = -0.15, 95% CI: -0.28 to -0.05), and the other through smoking rationalization beliefs alone (effect = -0.26, 95% CI: -0.46 to -0.09).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings emphasize the role of cognitive factors related to smoking and provide the foundation for a psychosocial processing model of smoking cessation. Future tobacco control strategies should focus on reshaping anti-smoking social norms, altering smokers' identity, and correcting smoking rationalization beliefs to foster the development of a smoke-free society.

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Generating sustainable funding for local tobacco control work

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Effective tobacco control requires strong efforts at the local level, which should be in collaboration with local governments and across sectors beyond health, including various government offices. Guidelines stipulate that local governments are supposed to allocate budgets every year for tobacco control activities and report on them regularly to the Tobacco Control Focal Point. However, these budgets are often diverted to other activities of the local government. In order to keep the tobacco control movement going, definite budget allocations and active participation of local organizations are necessary for substantial achievements.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: WBB Trust, as the secretariat of BATA, in collaboration with NILG, imparted training on tobacco control law and local government guidelines to 66 BATA network organizations and local elected representatives. This training increased the capacity of the members to support officials in implementing tobacco laws. WBB Trust also provided technical assistance to the local organizations in preparing proposals and forwarding letters to relevant authorities, strengthening their advocacy efforts.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As a result of the training, to make the tobacco control movement sustained relationships between public representatives and network organizations have improved, and tobacco control activities have been strengthened. Additionally, to make these activities more dynamic and sustainable, LGI has allocated funding from its tobacco control-related budget to 9 network organizations of BATA.

CONCLUSIONS: The collaboration between local government, NILG, and BATA network organizations has significantly strengthened tobacco control efforts. This training and budget have brought them closer and established a precedent that local resource can also be used to make tobacco control activity more sustainable and other ministry may be involved with it. Long-term involvement of local organizations and continued funding is a must to ensure long-term success of the tobacco control movement in Bangladesh.

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Smoking costs: Comparing pre-GST and post-GST cigarette price trends in India

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BACKGROUND: Smoking is the primary cause of 79.8 percent of all tobacco-related deaths, as reported by WHO in 2021. Cigarettes are one of the major components of smoking tobacco. The most effective method of preventing cigarette consumption is through taxes. To establish a uniform tax system, India implemented the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017. This study aims at examining the trends in taxes in India during the pre-GST and post-GST periods.

METHODS: Retail prices, wholesale prices and price indices from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) and per capita income from Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

were utilised to examine current and real (inflation-adjusted) prices, affordability (cost in terms of income), and key tax changes at the national level.
RESULTS: The study shows that the consumer price of cigarettes increased at a constant rate from 2013 to 2020. Following 2020, there was a rise in retail price from 2020 to 2021. After 2021, retail prices of cigarettes remained constant. In contrast to the consumer price, the wholesale price had minimal variation with a slight decline. From 2013 to 2020, per capita income had a modest growth at a consistent rate. Following 2020, there was a decline in per capita incomes from 2020 to 2021, following which a rise occurred. The consumer price index (CPI) indicated that cigarette affordability stayed constant from 2013 to 2020, declined from 2020 to 2021, and subsequently rose from 2021 to 2023.
CONCLUSIONS: The consumer prices of cigarette in the post-GST period initially rose and thereafter has remained stable, indicating enhanced scope of illicit trade. Further, the gap in CPI and WPI indicates that the taxes rises are being absorbed by the industry thus making cigarettes affordable. The findings of the study indicate opportunity for cigarette tax increase.
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Local to Global: Tobacco Control Alliances delivering 20 years of evidence based practice across North East England

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco is our biggest killer, a leading cause of health inequalities across our poorest communities. Tackling tobacco harm is everyone's business, there is a clear evidence base for multi-agency working to address this and advocate for further action. However, the evidence is not always widely understood, communicated or applied.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2005, https://www.fresh-balance.co.uk, the North East (NE) of England's tobacco control programme, has worked with a range of partners to embed evidence based practice at a regional and local level through effective tobacco control alliances.
Key strand 1: building infrastructure, skills and capacity, priorities include:
• Leadership: create a shared vision and provide evidence base for partners to achieve this
• Collaboration: build and invest in dedicated regional and local infrastructure to tackle tobacco harms
• Strategy: utilise regional strategy and tailored framework/resources to develop local tobacco control action plans
• Amplify activity at population level to enhance local delivery e.g. mass media campaigns
• Influence key decision makers to maintain funding for comprehensive tobacco control
• Advocate and build support for tobacco policy measures.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Comprehensive regional tobacco control delivery has resulted in a 62% drop in overall smoking in the NE since 2005, the largest of any English region.
Despite political change, austerity and other emerging public health priorities, the NE is the only region in England to maintain multi-agency tobacco control alliances implementing an evidence based approach. Prioritising this key strand has been pivotal to ensure that tobacco control is still viewed as central to addressing health inequalities and has ensured that the whole region is signed up to a declaration for a Smokefree Future.
CONCLUSIONS: This approach can be replicated across any geographical area and demonstrates all sectors have a role to play in delivering tobacco control evidence based activity. It's also a useful model to help address other commercial determinants of health.
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Far from harm reduction: Escalation of adverse events in dual and poly users

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BACKGROUND: Despite being marketed as safer alternatives for conventional cigarette (CC) smokers, electronic cigarettes (EC) and heated tobacco products (HTP) face growing scepticism regarding their safety and effectiveness in promoting smoking cessation. Understanding the patterns of use of these products, and their associated health effects, is essential for public health.
METHODS: We analysed data from a sample of 22428 Italian adult participants who reported their use of CC, EC, and HTP and any adverse events - including dry cough, sore throat and dry mouth - specific to each product use. We used multivariate logistic regression models to assess the odds ratio (OR) of reporting adverse events in dual users versus CC-only smokers.
RESULTS: CC use was reported by 75.6% of EC users and 80.3% of HTP users. Product-specific adverse events were reported by 68.2% of CC smokers, 44.7% of EC users, and 44.5% of HTP users. Mean number of adverse events was 1.41 (standard deviation, SD=1.46) after CC smoking, 0.78 (SD=1.17) after EC use and 0.74 (SD=1.15) after HTP use. Compared to CC-only smokers, CC smokers also using EC (OR: 1.32, 95%-CI: 1.17-1.50), also using HTP (OR: 1.14, 95%-CI: 1.01-1.30), and also using both EC and HTP (OR: 1.50, 95%-CI: 1.29-1.75) had a higher risk of experiencing at least one adverse event after CC use.
CONCLUSIONS: Combining CC smoking with EC and/or HTP use increases the risk of adverse events after CC smoking. To this number must be added the far from negligible number of adverse events reported after EC

and/or HTP use. Our findings reinforce the growing evidence of higher health risks for dual users compared to CC-only smokers, undermining the role of EC and HTP as effective tobacco control tools. This is particularly true in Italy, where almost all EC and HTP users are dual users.

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Revenue lost in Zambia as a result of excise tax incentive for local cigarette manufacturers

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BACKGROUND: In 2015, Zambia implemented an investment incentive to foster domestic cigarette production. Since 2016, cigarettes have been taxed at different rates, depending on whether they are locally manufactured or imported, i.e. tiered taxes. A 75% excise tax exemption is applied to locally-produced cigarettes. The investment incentive violates Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) that Zambia ratified in 2008.

Objective: To estimate the loss in real cigarette excise tax revenue attributed to the tiered excise taxes from 2016 to 2022 (excluding 2017 and 2018).

METHODS: We used tax revenue data from the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), and population, GDP, and inflation data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). We obtained demand elasticities from the international literature. We used the Tobacco Excise Tax Simulation Model (TETSiM) to retrospectively estimate how much excise tax revenue was lost as a result of the incentive. We exclude 2017 and 2018 due to inconsistencies in the ZRA data.

RESULTS: Our results show that in 2016, 2019—2022 Zambia lost a total of ZMW1.5 billion (in 2022 prices) (USD52.9 million) in excise tax revenue due to the tiered tax. On average (in 2022 prices), Zambia lost ZMW244 million annually, more than the average annual excise tax revenue (ZMW220 million) they collected. Cigarette prevalence increased from 9.0% to 11.5% during this period. Under a uniform specific tax, prevalence would have dropped to 7.6%.

CONCLUSIONS: Zambia's investment incentive has caused more harm than good. Zambia should follow best practices and revise its tobacco tax structure, opting for a uniform specific tax, which taxes the same amount per cigarette regardless of whether cigarettes are imported or locally produced. Furthermore, Zambia should revise the tobacco excise taxes frequently, in line with inflation and income growth, to ensure that cigarettes remain less affordable over time.

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Manipulating prices to evade taxation in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco companies resort to a wide range of measures to evade taxes, such as successfully lobbying government officers to keep the low tax rate and spreading propaganda about smuggling. Another strategy in Bangladesh is artificially keeping the 'Maximum Retail Price' of the cigarette packs lower. Although taxes are levied based on the MRP mentioned on the packs, the same tobacco products are sold for 15-25% more at various outlets. But the government does not get any revenue from that higher amount. In this way, the government is losing about BDT 5000 crore (USD 417 Million) yearly. Also, fractional pricing and selling as single sticks negate the enforcement and proper monitoring of this law, besides encouraging the youth to take up smoking.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA) along with other organizations conducted a field-level study to see the printed MRP and the actual selling price. BATA then shared the results of the study with the relevant government department like National Board of Revenue (NBR), Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Rights Protection Authority and other relevant stakeholders. While much remains to be done to prevent this harmful practice, the successful initiative indicates the positive potential for identifying such illegal behavior, punishing it, and ultimately increasing revenue.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As a result, British American Tobacco Bangladesh along with 2 super shops (Swapno and Mina Bazar) who sold this product violating the MRP law have been fined in Dhaka city. Further, the example was used by BATA members in various parts of the country to activate mobile courts to investigate the practice and provide on-the-spot enforcement.

CONCLUSIONS: While tobacco companies are still manipulating the price to evade taxes in Bangladesh, the efforts of BATA and government enforcement agencies prove such illegal practices can be curbed. More vigilance and firm enforcement will help in compliance issues and saving public health.

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Potential economic productivity losses due to bidi, cigarette and smokeless tobacco consumption: Comprehensive national and subnational estimates from India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco consumption is a recognized global health concern with 8.7 million premature annual deaths. Recently, the consumption trends have undergone a significant shift from high-income countries to low and middle-income nations. Within this complex landscape, India grapples with a distinct challenge having nearly a quarter of its population being active tobacco users. This study quantifies the national and subnational potential economic productivity losses due to cigarettes, bidi and smokeless tobacco in India.
METHODS: Pooled odds and population attributable fraction were obtained through a meta-analysis of published studies concerning disease occurrence due to cigarette, bidi and SLT consumption in India. PAF values were applied to the total state disease burden for estimating DALYs attributable to cigarettes, bidis and SLT consumption. Obtained DALY values were then multiplied with the state GDP-per-capita to obtain the potential productivity losses to the individual Indian states and UTs.
RESULTS: From meta-analysis of 33 studies, a total loss of 8490585.43 annual DALYs was estimated due to cigarettes, 11838161.02 DALYs from bidis, and 4200646.46 DALYs from smokeless tobacco use in India. At the Indian GDP per capita of 2100 USD, an estimated annual potential productivity loss of USD 21056651858.33 results from cigarette consumption, USD 29358639332.37 from bidi consumption and USD 10417603230.38 from SLT consumption, equivalent to 2.15% of the annual national GDP. Highest state-wise burden was observed from Bihar (4.34%), Uttar Pradesh (3.98%) and Madhya Pradesh (2.90%).
CONCLUSIONS: Besides being a health hazard, tobacco also has huge economic ramifications. Our findings complement the existing work in tobacco control by quantifying the economic implications due to lost productivity, from a parallel lens of potential GDP losses amounting to 2.15% of the annual national GDP. The study also reports sub-national estimates which may be utilized for regional as well as country specific policy reforms.
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Graphical health warning implementation status in eight divisional cities of Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: Bangladesh has a complex tobacco consumption pattern with varieties of tobacco products and intricate packaging designs aimed at attracting consumers. Graphic Health Warnings (GHW) serve as a cost-effective module for discouraging tobacco consumption. Since 2016, Bangladesh has implemented 50% GHW on tobacco packaging. This study evaluates the GHW implementations' status in eight divisional cities and identifies the associated challenges.
METHODS: The study was conducted from November 2023 to April 2024 in eight divisional cities, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and observational checklists on Section 10 of the tobacco control law by using Kobo Toolbox. Four retail and four wholesale shops were systematically selected in each city as intervention sites, and 272 tobacco products of available categories, including local and national brands, were observed.
RESULTS: The survey found that 85% of tobacco packaging across all categories displayed GHWs. Specifically, the GHW was observed on 89% cigarettes, 63% bidis, 88% Zarda, and 55% Gul packs. Compliance of minimum 50% coverage on cigarettes, bidis, Zarda, and Gul packets was 92%, 40%, 18%, and 8%, respectively. Moreover, GHWs displayed on both sides: 100% for cigarettes, 40% for bidis, 13% for Zarda, and 42% for Gul. Adherence to the three-month rotation of the image varied significantly, ranging from as low as 20% for bidis to as high as 67% for Gul. Compliance with key legal requirements was particularly low among non-cigarette products. The variability in size and form of smokeless tobacco (SLT) products and bidi packets, compounded by the lack of manufacturing dates, presents substantial challenges in comprehensively assessing GHW implementation across these categories.
CONCLUSIONS: Standardized packaging for smokeless tobacco and bidi, along with manufacturing dates, is essential to ensure the efficacy of the GWH provisions. Effective and regular monitoring mechanisms are required to ensure compliance with GHW provisions in Bangladesh.
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Using a segmentation approach and insights from individuals who smoke to inform local tobacco control and smoking cessation offer

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Smoking cessation services were introduced in 2000 across England to reduce health inequalities by offering free, tailored support combining behavioural interventions and pharmacotherapies. These services triple quit success rates compared to willpower alone, and have helped over 5 million people quit smoking since their inception. Despite this progress, over 6 million people in England still smoke, additionally service usage has declined nearly 80% since peaking in 2012, creating significant challenges for tobacco control efforts.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In May 2024, the Tobacco Control Programme for North East England, commissioned Bluegrass to conduct a Smoker Segmentation survey. The survey involved 1315 face-to-face interviews across 12

Local Authorities in a region known for comprehensive tobacco control but marked by high deprivation and above-average smoking rates.

The goal was to identify key differences between cohorts of smokers, understanding attitudes towards smoking and smoking cessation services, thereby raising awareness of and improving engagement and uptake of evidence-based support.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The survey identified seven distinct smoker segments providing insight to common demographics and highlighted barriers to quitting such as mental health (92% linked smoking to stress relief). While 64% were concerned about health risks and 71% believed quitting would improve their lives, only 27% intended to quit within a year.

Although half of respondents were aware of smoking cessation services, only 15% had previously used them. Many (58%) felt services weren't 'for them,' and half doubted a service could help them.

Workshops and discussions based on these findings generated recommendations for enhanced tailoring of local communication, service delivery, and improved professional engagement to boost service uptake.

CONCLUSIONS: With £70 million in new government funding, smoking cessation services are expanding nationwide. Regional insights are shaping targeted communication to and flexible, accessible support tailored to smokers needs, helping to address regional challenges and reduce smoking rates further.

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Compliance with the smoke-free policy in Ninh Binh and Nghe An provinces, Vietnam

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BACKGROUND: Vietnam passed the law on tobacco harm prevention and control in 2012, which bans smoking at public places. This compliance survey in Ninh Binh and Nghe An is the first one in Vietnam and would serve as the basis to design smoke-free models in these provinces.

METHODS: The survey followed the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health's guideline on 'Assessing compliance with smoke-free laws'. Data were collected by trained provincial data collectors in January 2024. Observations pertaining to evidence of smoking (observed smoking, cigarette butt litter, and the display of ashtrays), the required display of no-smoking signage, and the presence of designated smoking areas/rooms were conducted across seven different types of public venues (N=918) using an online observation form at REDCap. Descriptive data analysis was conducted to understand the level of compliance by venue types including the sub-types using SPSS.

RESULTS: Compliance with the composite indicator assessing evidence of smoking varied across venues but low in general; only 53.1% of all venues were compliant. Venues with the lowest level of compliance were government offices (39%), eating places (38.7%), accommodation venues (45.2%) and public transportation stations (28.6%). About one third of the venues complied with the regulation on displaying no-smoking signage. 73.2% government offices and 71.7% public transportation stations had the signage but only 5.2% eating places, 28.5% accommodation venues, 29.3% public service places, 41.2% education venues and 56.7% health facilities complied.

CONCLUSIONS: There is poor compliance with the smoke-free policy in both provinces. Displaying of no-smoking signage does not always guarantee compliance. Implementation and enforcement of the law must improve to protect the public from second-hand smoke. The findings of the survey have been used to inform the province on making plans for smoke-free cities at the provinces.

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Morbidity and mortality estimates of smokeless tobacco consumption in India

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BACKGROUND: Smokeless tobacco (SLT) is most widely consumed form of tobacco in India, with every fifth Indian adults (21.4%) being active user. However, its use is associated with severe health consequences, including oral and esophageal cancers, and cardiovascular diseases. Despite its significant public health impact, there is a paucity of nationally representative estimates of deaths and disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and prematurely lost life years (YLLs) attributable to SLT consumption in the country. This study aimed to provide empirical estimates of the mortality and morbidity burden due to SLT consumption at both national and subnational levels in India.

METHODS: A meta-analysis of existing literature across India was conducted using secondary data from the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2021 database and primary data on SLT consumption patterns gathered from national health surveys. Population Attributable Fraction (PAF) was calculated based on the prevalence of SLT use and its relative risk for major SLT-related diseases, including cancers and cardiovascular conditions. The PAF values were applied to GBD data on total deaths and DALYs to estimate the absolute burden attributable to SLT consumption.

RESULTS: From 27 quantitative studies providing odds of disease occurrence, SLT consumption was estimated to be attributable for 171051 annual deaths, 4380540.62 DALYs and 4310922.51 YLLs in India. Subnational analysis revealed highest burden in states of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the substantial health burden caused by SLT consumption in India. The findings emphasize the urgent need for strengthened regulatory measures, including higher taxation, pictorial warnings, and public awareness campaigns, to reduce SLT use. Tailored interventions focusing on high-burden states and vulnerable populations are critical to mitigating the adverse health impacts of SLT and achieving broader public health goals.

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Integrating smoking cessation interventions into lung cancer screening: A framework for improved public health outcomes in Poland

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BACKGROUND: Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related deaths globally, with smoking as its predominant risk factor. In Poland, lung cancer accounts for over 25% of cancer-related deaths. While lung cancer screening (LCS) using low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) has proven effective in reducing mortality, integrating smoking cessation interventions within LCS programs remains a challenge. Barriers include a lack of standardized protocols and variability in cessation outcomes. This Polish expert consensus highlights the need for a structured approach to incorporate evidence-based smoking cessation strategies into LCS programs.

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer-related deaths globally, with smoking as its predominant risk factor. In Poland, lung cancer accounts for over 25% of cancer-related deaths. While lung cancer screening (LCS) using low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) has proven effective in reducing mortality, integrating smoking cessation interventions within LCS programs remains a challenge. Barriers include a lack of standardized protocols and variability in cessation outcomes. This Polish expert consensus highlights the need for a structured approach to incorporate evidence-based smoking cessation strategies into LCS programs.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A multidisciplinary team of experts developed a framework to enhance smoking cessation support in LCS. Key recommendations include providing participants with cognitive-behavioral counseling, pharmacotherapy (cytisine, bupropion, varenicline, NRT), and educational materials. Teleconsultations, biochemical addiction validation, and proactive follow-ups ensure long-term cessation. Additionally, participants are discouraged from using alternative nicotine products due to health risks and potential addiction.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Research demonstrates that integrating smoking cessation interventions into LCS increases quit rates among high-risk individuals. For example, hospital-based counseling achieved a 15.5% one-year quit rate, while telephone counseling paired with nicotine replacement therapy showed a quit rate of up to 17.4%. This consensus framework optimizes LCS outcomes by combining early cancer detection with effective smoking cessation support. Implementing such interventions could significantly reduce lung cancer-related mortality and its economic burden in Poland.

CONCLUSIONS: Integrating smoking cessation into LCS programs represents a cost-effective strategy to enhance public health outcomes. The dual role of LCS in detecting cancer early and promoting smoking cessation can serve as a model for broader public health initiatives. By addressing existing barriers and leveraging evidence-based methods, this consensus sets the foundation for a sustainable smoking cessation approach within Poland's healthcare system.

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Out of site out of mind: Monitoring and enforcement challenges presented by the digital market place

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The Health Service Executive (HSE) National Environmental Health Service (NEHS) assessed the Irish online marketplace to evaluate the level of compliance with the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) 2014/40/EU. This assessment demonstrated there is a vast digital landscape, which poses a challenge for enforcement bodies to monitor and regulate. It also raised concerns with a potential higher rate of non-compliance in the online market versus physical premises.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To overcome the challenge of monitoring the number of websites, this assessment focused on websites registered with the HSE for cross border distance sales (CBDS) and those with a .ie domain. The website reviews included nicotine content, volume, product presentation, and promotional practices so as to assess compliance with the TPD. Twenty of the CBDS registered websites were also checked for means of age-verification. This provided data to assist NEHS to develop enforcement strategies and approaches.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Of the 64 CBDS registered

website displays and declarations, 5% exceeded nicotine, 44% breached volume, 83% had features resembling food, and 83% used promotional tactics. Furthermore, 55% implemented minimal age-verification (Y/N question). 45% had no age verification means.
Of the 40 .ie domain websites reviewed, 3% exceeded nicotine, 48% breached volume, 88% had features resembling food, and 85% had promotions.
Overall, 83% of these websites operated outside national jurisdiction, creating significant challenges for enforcement.
CONCLUSIONS: There is a need to explore the potential use of artificial intelligence (AI) for monitoring online content so as to enhance enforcement and to close compliance gaps between the online and physical market places.
To address jurisdictional enforcement challenges cross-border cooperation between regulators is recommended.
The NEHS, conducts test purchase inspections in physical premises, this approach is not possible to implement for online sales. We recommend robust age verification standards and systems are implemented to reduce the potential risk of underage sales online.
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Navigating bidi regulation in India: A holistic overview of India's regulatory framework from bidi production to consumption

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BACKGROUND: The bidi industry in India is a critical public health and socio-economic challenge, deeply entrenched in cultural and economic practices. Bidis, the most widely smoked tobacco product in India, contribute significantly to the national burden of non-communicable diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular illnesses. Despite existing regulatory frameworks such as the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA), and India's commitment to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, enforcement gaps and regulatory loopholes persist. The informal nature of the bidi industry and its dependence on unorganized labour further exacerbate the public health crisis.
METHODS: This review systematically analysed existing regulatory policies and frameworks for bidi production, distribution, and consumption in India. Using a PRISMA-guided approach, 125 records were identified, of which 36 met inclusion criteria. Key sources included policy documents, academic articles, and grey literature, focusing exclusively on smoked tobacco. Excluded were documents related to smokeless tobacco or unrelated regulatory policies.
RESULTS: The analysis revealed critical gaps in India's tobacco control strategies. The informal nature of the bidi sector, reliance on underregulated labour practices, and lenient taxation policies undermine efforts to reduce consumption. Enforcement of health warnings and sales restrictions remains inconsistent, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, environmental concerns such as deforestation and waste from bidi production and consumption lack adequate regulatory attention. Despite policies aimed at supporting bidi workers, poor wages and hazardous working conditions persist.
CONCLUSIONS: India's bidi control efforts require a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to address public health, labour welfare, and environmental sustainability. Strengthening regulatory enforcement, closing policy loopholes, and promoting sustainable alternative livelihoods for bidi workers are critical to reducing the public health and ecological burden. Tailored public awareness campaigns and improved taxation mechanisms can further support these efforts, ensuring a more robust and effective tobacco control strategy.
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Cost-effectiveness analysis on interventions for bidi consumption control

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BACKGROUND: Bidi consumption, a predominant form of tobacco use in India, poses significant public health and economic burdens, contributing to a high prevalence of tobacco-related diseases and mortality. Effective interventions to reduce bidi consumption are crucial, yet evidence on their cost-effectiveness remains limited. This study aims to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of interventions targeting bidi consumption control in India.
METHODS: A cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted using a decision-analytic model to compare different intervention strategies, including taxation, public awareness campaigns, cessation programs, and regulatory measures. Data on intervention costs and health outcomes were sourced from peer-reviewed studies, government reports, and national health databases. Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratios (ICERs) were calculated, and a societal perspective was adopted for the analysis.
RESULTS: The analysis revealed that increasing taxation on bidis was the most cost-effective intervention, with an ICER well below the threshold of India's per capita GDP. For every additional 23.73 USD spent on the intervention 1 Year of Life Lost (YLL) is prevented. Public awareness campaigns and cessation programs demonstrated moderate cost-effectiveness but were more impactful when combined with taxation measures. Regulatory enforcement targeting informal bidi production showed potential but required substantial initial investments. All interventions led to significant reductions in DALYs and healthcare costs, highlighting their potential for long-term economic and public health benefits.
CONCLUSIONS: Taxation emerged as the most cost-effective intervention for controlling bidi consumption, with synergistic effects observed when combined with awareness and cessation strategies. Policymakers

should prioritize these interventions to maximize health outcomes and economic efficiency. Further research is recommended to evaluate the long-term sustainability of these strategies and explore alternative livelihoods for bidi workers to ensure equitable implementation.

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Earmarking health tax revenue for public health in Jamaica: An example for other countries

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Public health advocates often call for the earmarking of tobacco excise revenue. Ministries of Finance typically dislike earmarking, because it introduces rigidities in the budget process, and/or there is the assumption that the funds will not be well spent. The Jamaican government wanted to implement universal health coverage in the 1990s and early 2000s, but, because of significant fiscal constraints (two-thirds of government expenditure was used to service the public debt), this could not be funded through the general budget.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In lieu of universal health coverage, Jamaica's government created the National Health Fund (NHF) in 2004, which provided subsidized medication to people with specific diseases. The NHF was funded through earmarked taxes on (1) tobacco, (2) other excisable products (mainly alcohol), and (3) payroll taxes.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The NHF has been very successful, and is popular. Because it has been funded through earmarked revenues, the NHF has been protected from the vagaries of general budget processes. The Jamaican example is important for other countries:

- When there are no existing revenues for new projects, the new projects have to be funded from alternative sources. Increasing health taxes and earmarking the revenue is a good source.
- The earmarked project should not decrease the revenues that would typically flow to the general revenue fund.
- Good precedents with other earmarked projects makes it easier to create another earmarked project.
- Earmarking health taxes for a particular project should not be onerous for the tax collecting authorities.
- There must be a very clear plan to use the earmarked taxes.
- The earmarked project, possibly more so than other projects, needs good governance and oversight.
- Countries should consider diversifying the revenue source for large projects funded by earmarked revenues.

CONCLUSIONS: Jamaica's experience with health tax earmarking has been extremely positive. Countries in a similar fiscal situation can learn much from Jamaica.

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The effect of enhanced standards of care on smoking behavior for individuals living with HIV in Botswana

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BACKGROUND: Botswana experiences a high prevalence of smoking, compounded by a significant burden of HIV, yet lacks smoking cessation interventions within HIV care facilities. The study assesses the effectiveness of evidence-based smoking cessation strategies in a real-world context. During the control phase, an enhanced standard care package included one counseling session at enrollment, complemented by a brochure.

METHODS: We utilized a stepped-wedge design for the Botswana Smoking Abstinence Reinforcement Trial (BSMART). Recruitment occurred from June 2023 to February 2024 at five HIV care facilities in Botswana. Clients on Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) for at least six months who smoked daily were eligible for enrollment and followed for six months. Self-reported smoking cessation was defined as abstaining for seven or more consecutive days, was documented at week 24 and verified through carbon monoxide (CO) measurements, with a CO level of ⩽6 parts per million (ppm) indicating smoking abstinence.

RESULTS: A total of 1750 individuals were screened for smoking, with 202 (12%) identifying as smokers. Among these, 125 met the eligibility criteria and enrolled in the study, with a predominance of male participants (90%). The average age of participants was 45.3 years, with an average smoking duration of 23.7 years. At the 24-week visit, 85 of the 116 (73.3%) participants who attended reported making at least one quit attempt since their last visit. Those who attempted to quit reported an average of 27.5 days of abstinence during these attempts. Notably, 23 out of 125 participants (18%) self-reported having quit smoking, of which 14 (61%) were verified through CO testing, and 10 (71.4%) were males.

CONCLUSIONS: The implementation of smoking cessation interventions in Botswana's HIV care settings holds promise for encouraging quit attempts among clients. The use of biochemical validation confirmed self-reported cessation, which underscores the potential effectiveness of integrating smoking cessation strategies in this context.

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Facing the battle over diverse TAPS strategies in Metropolitan Manila, Philippines

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Metro Manila houses approximately 20 million people; a good target market for any product.

Various TAPS strategies have been observed, from paper-based posters to huge outdoor ads. Before the passage of RA 9211 in 2003, ads could be seen on tv, in magazines, and in cinemas. At present, ads can only be placed inside stores located 100-meter away from schools.

From 2013 to 2016, TAPS observed was up to 23%. Early 2023, TI used trademark colors of tobacco products, painted on walls of stores with store names on top. It started in internal streets with low visibility and gradually increased in 2024.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Since 2013, MMDA has monitored the vicinity of schools and inspected stores. The results are forwarded to LGUs monthly for validation and sanction.

LGUs strengthen their capacity, passed more stringent policies, and activated their Task Forces. Verification of MMDA reports became a regular task. Stores in violation are sanctioned with penalties that range from a fine of Php1000 ($18) to P5000 ($90), business closure, or imprisonment.

An intensive campaign through social media, lectures, and info materials was made. Hotline 8888 is used to report observations.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: In 2023, TAPS observed within school vicinities s are contained to 5% or 1176 ads in 26196 stores inspected. Painted stores were repainted removing the distinctive marks of tobacco brands. Owners remove billboards with tobacco ads in their stores.

MMDA continues to provide monthly reports to LGUs which the LGUs use to track violators. Task Forces became more vigilant in enforcing their local policies; building on their pool of enforcers through regular training and updating.

CONCLUSIONS: TI will continue to invent strategies. Partnership for technical support is essential. The community must be engaged. LGUs need to be proactive and envision healthier communities. A total TAPS ban may be considered to address the issue.

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Compliance monitoring of DSA in restaurants of Dhaka City and tobacco industry influence among individuals who smoke and those who do not smoke

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BACKGROUND: In Bangladesh, the tobacco control law requires restaurants to follow strict rules when setting up 'Designated Smoking Areas' (DSA), ensuring they don't harm public health. The tobacco industry continues to influence opinions and behaviors among youth smokers and non-smokers. The objectives of the study are to measure the compliance of 'Smoking Areas' in restaurants in Dhaka and to observe the promotional tactics of the tobacco industry to attract smokers and non-smokers.

METHODS: Mixed approaches have been used to conduct the study. A structured observational checklist based on Section 7 of the tobacco control law. Data was collected from November to December 2023 by using the Kobo Toolbox. Purposively, 81 restaurants of 6 categories were observed based on the popularity among youth, customer reviews, and youth gathering areas in Dhaka to identify the industry tactics.

RESULTS: The study revealed that 40.7% of restaurants had smoking zones, 6.2% advertised tobacco products, and 8.6% sold cigarettes. 70% of restaurants had no smoke prevention systems for protecting non-smoking zones, and 46% had no fire-extinguishing systems. 24.2% of restaurants required customers to pass through smoking areas when entering or exiting the premises. 100% of restaurants did not maintain the compliance of **'No Smoking'** signage. 80% of DSA designed, promoted, and developed by the tobacco industry. In 91% of restaurants, it was observed that people were smoking cigarettes, while in 36% of restaurants, people were smoking e-cigarettes. Among these cases, 60% of the individuals were aged between 18 and 25.

CONCLUSIONS: Cigarette companies are creating smoking zones in Dhaka restaurants, targeting youth with advertising and sales. The study recommends amending tobacco control laws to ban DSAs, stop indirect advertising through DSA, prohibit tobacco sales, and strictly enforce the law and policies to protect public health and counter the industry's tactics against youth.

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Developing the Indonesia Sub-national Index of Tobacco Control Sustainability

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Indonesia faces a critical tobacco epidemic, with one of the highest smoking rates globally and significant health and economic consequences. Subnational jurisdictions encounter unique challenges in implementing sustainable tobacco control measures, including limited data availability, inconsistent enforcement, and varying levels of political and community support. The Indonesia Sub-national Index of Tobacco Control Sustainability was developed to address these gaps, offering a standardized framework to assess and enhance tobacco control efforts at city and district levels. It targets local governments, policymakers, and public health advocates, emphasizing tailored interventions for diverse geographic and socio-

political contexts.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Index was developed by adapting international best practices to Indonesia's decentralized governance system. The process included consultations with stakeholders, capacity-building workshops, and the design of context-specific indicators measuring policy implementation, enforcement, and sustainability. Collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs, civil society, academics, and health advocates ensured the framework's practicality and relevance. Implementation partners, including the Association of Health Offices (ADINKES) and local governments, played key roles. Data collection began in 2023 with 101 cities and expanded to 222 cities in 2024, refining the framework and establishing benchmarks for future evaluation.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The Index is designed to provide critical insights into subnational tobacco control efforts, highlighting strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement. It aims to guide policy prioritization, resource allocation, and capacity-building activities across regions. By establishing benchmarks, the Index empowers stakeholders to monitor progress, foster accountability, and drive evidence-based decision-making.
CONCLUSIONS: The Indonesia Sub-national Index of Tobacco Control Sustainability demonstrates the potential of localized frameworks to improve accountability and long-term outcomes. Recommendations include enhancing local data systems, fostering stakeholder collaboration, and integrating the Index into national health strategies. This approach offers valuable insights for countries with decentralized governance.
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Barriers to adoption of tobacco control policies: Lessons from subnational governments in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia faces significant challenges in adopting and implementing tobacco control policies at the subnational level, despite high tobacco consumption rates and associated health risks. One notable policy initiative is the introduction of a specific budget nomenclature for tobacco control, aimed at ensuring dedicated funding for smoke-free area (KTR) programs. However, the uptake of this policy has been limited across districts and cities. This study investigates the barriers to adoption and provides insights into improving policy implementation at the local government level.
METHODS: The research employs a qualitative methodology, analyzing policy documents, budget data, and reports from local governments, alongside interviews with key stakeholders, including officials from district health offices, representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), and public health advocates. Data collection focuses on identifying systemic, administrative, and socio-political obstacles that hinder policy adoption.
RESULTS: Results reveal several barriers, including weak policy dissemination and enforcement, insufficient awareness among local government officials, and pre-existing budget commitments that limit flexibility for new initiatives. Additionally, the lack of technical capacity and understanding of the policy's long-term benefits among local stakeholders further constrains adoption. Socio-political factors, such as resistance from interest groups and competing priorities in resource allocation, exacerbate the issue. Despite these challenges, the study identifies promising practices in districts that successfully adopted the nomenclature, highlighting the role of advocacy and multi-stakeholder collaboration.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, capacity-building programs for local officials, and broader dissemination of tobacco control policies. Integrating these measures with digital tools, such as the Governance Information System (SIPD), can enhance transparency and accountability. This study provides actionable recommendations for policymakers and advocates to address barriers, ensuring more effective implementation of tobacco control policies at the subnational level and contributing to improved public health outcomes in Indonesia.
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Donations to social and cultural organizations in Switzerland. Tobacco Industry's self-interested generosity

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BACKGROUND: Switzerland is a country in which the tobacco industry (TI) has a great deal of influence (ranked 89 out of 90 on the Tobacco Industry Interference Index). A mechanism of this influence is the TI's use of sponsorship of cultural events and of donations to charities as a means of inserting itself in the local social fabric, building a network of allies, and projecting the image of a good corporate citizen. This poster, based on TI internal documents, aims to show that TI 's 'philanthropic' programs are driven exclusively by its political and economic objectives, contradicting its attempts to present itself as a disinterested citizen.
METHODS: We examined TI's official communication and compared it with its internal declarations. In Switzerland, the main players contributing to these cultural and social programs are Philip Morris International (based in Lausanne) and Japan tobacco International (headquartered in Geneva). We put their actions in perspective by assessing them in the light of scientific data on the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by TI.
RESULTS: In Switzerland, TI gives money to a range of actors, including political parties, cultural institutions, humanitarian organizations, LGBTIQ associations, and biodiversity promoters.
Documents show that TI targets specifically the organizations and places where it wants to raise its influence and to gain access to political elites. TI gives

money without demanding anything in return from the recipients of its 'generosity': this creates the strongest binding effect.

CONCLUSIONS: Switzerland is lagging behind when it comes to structural measures to combat TI's influence. The CCLAT recommends banning TI's sponsorship and other CSR activities (Art. 13) and to keep TI's interests out of public policy (Art. 5.3). In Switzerland, current and forthcoming regulations give the tobacco industry too much influence and freedom, perpetuating the devastating consequences of the smoking epidemic.

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The implementation of a smoking cessation specialist in general practice for disadvantaged groups: A process evaluation

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BACKGROUND: There are major challenges in the accessibility of effective smoking cessation support for disadvantaged groups. Implementing a smoking cessation specialist in the general practice to whom general practitioners (GPs) and general practice nurses (GPNs) refer may contribute to overcoming these challenges. However, there is lack of supporting evidence. The aim of this study is to evaluate a pilot of a smoking cessation specialist in general practice in the Netherlands.

METHODS: The process evaluation was conducted in two general practices located in disadvantaged neighborhoods, using qualitative (i.e., interviews with GPs (N=11), GPNs (N=10), a smoking cessation specialist (N=1), patients (N=11), a health insurer (N=1)) and quantitative data (i.e., demographic questionnaire and records of (N=93) patients) across the RE-AIM framework dimensions (i.e., Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and quantitative data were analyzed descriptively.

RESULTS: GPs and GPNs referred patients to the smoking cessation specialist, due to the specialist' expertise and the opportunity to outsource work. The specialist's physical presence in the practice facilitated the implementation. GPs and GPNs did not all/always refer patients, due to not being aware of the specialist's presence or patients not wanting to quit. In total, 93 of the 115 referred patients received smoking cessation support, consisting of disadvantaged people (e.g. 42% had difficulty making ends meet). The quit success rate was 47.7% at three months and 43.7% at six months. The person-centered approach and trusted relationship with the specialist were experienced as contributing factors for success. Implementation barriers included a complex referral procedure, a high workload of the specialist and a challenging patient group.

CONCLUSIONS: Implementing a smoking cessation specialist in general practice may improve access to smoking cessation support and quit success in disadvantaged groups. However, for sustainable implementation various barriers need to be tackled.

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Perceptions of smoking-related harms and support for tobacco control policies based on tobacco product use patterns in South Korea

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BACKGROUND: The use of novel tobacco products has increased, leading to the proliferation of multi-tobacco product use. However, there is a lack of research on how multi-tobacco product users recognize the harms of smoking, which may influence their support for tobacco control policies. This study aimed to assess multi-tobacco product users' awareness of smoking harms and to examine its correlation with support for tobacco control policies.

METHODS: This cross-sectional study surveyed 1217 South Korean adults, selected through simple random sampling based on gender, age, and region. Awareness of smoking harms was assessed based on participants' recognition of the risk of 32 diseases associated with tobacco use. Support for tobacco control policies was measured across five items: two based on MPOWER strategies and three from tobacco endgame policies. Multivariable logistic regression analysis was used to analyze the association between harm awareness and support for tobacco control policies.

RESULTS: The most supported policy among current single users was banning tobacco use near schools(65.8%), while among multi users most supported designating all indoor areas as smoke-free zones and restricting retailers(both 61.5%). The least supported policy for both groups was a total ban on tobacco sales within 10 years(34.3% and 34.2%, respectively). Low awareness of smoking harms was related to lower policy support across all tobacco use patterns. Especially among those aware of smoking harms for lung cancer, single users were less likely to support a total ban on tobacco sales within 10 years(OR 0.192, 95% CI=0.124-0.296) compared to multi users(OR 0.231, 95% CI=0.137-0.388).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings of this study reaffirm the role of awareness of smoking harms in supporting tobacco control policies, while highlighting differences in support levels for certain policies based on tobacco use patterns. These results suggest the need for tailored strategic approaches that consider use patterns for specific tobacco

control policies.

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Implementation of monitoring information system for effective implementation of Tobacco-Free Educational Institution (ToFEI) in Karnataka

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Karnataka has 22.8% tobacco prevalence among the 15 and above age group, out of it 3.7% are from 15-17 years children. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India launched Revised Guidelines for Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) on 31st May 2019. However, there are no robust mechanisms to monitor the ToFEI compliance regularly with real-time data. Hence, STCC, Karnataka in collaboration with Dept of School Education with technical assistance from Vital Strategies developed the ToFEI Monitoring Information System in Karnataka in 2023.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: ToFEI app is used by the district-level staff under the Dept of Education, who are designated officials under COTPA section 6b, to facilitate and monitor the progress of ToFEI implementation. Further, a real-time monitoring information system dashboard was developed to track the overall progress of ToFEI implementation at State and District levels. Through dept of School Education, 3 rounds of orientation programs were conducted on ToFEI indicators and the use of the ToFEI app to 19000 school teachers and staff.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: ToFEI App-based monitoring system has been implemented in all 32 districts of Karnataka. In one year, 4366 educational institutions enrolled and updated ToFEI compliance, out of it 3463 Educational Institutions declared as ToFEI compliance based on evidence-based real-time data. This resulted in an improvement in overall ToFEI compliance in the State from 25% to 37% in a year.

CONCLUSIONS: A Web-based monitoring system is a feasible option to monitor and upscale the implementation of ToFEI guidelines and transform educational institutions into tobacco-free zones. This may be a good model to the Ministry of Education, Government of India to replicate in PAN India to monitor ToFEI compliance with evidence-based real-time data.

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TCRC's pioneering effort in achieving e-cigarette ban: A success model in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The emergence of e-cigarettes in Bangladesh presented a considerable public health challenge, especially among the nation's 65 million adolescents and young individuals. According to GATS 2017, a mere 0.2% of e-cigarette use, this figure has dramatically increased lately due to vigorous marketing, vape expos, social media promotions, and the availability of e-cigarettes close to educational institutions. Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) of Dhaka International University (DIU) unveiled this growing threat through research conducted in 2016-17, revealed HS Code imports, and initiated advocacy, led action to ban e-cigarettes. However, challenges included misinformation campaigns by e-cigarette traders, online harassment, hacking attempts, and lobbying efforts by the tobacco industry to prevent regulatory action.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Creating public pressure and exposing tobacco industry deception, TCRC raises awareness by mobilizing 5,000 DIU students for youth campaigns, conducting seminars, demonstrations, policy-advocacy, and sports tournaments. TCRC submitted Memorandums to Prime Minister, Chief Adviser, and Advisers demanding banning e-cigarettes. TCRC organized direct meetings with Parliament Members (MPs), Ministers, Advisers, and government high officials for banning e-cigarettes, and provided evidence-based research, 800+ letters, policy-brief, fact-sheets, newspaper articles. Besides, TCRC's president (former MP), secured 152 MPs' signatures, urging Prime Minister and Health Minister to take action against e-cigarettes. Additionally, along-with 50 anti-tobacco organizations, TCRC led rallies, human chains, and media campaigns to counter both industry and traders' tactics and misinformation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: These advocacy efforts successfully influenced Bangladesh government to ban the import of e-cigarettes on January 1, 2025, through an SRO. Public awareness among youth significantly increased, creating strong grassroots pressure.

CONCLUSIONS: TCRC's pioneering efforts highlight the power of evidence-based advocacy and youth mobilization in shaping public health policies. Bangladesh's success in banning e-cigarette imports provides a model for other countries facing similar challenges. Future efforts will focus on ensuring law enforcement and closing loopholes to prevent illicit sales.

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Comparing system dynamics and comparative risk assessment to model the impact of tobacco control policies in Belgium

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BACKGROUND: The widespread availability of tobacco products fuels preventable health burden in Belgium, representing a lasting challenge to public health. To address this, the Belgian inter-federal tobacco plan introduces a policy to reduce availability by closing specific sales channels. This study aims to estimate the avoidable health burden of this policy using two different modeling methods: comparative risk assessment (CRA) and system dynamics (SD).
METHODS: The CRA approach estimates the direct impact of reduced tobacco availability on smoking prevalence and related health outcomes by calculation of the potential impact fraction. The SD model applies a dynamic systems approach to simulate interactions between tobacco availability, smoking behaviors, and health outcomes. Key data sources include national Belgium health interview survey, literature-derived data, population projections and mortality data. Outcome measures include reductions in smoking prevalence attributable to the policy as well as avoidable disease burden in terms disability adjusted life years (DALY).
RESULTS: Both models estimated a substantial reduction in the tobacco-related burden. The CRA model estimated 2300 avoidable DALY due to lung cancer in 2040 while the SD model projected 2800 less overall deaths among smokers in 2040. The SD model provides complementary insights, highlighting potential delays in policy impact and long-term benefits for population health. A comparative analysis underscores the strengths and limitations of each method in capturing different dimensions of the policy's effects.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings indicate that reducing tobacco availability through targeted sales channel closures can yield significant health benefits, including reduced mortality and disease burden. This study highlights the utility of combining CRA and SD approaches for comprehensive evaluations of policies. Policymakers should consider these insights to enhance the effectiveness of tobacco control strategies and monitor their long-term impact on public health outcomes.
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Interactions between ENDS and cigarette consumption: Evidence from a 2022 national telephone survey in South Africa

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BACKGROUND: For some people, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) may serve as a cessation support for cigarette use. For others, ENDS may be a gateway to cigarette use. Very little research has characterised the relationship between cigarette and ENDS use in South Africa. This paper aims to fill this gap.
METHODS: We analysed a nationally representative survey of urban South African adults. The survey included detailed questions regarding the respondents' initiation and (where relevant) cessation dates for both cigarettes and ENDS. We developed a typology describing the sequence in which dual users (ever-users of both cigarettes and ENDS) used each product. 'On-rampers' are those users who used ENDS first and later took up cigarette smoking, and 'off-rampers' are those users who first smoked cigarettes and who subsequently quit cigarettes while still using ENDS. Other groups were 'non-off-rampers', i.e., people who started using ENDS while smoking cigarettes, but later quit using ENDS, and 'continuing dual users' who were still using both products at the time of the interview.
RESULTS: Based on the weighted data, 9.5% of dual users displayed 'on-ramping' behaviour, 13.1% displayed 'off-ramping' behaviour, 20.9% were 'non-off-rampers' and 56.4% were 'continuing dual users'. Roughly half of off-rampers, failed off-rampers and continuing dual users stated that they started using ENDS to help them quit cigarettes. 1.7% of the population were or had been ENDS users, but had no history of using cigarettes.
CONCLUSIONS: Policy interventions should attempt to minimize the on-ramp effect, and maximize the off-ramp effect. Specifically, ENDS use should be strongly discouraged amongst those who do not smoke cigarettes, especially young people. Targeted cessation support could be used to assist the 'non-off-ramper' and 'continuing dual user' groups, to successfully quit cigarettes. Additional research should investigate the nature of use (for example, the intensity of use), within each category.
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Tobacco as a model: Developing a commercial determinants of health approach to the three big killers

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The UK Government has made progress in reducing smoking; however disparities persist among certain populations, who also face harm from alcohol and obesity with commercial determinants of health (CDoH) playing a key role in prevalence. Despite synergies, policies have been developed in silos without addressing the clustering of risk factors. Effective solutions involve upstream measures to reduce the availability, affordability, and marketing of unhealthy products, but progress is hampered by industry lobbying.
There is increasing focus on addressing the CDoH, with WHO advocating for governments to act. In 2022, Action on Smoking and Health, the Alcohol Health Alliance, and the Obesity Health Alliance commenced a collaboration to advocate for a comprehensive prevention strategy targeting tobacco, alcohol, and obesity, with an aligned approach to tackling the commercial drivers.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The three organisations worked together to develop a shared narrative, centring the role of businesses producing harmful commodities

and identifying common policy approaches. The collaboration focused on engaging policymakers via advocacy approaches and the development of reports, polling and policy submissions.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A prevention policy framework developed by the collaboration has been positively received by policymakers and is being adapted for use in two English regions. The framework, polling, and an economic analysis were combined into the 'Holding Us Back' report, launched at a Parliamentary event attended by Parliamentarians. The 'Killer Tactics' report, which exposed industry lobbying tactics, gained media coverage and strong webinar engagement, indicating public interest in the issue.

The new UK government has identified tobacco, obesity, and alcohol as health priorities and met with collaboration representatives. Following the collaborations success, additional funding has been secured for continued advocacy.

CONCLUSIONS: A coherent policy approach to tobacco, alcohol, and obesity can reduce harm and health inequalities. Further work is needed to articulate the benefits of integrated strategies and protect policy development from industry interference.

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Tobacco control innovations for farmers through the utilization of mini-dams in Temanggung district, Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Temanggung Regency is the largest producer of tobacco in Central Java. Since 2012, tobacco has not been widely cultivated due to poor trade arrangements and a fluctuating climate. In the dry season, only tobacco plants can be cultivated, so that farmers' income is not maximized and has not been able to meet their daily needs. To meet these needs, farmers diversify by planting coffee and horticulture. However, production is not optimal because the availability of water is not sufficient. Therefore, MTCC UNIMMA offers innovation in the form of mini-dams to help farmers diversify during the dry season.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The method used is Participatory Rural Appraisal. The first stage began with an FGD between farmers, the local government, and Muhammadiyah community organizations. The second stage was the construction of five mini-dams. After one year of operation, an evaluation was conducted on the utilization of the mini-dams.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The results of the evaluation were that the presence of the mini-dams increased farmers' income by 5-10%; the utilization of the mini-dams was mainly for the leaking stage at the beginning of the planting period; and only 40% of farmers could utilize the mini-dams because the distance between the land and the mini-dams was quite far. The farmers suggested that a pipeline system be made to facilitate the distribution of water from the mini-dams to the farmers' land; the source of water to fill the mini-dams is not only rainwater but also from springs; on each farmer's land a reservoir is made.

CONCLUSIONS: So, it can be concluded that the presence of mini-dams is able to increase farmers' income, so that it can support efforts to diversify or switch crops. Therefore, the number of mini-dams needs to be increased so that the increase in farmers' income and efforts to diversify or change crops can be maximized.

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Prevalence of tobacco products use in Tunisian school adolescents, 2024

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BACKGROUND: Although national epidemiological data related to the use of new and heated tobacco products is still limited, several studies have suggested an increasing trend over the last years. We aimed to estimate the prevalence of main tobacco products use among Tunisian middle school adolescents.

METHODS: Data from the 2024- Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) was used. Based on a clustered two-stage stratification sampling method, the GYTS targeted middle school adolescents aged 13–15 years. Data were anonymously collected using a standardized questionnaire containing questions related to lifetime and current (last 30 days) use of any tobacco product: smokeless tobacco, heated tobacco, water pipe (WP) and e- cigarettes.

RESULTS: A total of 2745 middle school adolescents were enrolled. The prevalence of lifetime smokeless tobacco use was 10.2%, significantly higher in boys (12.0% Vs 8.4%, p=0.02). The prevalence of current WP use was 2.6% and 19.3% have tried WP at least once. This was significantly higher in boys (23.2% Vs 15.4%, p=0.0004). The prevalence of current e-cigarette use was 16.1% and 25.8% have tried e-cigarette at least once, significantly higher in boys (34.4% Vs 17.2%, p<10-3). As for heated tobacco, 2.9% of participants were current users and the lifetime prevalence was 7.6%, significantly higher in boys (7.2% Vs 12.3%, p<10-3).

CONCLUSIONS: Our results highlighted a concerning prevalence of new and heated tobacco products use among Tunisian middle school adolescents. This emphasizes the need to reinforce multisector collaboration through youth-tailored campaigns, and to control digital marketing of these products which increasingly targets this vulnerable

population.

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A comparative study on budget price and real market price (selling price) of smokeless tobacco product (Zarda) in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND: In Bangladesh, 22 million people (20%) use smokeless tobacco (SLT), but tax enforcement remains a low priority, leading to significant revenue loss. Tobacco tax increase is a globally recognized as effective for reducing consumption and boosting government revenue. Despite anti-tobacco activists advocating for higher SLT taxes, compliance is inconsistent. In the 2023–2024 fiscal year, the government raised SLT taxes, setting 10g of Zarda at BDT 45. This study examines the market-level impacts of these changes, evaluating the alignment between budgeted and real selling prices of Zarda products.

METHODS: This research employs a quantitative methodology, using primary data gathered through a semi-structured survey. Data gathering took place from June 2023 until January 2024 across eight divisional cities in Bangladesh. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools to identify trends, patterns, and key insights related to the study objectives.

RESULTS: This study revealed that, 97% SLT products does not follow the ratio of budget declaration price whereas 10gm is 87% and 20gm is 93%. Eighteen different weights categories (5gm, 8gm, 9gm, 10gm, 12gm, 14gm, 15gm, 18gm, 20gm, 25gm, 30gm, 32gm, 40gm, 50gm, 52gm, 65gm, 70gm, & 100gm) packaging found in the market. 50gm packets SLT product is more available in the market but none of the company (0%) are selling products as per ratio of budget declaration price whereas selling lower than budget price ratio. 97% SLT Company did not increase price according to budget price.

CONCLUSIONS: Government losing huge amount revenue from SLT products due to sell Zarda below budget price. SLT market is unregulated that is why government should take necessary step to reduce tax evasion through effective monitoring and ban self-declaration tax system. SLT products are not using standard packaging model. The study recommends to introducing standard packaging for SLT products to collect more revenue and reduce tax evasion.

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How the tobacco industry exploited protected speech to undermine TAPS bans

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The sari-sari store is a distinct and integral feature of Philippine communities. These neighborhood convenience stores, integrated into family homes, sell dry goods, snacks, and daily necessities. Children frequently visit sari-sari stores to run errands or purchase treats. Sari-sari stores are thus deeply embedded in the fabric of communities, often an extension of household life and a central feature in childhood and family routines.

Over the years, sari-sari stores have served as a marketing space for large beverage companies, with store facades often used for brand visibility. However, a troubling trend has emerged, with tobacco companies co-opting this space. Designs mimicking a well-known cigarette brand's packaging have proliferated across Manila, transforming neighborhoods into inadvertent advertisements for tobacco products. These visual elements bring harmful products closer to children, posing a significant public health concern.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: This initiative seeks to expose the tobacco industry's exploitation of sari-sari stores as a marketing avenue to circumvent TAPS bans. Through visual documentation, policy analysis, and in-depth interviews, it will examine how the industry uses branding strategies to embed tobacco advertising within communities.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: By targeting sari-sari stores, homeowners unknowingly become conduits by painting their homes with branded designs. Entire neighborhoods are transformed into visual advertisements for harmful products. The ineffectiveness of existing TAPS regulations against this strategy allows the industry to infiltrate community spaces and jeopardize efforts to protect children and families from tobacco marketing.

CONCLUSIONS: There is an urgent need for stricter enforcement of TAPS bans and the development of innovative regulatory frameworks. Protecting sari-sari stores from becoming tools for harmful advertising is essential to safeguarding public health, particularly for children who are disproportionately affected by the proximity of tobacco marketing in their everyday environment. There should be stronger policies to ensure that community spaces remain safe from exploitation by the tobacco industry.

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Farmer's perspective on alternative cropping: A step towards reducing cultivation

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BACKGROUND: Gujarat is one of India's top tobacco producing states, with thousands of farmers relying on this cash crop for a living, Gujarat accounts for 48% of the country's total tobacco production of 8 lakh tones. However, tobacco production has considerable obstacles, such

as negative health effects, environmental degradation, and economic weaknesses as a result of fluctuating market demand and severe anti tobacco regulations. In response to these issues, crop diversification has gained traction, encouraging tobacco growers to switch to more sustainable and profitable crops.

METHODS: The campaign organized cycle rally it covered 220KM of distance across 6 districts Gujarat. With them of WNTD2023 'We Need Food Not Tobacco' engaging local communities to grow food crops instead of tobacco crops through skit, poster presentation, distribution material, and discussion highlighting the advantages of shifting to food crop cultivation. Collaborations with Agricultural, Health, Police Department, Panchayati Raj, were established to provide comprehensive support and information to the farming communities on the benefits of alternate cropping.

A survey was conducted to see how many farmers want to switch the cultivation from tobacco crop to other cash crops.

RESULTS: Agriculture schemes and subsidies prompt some farmers to switch crops, but short duration and lower cash crop prices hinder sustainability.

The survey found that most farmers (65%) have been growing tobacco for 15-30 years due to its profitability, though 75% acknowledged health risks and 63% cited soil fertility issues. Despite these challenges, 55% expressed interest in switching to alternative crops, driven by government support and health benefits.

CONCLUSIONS: A combination of long-term government subsidies (spanning 5 to 10 years), higher market prices for other cash crops compared to tobacco, and insurance coverage for alternative crops against nonseasonal climate events like floods or droughts could significantly incentive farmers to transition away from tobacco farming, reducing its prevalence.

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Organizational Models for the Sustainability of the National Tobacco Control Program in Brazil: A Pilot Proposal for National Adoption

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Since the 1980s, Brazil has implemented the National Tobacco Control Program (PNCT), significantly reducing smoking prevalence. However, challenges such as emerging products, legislative compliance, and financial and technical sustainability persist. This study focuses on strengthening the State Tobacco Control Program (PECT) in five Brazilian states representing different regions: Tocantins, Paraíba, Goiás, Rio de Janeiro, and Paraná.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: From 2020 to 2022, technical visits were conducted to analyze and enhance tobacco control practices using tools such as SWOT-based inventories to identify local strengths and weaknesses. Actions included technical training, developing communication networks among municipal and state coordinators, and promoting partnerships with strategic organizations, including state planning secretariats and academic institutions.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Implemented practices strengthened the PECT at the state level and improved technical capacity to integrate regional and local actions. The strategy fostered alignment between states and national coordination, demonstrating an impact on smoking reduction and the structuring of sustainable state policies. The model showed potential for national expansion.

CONCLUSIONS: This pilot project highlights the importance of organizational models to ensure the sustainability of the PNCT in Brazil. The adoption of these practices in other Brazilian states is recommended, focusing on intersectoral partnerships and resource mobilization to ensure the continuity of tobacco control actions.

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Strengthening tobacco control in Bangladesh: Advocacy and law implementation efforts

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Despite the enactment of the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 (amended in 2013), enforcement of tobacco control laws in Bangladesh remains limited due to a lack of awareness among policymakers and institutional leaders. Challenges include insufficient prioritization of tobacco control in policymaking and widespread violations, particularly in public spaces and entertainment media. Addressing these gaps requires sustained advocacy efforts and collaboration across ministries and sectors.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Key interventions include:

• Policy Advocacy: Advocated for stricter enforcement through meetings, discussions, Policy briefs, and letters with government ministries.

• Strategic Litigation: Successfully advocating for a ban on e-cigarettes.

• Inter-ministerial Collaboration: Securing commitments from key ministries, including Health, Home Affairs, Information, and Culture, to integrate tobacco control measures into their respective sectors.

• Public Awareness Campaigns: Conducting public awareness campaigns and engaging with media to educate the public about the harms of tobacco use and promote compliance with the tobacco control law.

• Addressing Violations: Intervening in specific cases of law violations, such as those observed in entertainment media and public exhibitions, to ensure compliance and set a precedent for enforcement.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A ban on e-cigarette imports and marketing, the formation of an expert committee to amend the Tobacco Control Law, and directives from various ministries to enforce smoke-free policies.

• Enhanced public awareness about the dangers of

tobacco use and the importance of adhering to tobacco control laws.

• Successful interventions, such as the Bangladesh National Museum's commitment to adhere to tobacco control laws and the directive from the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner to include tobacco control in mobile court agendas.

CONCLUSIONS: Sustained advocacy, supported by multi-sectoral collaboration, is essential for effective implementation of tobacco control laws in Bangladesh. MANAS's efforts highlight the potential of advocacy-driven interventions to bridge policy gaps and promote compliance, ultimately contributing to a healthier, smoke-free society.

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Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to track targeted tobacco advertising in Indonesian digital newspaper platforms

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BACKGROUND: Machine learning and AI-enabled tools are emerging as powerful resources for understanding online tobacco marketing. This study aimed to characterize the types of advertisements found in Indonesian digital newspaper platforms and identify the targeted audience or user profiles.

METHODS: We developed specialized scraper engines designed around five fictional user profiles: two females and three males. These profiles simulated real-world digital behaviors across platforms like Google and e-commerce sites. The engine, powered by advanced AI technology and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), automatically classified tobacco advertisements in real time. News articles in both English and Bahasa from 22 newspapers with the highest digital reach were analyzed. Reach estimates were based on the number of monthly visitors to each newspaper.

RESULTS: From March to May 2023, 42.418 English and Bahasa articles were reviewed, and 306.874 ads were scanned, identifying 5.502 tobacco advertisements. Detik Online, with over 43 million readers, hosted the most ads, primarily in its 'Letters from Readers' section, featuring PT HM Sampoerna's cigarette brands. A 20-year-old female profile experienced nearly five times more tobacco ads (24%) than a 23-year-old male profile (5%), with most ads in video format on smartphones. Tobacco ads primarily targeted males (60%), but all profiles had highest exposure to Sampoerna A Mild (42%) and IQOS (19%) ads.

CONCLUSIONS: By leveraging the credibility of traditional print media and the vast reach of the internet, tobacco advertisers expose larger audiences to their products. The transient and elusive nature of digital ads complicates documentation and enforcement of restrictions on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS). Further research and robust digital monitoring systems are essential to strengthen enforcement. Targeted advertising towards young women poses significant public health risks, potentially exacerbating Indonesia's high smoking rates.

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Task shifting: An innovative approach to improve access to tobacco cessation in India

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BACKGROUND: Half of the 267 million tobacco users in India are willing to quit tobacco and 35% have made a quit attempt, 70% of whom tried to quit on their own. Only 49% smokers and 30% smokeless tobacco users were advised by their healthcare providers to quit tobacco. This demonstrates a gap in the demand and supply of cessation services in India. Brief advice interventions delivered by diverse healthcare providers with minimal training have shown promise and can be considered a low-cost scalable solution.

METHODS: Task shifting, which involves transferring responsibilities of highly skilled individuals to less specialized workers after due training, can be applied to tobacco cessation. The responsibility of providing cessation advice can be allocated to frontline health workers. LifeFirst, an evidence-based tobacco cessation programme, identified healthcare workers from three high reach, low resource settings – TB NGOs, Health NGOs and Dentists and provided trainings to deliver brief advice interventions and refer for counselling, during routine activities.

RESULTS: LifeFirst trained 15 dentists, 11 TB NGO workers and 40 Health NGO workers. All health workers from the TB and Health NGO setting and 9 (60%) dentists referred at least one tobacco user. In a period of one year, 2866 tobacco users (23% from TB NGOs, 68% from health NGOs and 9% from dentists). Of these, 2346 (82%) registered for counselling. Registration rate was highest among TB NGO health workers (86%) followed by Health NGO (81%) and dentists (79%). The average number of patients who registered for counselling per health worker was 21, 39 and 52 for dentists, Health NGOs and TB NGOs respectively.

CONCLUSIONS: Task shifting approach to deliver brief advice intervention in low resource settings is feasible. Tobacco cessation can be integrated in the TB Program and health initiatives implemented by NGOs through their health workers.

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Retailers in store and social media marketing mix of electronic cigarettes in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: The rising rate of electronic cigarette use among adult and young people in Indonesia partially attributed to the growing and unregulated retail marketing and promotion. This study aims to portray marketing mix of e-cigarette at vape store and their social media account as well as their selling behaviour to youth below 18 in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia.

METHODS: Audit survey was conducted by trained enumerators at 107 vape stores previously mapped in Denpasar. The audit included observation, photo taking and interview with shopkeepers regarding the 7Ps of marketing mix: product, place, physical evidence, price, promotion, people, process; and selling to youth under 18 years. Then, the promotional content of social media (Instagram) accounts of 24 randomly selected retailers was explored. We performed descriptive analysis.

RESULTS: Almost all (99.07%) stores sold Pod, followed by Mod (95.33%); all sold fruit and milk/creamy e-liquid flavor. Almost half (48.60%) reported the highest nicotine concentration of above 36 mg/mL and median average price of e-liquid at IDR140.000 ($9.3). We observed varied advertisements and promotions including testers, price discounts, vouchers, and membership. All employed online channels, most frequent was Instagram (99.07%). Shopkeepers who were young, male, with low education were more likely to sell to youth. Of the 24 Instagram accounts, the majority of them posts was images (83.3%), followed by highlight (33.3%) and reels (25.0%). More than 90% of the posts were promoting the products; which include customer testimonies, product reviews, tips and tricks, and information on e-cigarettes. Half of them posted price discount, free items, give away, and others.

CONCLUSIONS: Vape store use both conventional and more engaging marketing strategies such as membership benefits, exclusive and comforting ambience and online promotion. The government must urgently ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship as well as regulate selling and distribution of e-cigarette product alongside other tobacco/ nicotine products.

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Tobacco packaging and labeling policies in the WHO South-East Asia Region: Evaluating alignment with WHO FCTC Article 11 Implementation Guidelines

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco packaging and labeling policies that align with Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its Implementation Guidelines are proven strategies to help reduce tobacco consumption. Many WHO South-East Asia Region (SEARO) countries have made significant strides to address high tobacco rates by adopting and implementing such policies. This analysis highlights regional trends and identifies specific policy areas requiring more focused advocacy efforts.

METHODS: Using the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' International Legal Consortium's Tobacco Control Laws database and the World Health Organization's Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2023, we reviewed tobacco packaging and labeling policies adopted in SEARO. We categorized policies into three sub-policy areas and assessed each against Article 11 of the WHO FCTC and its Guidelines for Implementation. A scoring system was created to rank country policies and identify areas of shared policy strengths and weaknesses.

RESULTS: Ten of the 11 countries in SEARO have adopted national-level laws that address tobacco packaging and labeling requirements. Nine have adopted pictorial health warning labels (HWLs) and seven require at least 70% coverage of the principal display areas. Timor-Leste has the largest pictorial HWLs in the region (92.5%). Only four countries require some display of qualitative constituents and emissions messages. Nine countries have banned misleading brand descriptors. Thailand and Myanmar have implemented standardized packaging, while such legislation is currently under consideration in Indonesia. Myanmar score the highest total possible points in the region, while Bhutan scored the lowest.

CONCLUSIONS: The majority of countries in SEARO have made substantial progress towards alignment with Article 11 of the WHO FCTC. Increased efforts should be made to adopt standardized packaging throughout the region, as well as continued collaboration between SEARO countries to leverage successes and overcome common challenges that prohibit advancement in tobacco warning and labeling policies.

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Association between substance use and NCDs among Indigenous women in India

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BACKGROUND: Indigenous populations, referred to as tribes, are among the most marginalized and impoverished groups in India. This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of substance use and its association with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among women of reproductive age.

METHODS: Cross-sectional data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 2019–2021, were analyzed. The survey employed a multi-stage sampling design, and 135239 women aged 15–49 years were included. Descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression were used to explore the relationships between socio-cultural factors, substance use, and NCDs.
RESULTS: Indigenous women exhibited a higher prevalence of substance use compared to non-Indigenous women. Women aged 35–49 years were 2.3 times more likely to engage in substance use (95% CI: 2.2–2.4). Substance use was more common among women in disrupted marital statuses, Christians, individuals from poorer wealth groups, urban residents, and those living in northeastern India. Additionally, the prevalence of hypertension, asthma, heart disease, and diabetes was higher among Indigenous women who consumed substances. Geographically, NCD prevalence was particularly high in eastern and central regions of India.
CONCLUSIONS: The strong correlation between high substance use and elevated NCD prevalence underscores the urgent need for targeted intervention strategies to address substance abuse and prevent NCDs in Indigenous women.
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Tobacco industry tactics undermining implementation of Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC in Southern Brazil

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BACKGROUND: Brazil ranks third globally in tobacco production and is the leading exporter of unprocessed tobacco leaves. Currently, over 95% of the country's tobacco leaf production is concentrated in three southern states. Among Brazil's commitments under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) are Articles 17 and 18, which focus on promoting alternative livelihoods for tobacco workers, protecting their health, and ensuring environmental protection. However, tobacco companies have adopted various strategies to maintain control over farmers and influence policymakers, obstructing the implementation of these commitments. This study examines how the tobacco industry shapes the socioeconomic dynamics of tobacco farming in southern Brazil.
METHODS: The study analyzes official tobacco production data, legislation, tobacco company websites, academic research, and media reports published between 2016 and 2024, with a focus on Brazil's southern states. It examines the Integrated Tobacco Production System, which creates a dependency of farmers on companies; the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives; and the industry's influence on judicial decisions, labor unions, and media narratives.
RESULTS: The findings reveal that tobacco companies maintain farmers' dependence through contractual obligations, technical assistance, and control over pricing. The industry's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, such as environmental education and anti-child labor initiatives, serve as greenwashing tactics to improve its public image. Additionally, the industry influences judicial outcomes, weakens labor unions, and strategically uses the media to shape public perception and promote favorable views of tobacco cultivation.
CONCLUSIONS: The tobacco industry's influence in southern Brazil can hinder the implementation of WHO FCTC Articles 17 and 18. To reduce farmers' dependence on tobacco, protect their health and the environment, and promote sustainable alternatives, policymakers must strengthen regulatory frameworks and safeguard public policies from industry interference.
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Strengthening tobacco control in Indonesia: Key advancements in government regulation no. 28 of 2024

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia faces persistently high smoking rates among adolescents and adults, compounded by some of the weakest tobacco control regulations globally. Government Regulation No. 109 of 2012 introduced foundational measures but proved insufficient to curb tobacco use effectively. The adoption of Government Regulation PP 28/2024, following years of amendment efforts, represents a major step forward as the implementing regulation for the omnibus health law (Law 17/2023). This study critically analyses the new regulation's advancements in tobacco control.
METHODS: Using the MPOWER framework, this study compares the provisions of the two regulations and evaluates newly introduced measures. The framework provides a structured approach to assess progress across six key tobacco control pillars: Monitoring, Protection, Offering help, Warning, Enforcing bans, and Raising taxes.
RESULTS: The regulation introduces several improvements:
• Monitoring: Periodic tobacco-use surveys and integration with the National Health Information System enhance compliance and cessation efforts.
• Protection: Ensures 100% smoke-free environments in indoor public places and workplaces, with stricter criteria for smoking areas.
• Offer Help: Expands cessation services, including telehealth and telemedicine options.
• Warnings: Increases pictorial health warnings on packaging from 40% to 50% and mandates standardized packaging.
• Enforce TAPS Bans: Prohibits advertising on social media, although gaps remain in broader enforcement.
• Raise Taxation: No new provisions are included. Additional measures include raising the legal purchasing age from 18 to 21, banning single cigarette sales, and restricting harmful additives in tobacco products.

CONCLUSIONS: Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024 marks a significant step in strengthening Indonesia's tobacco control efforts. While it addresses critical gaps in tobacco accessibility, cessation support, and advertising, its success hinges on effective implementation, robust monitoring, and translation into actionable regulations to sustain progress.

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Organisation and structure of tobacco and nicotine cessation services: the JA PreventNCD project

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BACKGROUND: Promoting tobacco and nicotine cessation and preventing initiation can lead to significant savings in healthcare and social costs. However, tobacco and nicotine cessation, along with guidance, support, and treatment pathways, are not always effectively integrated into healthcare practice. As a result, clients' access to tobacco and nicotine cessation support and services may be hindered. This study, conducted as part of the JA PreventNCD project, examined the system-level factors that contribute to the successful implementation of early identification and brief interventions related to tobacco and nicotine products in the wellbeing service counties in Finland.

METHODS: In 2024, data were collected by a structural web-based survey directed to key actors working in health care services related to tobacco and nicotine cessation from wellbeing service counties in Finland (n = 21). The survey measured six items: structures, knowledge management, strengthening of competence, communications, good practices, and people with special support needs. The data were analysed using quantitative methods.

RESULTS: A third (29%) of the counties had appointed a party responsible for coordinating tobacco and nicotine cessation efforts, and most (81%) documented clients' tobacco and nicotine product use. Just over half (62%) documented early identification and interventions. One third (33%) provided annual training on tobacco and nicotine cessation for healthcare professionals. Over half (67%) of the counties reported having appropriate materials, and three-quarters (71%) used digital cessation services. Pregnant women and lung disease patients (43%) were considered for special support.

CONCLUSIONS: Our study shows that the organisation of tobacco and nicotine cessation services and structures is uneven and still in its early stages in the wellbeing service counties, requiring more effective implementation. Further research is needed to explore the organisation and structure of tobacco and nicotine cessation services and care pathways at the organisational level.

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Fiscal and tobacco control consequences of the huge increase in cigarette excise taxes in France

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BACKGROUND: Among tobacco control policies, increasing taxation on tobacco products is undoubtedly the most effective strategy to reduce smoking initiation, prevalence, and consumption, particularly among younger populations, and increase smoking cessation. Price increases due to higher taxes also lead to higher tax revenues. In recent years, France has implemented substantial excise tax increases to curb smoking rates. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of these measures on tobacco consumption and fiscal revenues in France.

METHODS: We analyzed the impact of excise tax increases in France between 2017 and 2023. Price elasticity was calculated based on changes in the weighted average price (WAP) of cigarettes and corresponding variations in cigarette sales. We also examined trends in fiscal revenues from tobacco products during this period.

RESULTS: Between 2017 and 2023, the WAP of a cigarette pack rose by 60.8%, from €6.81 to €10.95. Cigarette sales in France fell by 34.2%, from 44.3 to 29.1 thousand tonnes, corresponding to a price elasticity of -0.56 over the six years. Annual fiscal revenues from total tobacco (excluding VAT) increased systematically by an average of €2.0 billion per year.

CONCLUSIONS: The French experience shows that substantial tobacco tax increases can reduce consumption and boost fiscal revenues. Claims that higher prices lead to tax evasion and lower revenues are unsupported by evidence, as cross-border shopping in France remains limited. Expanding such measures across the EU could bring both public health and fiscal benefits. Setting a minimum cigarette pack price at €10 across the EU could generate significant revenues to offset smoking-related health costs and advance tobacco control towards the EU tobacco endgame. Countries with low tobacco prices, like Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain, should adopt these policies to all , including extending taxes to e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.

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How do French MPs perceive tobacco actors and the arguments they use to oppose excise tax increases?

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BACKGROUND: The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recommends significant and regular excise tax increases on tobacco products. However, since the 2000s, French policymakers have rarely used this measure. Analyses of the French general press and MPs' documents, which revealed strong lobbying from the tobacco industry and tobacconists to oppose tax increases, may explain politicians' reluctance to use a highly effective policy. To assess this explanation, we explored how French Members of Parliament (MPs) perceive tobacco actors and the arguments against tax increases, spread by the tobacco sector, and arguments in favour, spread by health actors.

METHODS: In 2022, we conducted semi-structured interviews by telephone or face-to-face with 25 MPs (16 senators and 9 deputies), of varying political orientations and geographical origins (6 cross-border MPs). The interview guide probed their perceptions of tobacco actors and arguments regarding excise tax increases. We used thematic analysis to interpret the data, which we managed in NVivo 15.

RESULTS: Most MPs consider consultation with the tobacco sector on public health issues legitimate, particularly with tobacconists, who they perceive very positively. More MPs are in contact with tobacco sector actors than with health actors, and they overwhelmingly subscribe to the tobacco sector's anti-tax arguments, particularly those raising concerns about illicit trade and the alleged economic loss tobacconists will face. A minority of MPs support the arguments spread by public health actors.

CONCLUSIONS: This research is useful for understanding the influence of tobacco sector lobbying on the perceptions and representations of decision-makers. It highlights the need for public health actors to develop advocacy aimed at strengthening the application of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and to better inform decision-makers about the overall benefits of tax increases.

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The Colombian National Cancer Institute targets tobacco industry interference

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: It is unusual in the Latin American region to observe the heath sector actively developing tools to counteract tobacco industry interference. INC is a government agency that provides technical advice on cancer policy, including tobacco control measures. In their strategic planning processes they acknowledge said interference as a structural obstacle to advance in the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and to reach Cancer policy goals. Unfortunately, most government staff involved in FCTC implementation have difficulties understanding the issues related to interference, and when they do, feel helpless in terms on appropriate ways to proceed. In addition, personnel in charge of tobacco control implementation has a high turnover rate.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Fundación Anáas was commissioned by INC to develop a toolkit that standardizes an inter-sector intervention to increase public servants capacity in two areas: a) increased commitment to prevent interference by understanding its nature of interference, and b) incorporating procedures inside their own institutions using transparency and anti-corruption best practices that improve compliance with article 5.3 guidelines. The toolkit is described in a document with an introduction to Article 5.3 guidelines and training materials, such as short case studies, videos, and presentations, links to global resources to monitor interference or to learn how to comply with FCTC mandates. It was essential to gather all these materials and provide clear instructions on how to implement workshops in order to replicate efficiently and accurately the intervention.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: INC implemented the first four-hour workshop applying the toolkit on May 2024, and a second one was organized by the Ministry of Health in September. Altogether 26 participants of the tobacco control inter-sector group received training. Next steps involve training of health authorities at the subnational level.

CONCLUSIONS: Increasing capacity at local level to implement Article 5.3 guidelines requires adaptations to institutional contexts and low-cost, replicable interventions.

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Big tobacco, tiny targets - study highlighting tobacco advertisements, product displays, sales and promotions around educational institutions in India

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: As per Section 6 of the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (COTPA), there is a ban on the sale of tobacco to and by minors and sale of tobacco products is prohibited in an area within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institutions and mandatory signage in this regard should be displayed prominently near the main gate and on the boundary wall of the school/institute. Under COTPA Rules, tobacco advertising, promotion and product display is banned at the point of sale.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Voluntary Health Association of India & Consumer Voice conducted a Tiny Targets study across India - 243 schools, 487 points of sale, and 20 cities across 6 states of India to assess COTPA compliance near educational institutions and to expose tobacco industry tactics which target children.

Field investigators were trained and equipped with a mobile reporting form to document instances of tobacco companies advertising, selling, displaying, or incentivizing the sale of tobacco products within a 100-meter radius on their smart phones.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: 225 points of sale were selling tobacco products out of the 487 surveyed around schools. The most common and popular types of points of sale in these areas were street vendors (56.6%), followed by mobile vendors (17.5%) and small grocery stores (13.7%). Tobacco products are displayed in ways that are appealing to children and youth.

CONCLUSIONS: This has helped civil society to effectively strategize and mount a stringent campaign on tobacco control across the country, garner political support from select leaders, sensitize the media and seek general public support for compliance & implementation of Section 6 of COTPA.

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The violation of the bans on tobacco advertising and promotion at points of sale in Vietnam in 2024

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BACKGROUND: Vietnam enacted the Law on Tobacco Control in 2013, which bans tobacco advertising and promotion (TAP) activities. However, enforcement of these bans at points of sale (POS) remains weak, with high rates of violations. Since 2017, no nationwide studies have evaluated the implementation of TAP bans, leaving a critical gap in scientific evidence for policymakers. This study aimed to (i) describe the violations of TAP bans at POS, (ii) assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of sellers at POS regarding these bans, and (iii) identify challenges in enforcing TAP bans in Vietnam.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted at 2,414 tobacco POS across 8 provinces in Vietnam in 2024. The data was collected by using an observational checklist and KAP questionnaires administered to POS sellers. In-depth interviews with government officials and provincial inspectors were also conducted to identify challenges in enforcing the ban.

RESULTS: The study revealed that violations of TAP bans were observed in 23.1% of POS for advertising and 4.9% for promotion. Additionally, 40.9% of POS violated display regulations by showcasing more than one pack, carton, or bottle of a tobacco brand. Only 59.6% of POS sellers were aware of the Law on Tobacco Control, and just 38.6% knew about the TAP bans. Key challenges to enforcing the TAP bans included low awareness among POS owners and sellers, inadequate communication efforts, limited monitoring, and poor inter-agency coordination.

CONCLUSIONS: Violations of TAP bans and display regulations at POS are prevalent in Vietnam, driven partly by low awareness and weak enforcement. To address these issues, comprehensive communication strategies are needed to educate POS owners and sellers about TAP bans. Enhanced monitoring and stricter enforcement mechanisms are essential to ensure compliance.

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Current regulations on Digital Technology: Their effectiveness and challenges in tobacco control

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BACKGROUND: With 692 million digital technology users in India, the paper is an attempt to explore the current regulations, impact and challenges. COTPA bans TAPS along with mandating anti-tobacco health spots, CTNR 1994 prohibits all advertising and Advertising Standard Council bans all surroragte advertisement of tobacco products. Facebook, Whatsapp, Instragram prohibit listing of tobacco products for selling and buying and Google and IOS prohibit advertisement for tobacco and e-cigarettes in their search engine.

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: With 692 million digital technology users in India, it has transformed how people communicate, learn, and work. COTPA, 2003 prohibits all forms of tobacco advertisement promotion and sponsorship in line with WHO FCTC. CTNR 1994 prohibit direct and indirect advertising and Advertising Standard Council of India bans surrogate advertisement of tobacco products. Through an amendment in COTPA, 2003 it is made compulsory for every publisher of online curated contents displaying tobacco products to display anti-tobacco health spots, warning and audio-visual disclaimer. Platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instragram prohibit listing of tobacco products for selling and buying. Google and IOS prohibit ads for tobacco and e-cigarettes in its search engine

METHODS: A systematic desk review of existing literature, policy documents, and government reports was conducted to examine the current regulatory framework. Secondary data from public health surveys, government databases, and icredible websites analyzed.

RESULTS: Despite the presence of marketing bans, tobacco companies continue to exploit social media and e-commerce platforms to target younger audiences through indirect advertising, influencer marketing, and the promotion of 'lifestyle' content. The rapid evolution of digital technologies, including the rise of social media apps and streaming services, further complicates regulatory efforts. Delivery platforms like Dunzo, Blinkit and Swiggy have played around the law and are selling tobacco products. In August 2018, the New York Times investigated Big Tobacco's social media and Instagram influences and found 123 hashtags associated with companies' tobacco products, which had been viewed a staggering 25 billion times.

CONCLUSIONS: The current regulations are not fully effective due to enforcement gaps, technological advancements, and the creative tactics used by tobacco companies to circumvent the law. There is a need of development of more specific guidelines for digital

marketing, implementation of stronger monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, along with fresh guidelines for Influencer Advertising in Digital Media along with legislation to regulate Artificial Intelligence advancement. Additionally, continuous adaptation of regulations to keep pace with emerging digital trends is essential to reducing the influence of tobacco marketing on young people and achieving better tobacco control outcomes.

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Strategies and challenges in young leaders-driven tobacco control programme: Insights from a rural outreach programme of Salaam Mumbai Foundation

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Salaam Mumbai Foundation's rural outreach program, launched in 2007, uses a 'train the trainer' model to engage rural influencers such as teachers, health workers, and community leaders in tobacco control. Trained youth leaders, equipped with life skills and tobacco control knowledge, lead initiatives through platforms like 'Balpanchayat,' where they share experiences with policymakers. A survey was conducted to document the effective strategies and challenges in tobacco control.

The study aimed to explore the experiences and perspectives of young leaders with respect to strategies employed and challenges faced in conducting tobacco control activities among peers, families, communities, local neighbourhoods and tobacco vendors

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A structured questionnaire was administered to 262 trained youth leaders to gather data on the various strategies used and challenges in tobacco control initiatives for various stakeholders.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Key tobacco control strategies included educational sessions (68%), counselling (44%), and peer support groups (19%). Major challenges faced by youth leaders included peer and family resistance (62%), gender (27%), and lack of trained professionals (33%). Social influences like peer pressure (51%), media glamorization (43%), and stress relief (68%) were cited as key drivers for tobacco use. However, 60% of leaders emphasized strong community support, awareness of health risks, and personal willpower in keeping individuals tobacco-free. Additionally, 69% of leaders identified tobacco vendors near schools, and 93% successfully convinced at least one vendor to stop selling tobacco. Challenges in convincing vendors included resistance, lack of awareness, and profit motives, yet 40% of approached vendors were willing to cease tobacco sales.

CONCLUSIONS: The research underscores the vital role of young leaders in tobacco cessation efforts, offering insights into effective strategies and the challenges they face in promoting tobacco-free behavior in various stakeholders

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Revisiting the legislative landscape of tobacco control laws of Bangladesh: Quest for a WHO FCTC compliant legislation

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BACKGROUND: Bangladesh being one of the founding signatory parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) enacted the Smoking and Usage of Tobacco Products (Control) Act (SUTPA) in 2005 which was amended in 2013. The Act along with its implementing Rules of 2015 proscribes smoking in public places, selling of tobacco products to minors, most direct and indirect advertising of tobacco and tobacco use. Moreover, it legislates for the mandatory display of graphical health warning (GHW) on tobacco packs. Since 2013 Bangladesh demonstrated no progress in tackling tobacco epidemic through the amendment of the aforementioned legislation and make it more compliant with the WHO FCTC and best global practices. Given the contemporary landscape this paper aims to dissect the legislative regime of the SUTPA, 2005, corresponding Rules, 2015, decipher the gaps and recommend necessary reforms.

METHODS: Following qualitative research methodology this study has relied on secondary sources like tobacco control laws of Bangladesh, WHO FCTC and its guidelines, tobacco control laws of other countries, parliamentary reports and judicial decisions, expert consultation, content analysis etc.

RESULTS: This paper finds that the tobacco control laws of Bangladesh suffer from severe lacunae namely allowing of Designated Smoking areas (DSAs), advertisement by way of point-of-sale displays (PoSD), corporate social responsibilities (CSR) by tobacco companies, the sale of single sticks of cigarettes and bidis (SSSCB), absence of provisions to combat novel tobacco and nicotine products (NTNP) and presence of 50% GHW.

CONCLUSIONS: This study argues and recommends to prohibit DSW, CSR, SSSCB, advertisement by PoSD, ban NTNP, increase the size of GHW to 90% and these steps will essentially ensure more compliance of the tobacco control regime of Bangladesh with the WHO FCTC, represent a global standard and protect public health more efficaciously.

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Industry transformers: 'Ryze' of the nicotine beasts in India

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BACKGROUND: In India, any nicotine product intended to be used as a tobacco cessation aid, is listed as a drug (Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and Rules) and Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs) are included in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) since 2022. Presently, 2mg formulation of nicotine gums/ lozenges

are exempted from the provision of sale license and being sold as Over The Counter (OTC), however, this is under consideration by the Government of India (GoI). Globally, a glaring spurt has been observed among Transnational tobacco companies (TTCs), to expand the scope of newer nicotine products as NRTs.

METHODS: During December 2024, an online investigation was carried out to look for industry (direct and indirect) manufactured NRTs (gums, lozenges, patches etc.), selling over the top seven Internet-based Electronic Vendors (IEVs) delivering in India. The content analysis was done following website characterization and data extraction into types of products, pricing, flavours and formulations.

RESULTS: Of the searched NRTs, a total of four brands emerged as tobacco industry products. PMI's hotsellers were Indian flavorised nicotine gums: Ryze (2mg and 4mg), STOP-NIC (2mg) and Nicobyt (2 mg), while ITC Limited's Nicosure (2mg and 4mg) was being sold as both gums and lozenges. It was interesting to find that Fertin India Pvt Ltd., a subsidiary of Fertin Pharma is Philip Morris International Inc. (PMI's) wholly owned subsidy.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco industry is positioning itself as a sustainable giant- PMI's 'Smoke-Free future' is one such well-thought propaganda. Such evidence is a gentle reminder that the industry is already targeting the pharmaceutical market, to advance its tobacco and nicotine addiction business in the country. Therefore, the tobacco control community and advocates should remain watchful against the industry's playbook and must align the existing regulatory frameworks in the larger interest of public health.

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The effectiveness of VDO and TikTok on perceived severity and attitude toward e-cigarettes among Naval rating students, Thailand

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BACKGROUND: Electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) use has recently risen to rate across the country. A significant increase in e-cigarette use by adolescents has been observed over the last decade.

METHODS: This study used a quasi-experimental design; a two-group pretest-posttest group design. The objectives of this study were to examine the perceived severity and attitude toward E-cigarettes among Naval-rating students after receiving VDO and TikTok.

The sample of 60 Naval-rating students in 2023 was simple random sampling. The subjects were assigned to a Video group and a TikTok group equally. The subjects were matched pair before being assigned to the group. The data collection tools comprised the perceived severity questionnaire and the attitude toward the e-cigarette questionnaire. The intervention were the VDO and TikTok for smoking cessation. Data collection was performed at pre-test, the samples were received only VDO or TikTok for each group. post-test was followed. Percentage, frequency, mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, and Pair t-test were employed for data analyses.

RESULTS: 1. Perceived severity at post-test was greater than pre-test in the VDO group ($\bar{x}$= 3.50, SD .42; $\bar{x}$=4.01, SD .59, p<0.001).

2. Attitude toward E-cigarettes at post-test was greater than pre-test in the VDO group ($\bar{x}$=3.40, SD .80; $\bar{x}$=3.93, SD 1.09 (p<0.001).

3. Perceived severity at post-test was greater than pre-test in the TikTok group ($\bar{x}$=3.55, SD .43; $\bar{x}$=3.99, SD .49 (p<0.001).

4. Attitude toward E-cigarettes at post-test was greater than pre-test in the TikTok group ($\bar{x}$=3.68, SD .55; $\bar{x}$=4.20, SD .59 (p<0.001).

5. Perceived severity and Attitude toward E-cigarettes between the two groups were not significant. (p = .05).

CONCLUSIONS: Online media both VDO and TikTok affect the perceived severity and attitude of e-cigarettes among youth. Online media should be used among teenagers to prevent e-cigarettes.

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Tobacco marketing in Brazil: Social media as a challenge to regulatory policies

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BACKGROUND: This study aimed to understand how tobacco marketing persists on social media platforms in Brazil despite regulatory bans. With the 2009 prohibition of

electronic cigarette advertising, brands and retailers have adapted their strategies, leveraging platforms like Instagram to reach younger audiences subtly.

METHODS: Data was collected from January 1 - December 31, 2023, on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Using natural language processing (NLP) and media analytics tool FanPage Karma, conversations about tobacco and electronic cigarettes were tracked and categorized. Social network analysis was used to identify the sentiment of subgroups based on graph theory, which is a branch of mathematics that studies the properties and relationships between objects represented as graphs. In a graph, the objects are called nodes (or vertices), and the connections between them are called edges (or links).

RESULTS: Over 3.4 million mentions were tracked, with electronic cigarettes comprising 14% of the total. Instagram was the primary channel for indirect promotion, dominated by third-party retailers/stores using humor and flavor-focused narratives to appeal to youth. Public sentiment remained predominantly negative, with health concerns at the forefront. The strategic use of influencers by stores/retailers, and recycling accounts to evade

enforcement was observed.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite the regulatory ban, social media allows for persistent tobacco promotion, reshaping perceptions and normative behavior toward smoking and electronic cigarette use. Strengthening monitoring and enforcing penalties for indirect promotions are critical to upholding public health policies.

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Smoking habits and attitudes toward Ccessation among primary-care physicians in Arab communities in Israel: Engagement in smoking cessation services for patients

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BACKGROUND: Physicians play a critical role in smoking cessation (CS) of their patients. Providing a brief advice by physicians had been associated with a 1–3% increase in quit rates.

Objectives: The current study aims to examine the association between attitudes toward SC and smoking habits among physicians in PCC in Arab communities, and examine the extent of physicians' engagement in SC practices among their patients according to the 5As (i.e., Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, Arrange).

METHODS: An online survey was conducted between 2020 and 2022 and included 282 physicians in PCC in Arab communities across three districts of a large Health Services Fund. Multivariate analyses were performed to assess smoking status, attitudes, and engagement in providing SC services.

RESULTS: Physicians who were more actively involved in (SC) reported higher supportive attitudes than those who were less involved. Compared to current smokers, former-smoker physicians, and those who never-smoked were more likely to engage in smoking cessation (OR=3.93, 90% CI=1.25–12.40; OR=5.14, 90% CI=1.87–14.08). Never-smoked physicians were more likely to Ask patients about their smoking status (OR=4.54, 90% CI=1.19–17.28) and to offer SC advice (OR=7.76, 90% CI=1.97–30.46) compared to current smokers. Former-smoker's physicians were more likely to offer cessation counseling (OR=4.67, 90% CI=1.73–12.66). Additionally, never-smoked physicians were more likely to Assess cessation (OR=4.63, 90% CI=1.50–14.25) and to assist patients in quitting (OR=5.15, 90% CI=1.83–14.51).

CONCLUSIONS: Physicians' smoking status significantly influence their attitudes and SC practices. Never-smokers and former-smokers are more likely to Ask, advise, and assist with cessation. These results underscore the need for dedicated SC workshops targeting PCC physicians. This can enhance engagement in SC services and ultimately improve cessation among patients.

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Strengthening the tobacco control framework of Bangladesh: developing and approving the organogram of the National Tobacco Control Cell (NTCC)

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The National Tobacco Control Cell (NTCC), established in 2007 under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), has been a central body for implementing tobacco control laws in Bangladesh. However, the absence of a formalized organogram and reliance on temporary project-based funding created significant operational and sustainability challenges. Although the legal framework for NTCC's structure was outlined in the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act, 2005 (amended in 2013), delays in approving the organogram and securing revenue-funded positions hindered the cell's ability to expand its role.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Efforts to develop NTCC's organogram officially began in 2015 with extensive stakeholder consultation. Draft rules were prepared in line with Section 15A of the amended Act, detailing NTCC's structure, powers, and functions. Multiple inter-ministerial meetings led to proposals for creating permanent and temporary posts under the revenue sector, aligned with national priorities. In 2024, significant progress was made as the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Public Administration approved a revised organogram that included the creation of 5 permanent cadre posts, such as Director General, Directors, and Deputy Directors, and 11 temporary posts to ensure operational sustainability.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The approval of the organogram was a key milestone in NTCC's institutionalization, establishing a robust administrative framework for independent and effective operations within the government. It enhanced NTCC's capacity to coordinate nationwide activities, train enforcement officers, and monitor compliance with tobacco control laws, reinforcing its mandate to achieve a tobacco-free Bangladesh.

CONCLUSIONS: Formalizing NTCC's organogram is a significant step toward institutional stability and sustainability. By addressing long-standing structural challenges, the approved organogram ensures the continuity of tobacco control efforts and aligns NTCC with national public health priorities. Continued support from the government and stakeholders is crucial for the full implementation of the organogram and expand NTCC's impact.

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A scoping review of policies to control tobacco smoking in Maharashtra, India

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BACKGROUND: India is a leader in public health initiatives, particularly in tobacco control. Significant progress has been made in reducing tobacco use nationwide through the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA, 2003). However, at the subnational level, challenges persist. Maharashtra, a major tobacco producer and a state where various types of tobacco are consumed, faces significant implementation and enforcement issues, especially in rural areas.

METHODS: This scoping review examined state and national level policies for controlling tobacco smoking in Maharashtra and India as part of a multi-country initiative on identifying policy priorities for tobacco control and improving air quality. Studies published in English since 2003 were included through a search of electronic databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Grey literature was consulted through online institutional sources. Qualitative and quantitative studies, analyses and reports on tobacco control policies from India and Maharashtra were included. Data were extracted using a standardized template and analyzed thematically. Findings will be discussed with state-level stakeholders, highlighting policy implementation, barriers, facilitators, and priorities.

RESULTS: The review included 25 studies. Barriers for policy implementation in the state include tobacco industry interference and inadequate enforcement in rural regions. Challenges such as non-uniform adherence to tobacco-free school policies, loose cigarette sales, and gaps in cessation services were also noted.

Measures like the Tobacco-Free Village program and enforcement of COTPA regulations in urban areas indicate progress and offer lessons for scaling up.

CONCLUSIONS: The literature presents recommendations such as an AI-powered compliance monitoring platform to detect tobacco regulation violations and implementing incentive-based schemes (tax breaks or microloans) to encourage vendors to transition away from tobacco sales. Findings from this review will be used for an in-person stakeholder workshop and survey on identifying priorities for advancing tobacco control in Maharashtra.

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Decentralising smoking cessation services to District Health Centers in Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains one of the leading preventable causes of morbidity and mortality globally. In Vietnam, 38.9% of adult males smoke, and 49.5% of smokers have planned to quit smoking in the future. However, smoking cessation services in Viet Nam remain limited and mainly at central level. This intervention aims to increase accessibility for patients and integrate smoking cessation services into primary healthcare delivery. It targeted adult smokers, particularly those accessing healthcare services, and operated across the district of Binh Son, including 22 commune health stations, to ensure wide coverage and accessibility.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The intervention model employed a multi-tiered approach involving healthcare providers, health collaborators, patients, and the community. All healthcare staff received training on tobacco harm prevention and brief advice techniques. A selected group of staff attended advanced training on smoking cessation treatment and received on-the-job training from central-level experts.

Every patient identified as a smoker was offered brief counseling. Those requiring further support were referred to a Smoking Cessation Counseling Room for in-depth guidance, treatment planning, and ongoing follow-up over 12 months. This process was also applied in 22 commune health stations, integrating smoking cessation efforts with campaigns on non-communicable diseases.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: From 2023 to 2024, 1010 patients received brief counseling, and 242 patients received intensive advice. Among them, 168 individuals successfully quit smoking after 12 months, while 187 individuals quit smoking after 6 months.

CONCLUSIONS: The smoking cessation intervention model at Bình Sơn District Health Center highlights the feasibility of integrating tobacco control into district-level healthcare systems. This model provides valuable insights for scaling up smoking cessation programs in similar rural and resource-limited settings. However, challenges such as limited public engagement and the unavailability of nicotine replacement therapies highlight areas for improvement. Addressing these barriers will be essential for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of future programs.

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Experimental study on the development and design of tobacco pictorial health warnings using eye movement tracking

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BACKGROUND: Since 2016, South Korea has required that 50% of cigarette packs display pictorial health warning images and messages, with updates required every 24 months. This regulation applies to all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs). To increase public awareness of the risks associated with tobacco use and to counteract marketing strategies that use tobacco package design, efforts have focused on expanding pictorial health warnings on packaging.

METHODS: This study investigates the optimal design elements, including size, placement, and color, for pictorial health warnings through an eye-tracking experiment. The study sample consisted of 40 participants, including

30 adults and 10 adolescents, selected to account for smoking status, gender, and age distribution. A total of 130 cigarette pack warning designs were developed as target stimuli, supplemented by 254 filler images to obscure the purpose of the study. Experimental conditions varied in the placement and size of the warnings, and participants' average fixation times on the warning areas were recorded. Stimuli were presented randomly across trials, and participants were asked to identify the cigarette pack design that most discouraged smoking during specific sessions.

RESULTS: Key findings indicate that warning effectiveness is maximized when warnings cover 90% of the cigarette package when pictorial health warning images and text overlap, and when the text background is red or black.

CONCLUSIONS: The study suggests that overlapping pictorial warnings and text and expanding the area covered by warnings through legislative changes could improve the effectiveness of pictorial health warnings. In addition, the adoption of standardized packaging policies is needed to complement these measures and strengthen tobacco control efforts.

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Observation study at the 30 railway stations in Bangladesh manifested the success and challenges of tobacco control law implementation

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco control law banned: smoking in public places, tobacco advertisement and selling to and by minor (underage of 18) and introduced graphical health warnings. The Ministry of Railways (MoR) is working to implement this law to make rail transport smoke-free to protect 100 million passengers from exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS).

METHODS: MoR conducted quantitative study in 30 large railway stations in Bangladesh. Using structured observation checklists, the study categorizes data across three key sections: station features, smoke-free law compliance, and tobacco point-of sale (POS) compliance. The trained volunteers observed the selected railway stations and documented the findings.

RESULTS: The study found an advancement of TC law implementation in the railway stations, as well as the gaps in existing laws. 'No Smoking' signs were visible in 50% rail stations. Active smoking was detected on platforms of all stations and 90.27% of smoking occurrences were also found on platforms. Cigarette butts were evident across platforms and parking spaces. Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use was recorded on 86% platforms. Selling tobacco products in tea-stalls were founded in 80% station premises and tobacco promotion observed at 23% stations, manifested through stickers, brochures, and company emblems.

Compliance exhibited considerable variation, with stations such as Rajshahi demonstrating superior signage, while others were deficient.

Weaknesses of existing law were also identified that platforms and parking areas are not included as public places, SLT use is not banned, and tobacco selling shops are not banned in smokefree public places.

CONCLUSIONS: MoR is working to ensure full compliance of TC law following the recommendations from this study. That includes increasing public awareness, installing 'No Smoking' signage, removing all POS from all railway premises, and training for railway personnel to observe law implementation. MoR also recommended to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for TC law amendment to address the weaknesses.

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Unlocking efficiency through the power of digitization in monitoring process

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Salaam Mumbai Foundation (SMF) works on tobacco control throughout the state of Maharashtra & 7 other states in India. Monitoring is an issue, especially reaching out to far-off locations is a concern when trying to reach out to remote rural areas. Physical travel to remote locations for school monitoring to check hard copies of their Tobacco-Free School files, had cost associated with it. To address this issue, SMF developed a data system that involves an individual or school entering their unique UDISE code & uploading their TFS status online. This App was launched by SMF on google play store.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: SMF sensitized all partners, teachers & school-level stakeholders about the application through training workshops. Education & health authorities supported this cause, encouraged schools to upload a high number of relevant files online along with photos & evidence. Furthermore, the Admin panel is handled by SMF, who has record of log of activities of user accessing the app. SMF can accept and reject the individual files as per the 9 criterion requirements by Central Government of India

RESULTS AND IMPACT: SMF has received the database of more than 1,10,000 schools, 52000 entries from schools across Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh etc has been already made. Out of this around more than 19208 schools have declared as tobacco free through this digital app as per the nine criteria developed by Central Government of India.

Reports are accessible to the officials from Health and Education department for strategizing their districts and states progress as per the same.

CONCLUSIONS: Introduction of the online monitoring

tool has saved considerable efforts and resources in paperwork. travel time, and simplified district-wise reporting system, where at one click one can find the Tobacco-Free-School status of any district in Maharashtra and other states who have registered their data.

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Enhancing tobacco control efforts with the 'Tobacco Monitor' App and AI integration

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The 'Tobacco Monitor' app, developed by Mary Anne Charity Trust, empowers individuals, professional associations, and organizations across India to fight tobacco use. Users report tobacco violations, routed to authorities under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA, 2003). The app provides updates on tobacco control efforts. However, manual processes for reporting and tracking violations present challenges in scalability, response time, and data accuracy.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The app has been successfully implemented in Assam, Jammu Kashmir, Tripura, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar. Implementation is underway in Odisha, with plans to expand to other states. AI will address language barriers by providing real-time translation and support, ensuring effective reporting from diverse linguistic backgrounds. AI will also adhere to state-specific acts by automatically approving or rejecting complaints based on each state's regulations, streamlining the process and ensuring compliance with local laws. AI-driven analytics will identify patterns and trends in tobacco violations, enabling targeted and efficient interventions.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Integrating AI into the 'Tobacco Monitor' app is expected to enhance its functionality. Automating violation detection and improving data analysis will provide accurate and timely responses to reported violations. Personalized alerts and recommendations will increase public engagement and compliance, leading to faster response times, more targeted interventions, and a stronger impact on tobacco control efforts across India.

CONCLUSIONS: Incorporating AI into the 'Tobacco Monitor' app holds significant promise for advancing tobacco control efforts in India. By leveraging AI technology, the app can overcome current implementation challenges and achieve greater scalability, efficiency, and user engagement. This will support the ongoing efforts of individuals and organizations dedicated to reducing tobacco use and its associated health risks, aligning with the goals of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

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Assessing industry compliance to the Graphic Health Warnings Law in the Philippines: Challenges in multi-sectoral tobacco governance

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BACKGROUND: The Philippines implemented Republic Act 10643, or the Graphic Health Warnings Law, in accordance with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Article 11 to warn about the harms of tobacco use. The Graphic Health Warnings Law requires all tobacco products in the Philippines to bear graphic health warnings on their packaging. This study aims to assess tobacco industry compliance with the requirements of the Graphic Health Warnings Law and identify challenges of multi-sectoral tobacco governance in the Philippines.

METHODS: We adapted the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System protocol to collect a sample of unique tobacco products across the country. We coded and assessed packs using both the Codebook from the protocol and the Department of Health's Graphic Health Warnings Law checklist.

RESULTS: We collected 109 unique tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, moist snuff, and rolling tobacco, with only six packs (5.5%) being fully compliant with the Graphic Health Warnings Law. Seven packs did not have graphic health warnings on any display surface, and four only had stickers for graphic health warnings.

CONCLUSIONS: There is low compliance with the Graphic Health Warnings Law in the Philippines. Policymakers and enforcement agencies need to improve enforcement and compliance monitoring. Nevertheless, there are difficulties in implementing and interpreting the law. Critical policy amendments and moving towards plain packaging could mitigate these difficulties. Policymakers need to consider the conflict of interest of the tobacco industry as a part of the Philippines' multi-sectoral tobacco governance model.

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Profiling tobacco industry allies in entertainment industry: Investigative research findings from Sri Lanka

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BACKGROUND: Sri Lanka has a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertisements and promotions from 2006. However, direct and indirect promotion happens throughout the media platforms. This study aimed to profile the individuals in entertainment industry engaged in these acts to identify common attributes to develop effective control measures.

METHODS: Key informant interviews and review of media content identified individuals to be profiled. The operational definition used was 'individual linked to entertainment industry advertising tobacco as defined in

the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act'.

RESULTS: Thirty-four profiles emerged in television, cinema, social media and music video categories. Tobacco promotion behavior was in two main themes, smoking-on-screen and directors/producers/scriptwriters. The content themes included product and brand promotion, normalization and glamorization of smoking and promotion of smoking among women. Clustering of the same set of individuals was conspicuous across the entertainment platforms.

Of the 23 individuals who smoked on screen, 17 were men and six were women. A few claimed not to smoke off-screen, while majority portrayed smoking in their social media profiles. Two had a history of positive engagement in tobacco control. All had received awards of popularity or talent. Age ranged between 25 to 65 years. The majority engaged in active politics, clustering in a single political camp.

Of the 11 directors/producers/script writers, 10 were men and the only female producer belonged to a television channel. The majority were tobacco users themselves. Most had their own creative or public relations agencies or were employed in those. Two of those agencies mentioned Ceylon Tobacco Company (the BAT subsidiary) as a client. None declared of receiving any sponsorship from tobacco industry. Three were strong political activists belonging to two political camps.

CONCLUSIONS: Personal use and affiliation to certain political and industrial clusters potentially make individuals in the entertainment industry vulnerable to violate tobacco advertising laws.

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Addressing tobacco as a determinant of nutrition via youth-led community actions – example from nationwide community project in Sri Lanka

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Sri Lankan households struggled to find money to buy food in the economic crisis and child under-nutrition emerged as a challenge. Engaging youth in tobacco control remains a challenge and we tried to find a combined solution.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The intervention aimed to mobilise youth to initiate collective community actions to improve nutrition in their communities. Two teams were recruited from each district of Sri Lanka, including 100 youths as 50 teams. They were empowered via three workshops and continuous inputs via virtual platforms to identify determinants of nutrition and address them through community empowerment processes. The process evaluation was conducted following nine months of community interventions. A mixed-method approach was used to collect data related to the process teams follow, reach, content, actions and perceived outcomes of the community processes. Data collection methods included interviews with youth teams and community participants, analysis of determinant assessment charts and field activity logs, and discussions conducted during field visits with individuals, families and community groups. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data, and qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: At the time of the evaluation, 36 community processes sustained reaching approximately 55000 people via 171 community settings. Tobacco use was identified by the communities as a key determinant of nutrition in 32 out of 36 processes. Youth led discussions empowered communities to take collective actions, such as monitoring household expenses related to tobacco and redirecting toward purchasing nutritious food. Some children's and youth clubs engaged in educating their peers, monitoring tobacco advertisement and promotion via media, and advocating media channels against those violations. All community groups reported reduced tobacco use and reallocation of expenses for nutrition.

CONCLUSIONS: Youth led community empowerment initiatives can be effectively used for tobacco control by targeting it as a determinant of child nutrition.

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Aligning advocacy with action: How civil societies enhance MPOWER policy implementation for tobacco control success

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BACKGROUND: Civil Societies are important partners in tobacco control, especially under the WHO MPOWER framework. Though they are very important players, there is very little work on their role, challenges, and best practices, especially in low- and middle-income countries such as India. This study aims to understand how Civil Societies supplement MPOWER policy implementation, what barriers exist, and provides actionable recommendations on how to integrate Civil Societies' efforts into the NTCP.

METHODS: The current study is a qualitative study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 representatives of NGOs and key tobacco control stakeholders across 15 Indian states and Union Territories. Participants were selected purposively in order to represent diverse views and region-specific inputs. The contribution of NGOs in MPOWER components, the obstacles they face, and the innovative practices used are explored. A thematic analysis was conducted of the verbatim transcript using Atlas.ti and the Socio-Ecological Model with a codebook developed for finding key themes.

RESULTS: Civil societies contribute considerably to all MPOWER components, such as advocacy, grassroots data collection, and community-based cessation services. Examples of best practices include digital advocacies

that precisely target specific demographics, multiple stakeholders for laws enforcement, and local initiatives like street plays and community dialogues. Challenges faced were funding is inadequate, resources are limited, laws are weakly enforced, and tobacco corporations find ways to intervene using any legal loopholes, filing complaints, or spreading misinformation. The proposed solutions include increased government cooperation, capacity-building programs, sustainable funding, and strong advocacy to counter industry interference.

CONCLUSIONS: Civil Societies play a crucial role in filling gaps in MPOWER policy implementation by engaging communities, pushing reforms, and supporting cessation efforts. Stronger partnerships, sustainable resources, and industry interference-affecting targeted strategies all are key to maximize the impact. The study provides action-based insights that systematically integrate Civil Societies into national tobacco control programs.

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Strengthening National Tobacco Control Programme in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India, through collaboration and coordination

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Government of India launched National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in 2007-2008 to create awareness about harmful effects of tobacco, enforcement of Cigarette and other Tobacco Product Act (COTPA) and reduce tobacco consumption.

The State Tobacco Control Cell (STCC) is responsible for overall planning, implementation, reporting and monitoring of activities and achievement of tangible targets under the State Programme.

Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) worked in close association with STCC to remove bottlenecks faced, namely -Poor review and reporting mechanism

Low priority of Tobacco Control (TC).

Lack of COTPA awareness amongst bureaucrats of key departments Inactive multi sectoral enforcement mechanism

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Training of stakeholders and district staff of NTCP.

Comprehensive order from Principal Secretary- Home for enforcement, reporting and review of COTPA Training of Master Trainers of Police on COTPA Module included in Police trainings with STCC. Developing sustainable reporting mechanisms for tobacco free educational institutions.

Mass media strategy designed for National Health Mission for NTCP. IEC developed by VHAI for NTCP of Uttar Pradesh

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Recognition of VHAI as Technical Partner and letter of appreciation from Director Health, Govt. of UP for strengthening NTCP via valuable technical contribution.

Sensitization of policy makers and bureaucrats of key departments like Education, Police, Food & Drugs Administration & Health and subsequently order was issued for COTPA compliance and reporting.

Trained Nodal Officer and staff of District Tobacco Control Cell of 45 Districts in coordination with STCC.

15 districts declared tobacco free health facilities, COTPA compliance in educational institutions, police stations, transport, courts & other public places and making tobacco free in coordination with STCC and concerned departments with reference to the orders issued by the department concerned.

CONCLUSIONS: Providing technical assistance to strengthen NTCP and address gap areas of STCC has improved effectiveness of TC initiatives of key departments and made it sustainable.

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A month of action: India's leading medical institutions unite for tobacco control on WNTD 2024

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry continues to target children and adolescents through aggressive marketing strategies, contributing to rising tobacco use in the Indian subcontinent. Despite existing regulations, the industry's influence remains pervasive, undermining efforts to protect young people from addiction. This persistent challenge is exacerbated by the normalization of tobacco use in society and the inadequacy of current preventive measures. Strengthening policies and collective action is crucial to shield children from the harmful effects of tobacco industry interference.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC) at PGIMER Chandigarh spearheaded key initiatives, including educational campaigns, policy advocacy, community outreach, research projects, slogan competitions, counseling sessions, and radio talks. This effort was led by the AIIMS Consortium for Tobacco Control and the Consortium for Medical Colleges for a Tobacco-Free India, involving 14 AIIMS institutions and 22 medical colleges, aiming to promote a tobacco-free future.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A total of 132 activities were organized, engaging over 5.000 individuals, including the general public, students, faculty, and patients. These efforts successfully raised awareness about the dangers of tobacco use, encouraged behavior and social change, and promoted policies to prevent tobacco industry interference in public health. The collaboration has significantly advanced the goal of a tobacco-free future across India.

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights the critical role of collaborative efforts in advancing tobacco control in India. Through the unity of the AIIMS Consortium for Tobacco Control and the Consortium for Medical Colleges for a Tobacco-Free India, this initiative effectively mobilized leading medical institutions across the country. Their

collective actions, spanning research, policy advocacy, and community outreach, underscore the importance of such partnerships in driving meaningful change and achieving a tobacco-free future for India.

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Promoting smoke-free homes among households with minors in Spain: A pilot study of an adapted evidence-based intervention

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BACKGROUND: Only about 30% of Spanish adults who smoke live in smoke-free homes (SFH). Few evidence-based interventions exist to encourage the voluntary adoption of SFH in Spain. This pilot study assesses the feasibility of implementing a locally adapted, evidence-based intervention to promote SFH among households with minors (younger than 18 y.o.), along with its short-term effects.

METHODS: A pre-post evaluation pilot study with a 2-week follow-up after the intervention delivery, conducted between June 2023 and March 2024. We implemented a previously adapted Smoke-Free Homes Program (SFHP; developed by the Emory University) featuring a brief four-component (three mailings and one coaching call) intervention delivered during 6 weeks. Recruitment was performed through the Students' Families Associations (SFA) from 10 schools in Barcelona Metropolitan Area. We used descriptive statistics to assess implementation outcomes and changes in self-reported smoke-free rules. Pre-post changes in categorical and continuous outcome variables were analyzed using McNemar and Wilcoxon tests, respectively.

RESULTS: At baseline, among 45 recruited participants (28 people who smoke and 17 people who do not), most participants 42 (93.3%) had a partial smoking ban, allowing smoking primarily in 'outdoor' areas of homes (balconies, etc.). Among 41 participants with the follow-up information, 40 found the recruitment strategy appropriate and 39 had no difficulties with their participations. Participants reported that the first mailing and a coahing call were the most useful components and gave average score of 4.0 out of 5.0 for utility of the materials. At follow-up, 28 (68.3%) of participants reported attempting to establish a smoke-free home and 7 (17.5%) succeeded. In households where smoking persisted, the mean number of cigarettes smoked per day at home decreased from 7.5 to 4.5.

CONCLUSIONS: Implementing the evidence-based SFHP intervention and recruiting participants through SFAs in Barcelona Metropolitan Area is feasible and a larger trial to evaluate intervention effectiveness and implementation is necessary.

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Tracking and tracing taxation in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco taxation is an effective MPOWER measure to curb tobacco consumption by increasing prices, inducing cessation, and preventing initiations. However, like many low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs), Pakistan lacks a discernable tobacco taxation policy. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) recommends that 70% of the retail price of tobacco products should constitute taxes. To move towards this goal, and strengthen tobacco control, Pakistan implemented the tobacco Track and Trace System (TTS) in July 2022 and raised the tobacco taxes by over 150% in February 2023. Despite these efforts, the Federal Excise Duty (FED) remains below the FCTC-recommended threshold reaching 45.9% for economy brands (from 35.6%) and 66% for premium brands (from 51.5%).

METHODS: This study assesses pricing and compliance with TTS stamps by analyzing approximately 3000 cigarette packs collected (for multiple studies), from 28 smoke-free cities in Pakistan. The research triangulates these findings with existing survey data from Pakistan. In an initial analysis conducted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, 300 cigarette packs representing 26 brands were sampled from 11 outlets across various markets.

RESULTS: The initial findings revealed significant non-compliance with the Finance Act 2024. Nearly 50% of the sampled packs lacked printed prices and TTS stamps, and half of these were sold below the minimum price of PKR 163 per pack. Such violations highlight substantial gaps in enforcement and regulatory oversight.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings underscore gross violation of the Finance Act 2024, which mandates sealing retail outlets selling cigarette packs without legitimate tax stamps or with counterfeit stamps. It urgently calls for a comprehensive and sustainable tobacco taxation policy in Pakistan and robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with existing regulations. Enhanced implementation of TTS and taxation measures is crucial to achieving FCTC goals and advancing tobacco control in Pakistan and beyond.

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Efficacy of eLearning in increasing tobacco control workers' knowledge on changing media and product landscape

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco control workforce is critical in promoting tobacco control strategies—through effective communication of tobacco-related information that amplifies data and addresses the evolving tobacco landscape. CDC and the CDC Foundation develop and disseminate eLearning courses via Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS) Academy. The courses are intended to enhance and support workers' capacity to address tobacco-related challenges in low-to-middle income countries. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of the digital media messaging (course 1) and the changing tobacco product landscape (course 2) in increasing tobacco control workforce knowledge and skills about the changing media and product landscape.
METHODS: The courses collect participant data through learner check-ins, knowledge checks, and feedback surveys to assess participants' knowledge, skills, and plans to use the course material in their work. Data from each course's launch (September 2021 and April 2022, respectively) through October 2024 were analyzed using descriptive statistics via the survey platform to evaluate the courses' effectiveness.
RESULTS: During the assessment period, 109 and 104 participants accessed course 1 and course 2, respectively. Data were available from 56 participants for course 1 and 70 participants for course 2. For both courses, participants agreed (94%) they enhanced their knowledge in key media and product landscape content areas. Participants reported gaining new practical skills related to tobacco control efforts (88% for course 1, 94% for course 2). Most participants intend to apply the acquired knowledge and resources to future initiatives (86% for course 1, 94% for course 2).
CONCLUSIONS: GTSS Academy offers accessible courses to enhance the tobacco control workforce capacity globally, signaling the potential for widespread impact. These courses contribute to bridging knowledge gaps and fostering actionable public health initiatives among tobacco control staff to address the changing media and product landscape.

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Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour towards smoking among people with migration experience: A global scoping review

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BACKGROUND: Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours towards smoking have been extensively researched across diverse populations with migration experience. The objective of this scoping review was to understand the extent, type, and geographical distribution of the published literature on smoking among people with migration experience across the globe.
METHODS: We conducted a scoping review using the Joanna Briggs Institute methodology. Supported by two information specialists, we performed a comprehensive literature search (from 2012- 17 January 2024) in five databases, without language or geographic restrictions. The search yielded 8.400 potentially relevant records after deduplication. After title and abstract screening, 305 full texts were included for descriptive analysis and out of these 25 that covered all three aspects (knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour) were included for content analysis.
RESULTS: The review identified a predominance of quantitative studies (87%), with a smaller proportion of qualitative (12%) and mixed-methods studies (2%). Most studies focused on behavioural prevalence related to tobacco and nicotine product consumption, with 72% addressing behaviours specifically, though only a subset (26%) focused directly on tobacco and/or nicotine use among migrants. Geographical analysis revealed that most of the research originated from high-income countries in particular USA (n=126), Canada (n=32), and Germany (n=20), with notable gaps in regions with significant migrant populations, such as Saudi Arabia (n=1). Additionally, terminology varied across studies, with inconsistent definitions for key terms such as 'migrants' and 'immigrants,' complicating comparisons between populations and countries, and highlighting the need for standardized terminology.
CONCLUSIONS: This scoping review reveals significant gaps in research on migrants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours towards tobacco and nicotine consumption, including a lack of qualitative studies, inconsistent terminology, and a geographic focus on high-income countries. Addressing these gaps through expanded research in underrepresented regions and standardising terminology is essential for developing culturally relevant public health strategies.

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Menthol cigarette smoking and its perceived comparative harm among South African adults who smoke daily

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BACKGROUND: Menthol cigarette (MC) smoking has been reported to be growing in LMICs as high-income countries begin to regulate flavoured cigarettes. However, only limited information that can support regulatory action in LMICs is available on MC smoking. This study therefore sought to describe factors associated with MC smoking among South African adults who smoke daily.
METHODS: Data was collected during 2021 via an online survey of adult South Africans aged ≥ 18 years (N=10.587),

including daily cigarette smokers (n=3.434). In addition to participants' sociodemographic characteristics, information obtained included participants' use of other tobacco or nicotine products, alcohol use, use of MC, and perception of the harm of MC compared to 'regular' cigarettes. Also obtained, were the participants' past year quit attempts and intention to quit smoking in the next 6 months. Data were weighted to match the South African population distribution. Data analysis included chi-square statistics and multi-variable adjusted logistic regression ($p<0.05$).

RESULTS: Of those who smoke daily, 26.4% (22.1-31.3%) regularly smoked menthol cigarettes. About 9.4% and 58.9% perceive it to be less and just as harmful respectively. MC smoking was more common among females than males (35% vs. 21.3%; p=0.05). In the final model, MC smoking was not associated with past quit attempts but with higher odds of intention to quit (AOR=1.62; 95%CI=1.00-2.63), current weekly e-cigarette use (AOR=2.10; 1.06-4.16), problem-drinking (AOR=1.91; 1.67-3.27) and being a female (AOR=2.14; 1.34-3.42). The odds of MC smoking were higher among those with > High school education (AOR=2.37; 1.18-4.477) as compared to those with < High school education and, was higher among those who believe they are less harmful (AOR=3.51; 1.67-7.40) as compared to believing that they are just as harmful or more harmful than 'regular' cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: Menthol cigarette smoking seems more common among those looking to reduce harm from 'regular' smoking. Regulation of menthol cigarettes may benefit public health.

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Licensing of points of sale of tobacco products by the Local Government Institutions: An effective strategy for tobacco control

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than 8 million people a year around the world. Transnational tobacco companies play an important role in contributing to these deaths by aggressively marketing their products. Therefore, control of tobacco sales in crucial in tobacco control. This article shows how licensing measures can restrict POS in aggressive marketing of tobacco products.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Grambangla Unnayan Committee is implementing tobacco control projects since 2018 with the support from Vital Strategies, The Union and Bloomberg Philanthropies. One of the initiatives of these projects was to develop a system for enforcement of provisions of `Tobacco control (TC) implementation guidelines for local government institutions (LGI)' (licensing, public health tax, sales ban). During the project period a total of 18 majors, 211 councilors, 18 Secretary of municipalities, 212 Tax Officers were oriented on the provisions of LGI TC guidelines to help them make specific plan for licensing of POS, eviction of POS of tobacco those are located in 100 meters of schools or hospitals. During the period 9034 POS received notice to take license for selling tobacco in the respective municipal areas. During the period 2372 licenses were taken by the POS to sell tobacco.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: A total of 87 licensing staff of 18 LGIs received capacity building training for promoting licensing of POS to sell tobacco products and eventually a total of BDT 406,800 (USD 3362) was collected as licensing fees by 18 LGIs. Warnings were given to POS of tobacco projects to close their tobacco business in 6 months those are located in 100 meters of schools and hospitals.

CONCLUSIONS: Executive magistrates now operate mobile courts and fine the POS those do not have licenses for tobacco sales. Therefore many POS owners discontinued selling tobacco products.

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How 'India vs tobacco' campaign harnessed the power of digital media: A deep dive into agenda setting to creating engagement

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare aims for a comprehensive amendment to the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003. However, the amendment Bill is complex and has multiple elements, which tie up to MPOWER; political sensitivities are currently strong in India; it entails a long timeline from passage to implementation; and requires national and sub-national level intervention. Vital Strategies and partners are actively supporting MOHFW in strengthening this policy change.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Complementing partner advocacy, Vital Strategies initiated an integrated communication campaign unified on digital media called 'India vs Tobacco', which ran through a series of phased tactics, each focussed on specific MPOWER policies, together making a public health case for the bill and building public support for its passage. The youth-centric campaign was executed on three-pronged strategy – mobilizing actors; changing public opinion through mass media, social media and community engagement; and getting attention to the issues through earned/news media.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Over a duration of 18 months, the campaign reached approximately 97 million people online; mobilized 2000+ youth, engaged 64 unique influencers and key opinion leaders; collaborated with 7 government,

quasi-government and medical organizations; and generated 579 news stories reaching approximately 564 million people. While the campaign is still on for the national level bill, there were some interim wins such as passage of the amendment at subnational level in Karnataka and Jharkhand, and central government issuing the guidelines on preventing of misleading advertisements and endorsements.

CONCLUSIONS: The campaign demonstrated the power of digital media, the importance of collaborations at multiple levels and with organisations beyond health, and how strategic influencer marketing and youth mobilization can amplify campaign messages and drive effective engagement. Using the right communication platforms along with targeted and tailored messaging helps is key to drive public engagement for policy promotion.

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Two decades of COTPA, 2003 : Evaluating compliance and identifying key challenges

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BACKGROUND: The use of tobacco leads to health, social, economic and environmental burden. A comprehensive law was enacted in May of 2003 to protect the public health - The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA). The Act aims at prohibiting the advertisement of, and to provide for the regulation of trade, commerce, production, supply and distribution of cigarettes and other tobacco products including prohibition on public smoking and sale of tobacco to children below 18 years.

Presently, India is home to 267 million tobacco users, facing a dual burden of tobacco use, smokeless and smoking. 8.5% children use tobacco products. Tobacco causes nearly 1.35 million deaths every year and 30% adults are exposed to second hand smoking in India.

METHODS: To assess the effective progress of COTPA, 2003 across India an analysis of compliance towards the legislation was done. Qualitative research through extensive desk review, involving the application of critical content analysis of third party compliance studies and online media coverage from across India was done.

RESULTS: Though the law is robust, it's implementation remains a real challenge even after decade of its existence. Regular enforcement drives by enforcement squads with members from various stakeholder departments is inevitable. Awareness about the law not only to consumers but also to tobacco vendors is essential for bringing down the tobacco epidemic. Stricter penalties and punishment under COTPA, 2003 for violators will go a long way for tobacco control.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite the twenty years of it's existence its implementation remains a real challenge. Political will and administrative commitment are the key factors for effective and efficient implementation of COTPA, 2003 at subnational level. All departments need to collaborate, coordinate and cooperate for effective and efficient implementation of COTPA, 2003.

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How did Sweden reduce tobacco smoking? The facts behind the tobacco industry narrative of Sweden's public health miracle

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry is successfully communicating through international press, claiming that Sweden is now smoke-free thanks to snus, used as a strategic harm reduction approach. This narrative concludes that countries should follow Sweden's example, through refraining from regulations of nicotine products.

What do we know of the facts behind this narrative? Let us look at statistics, research and Swedish tobacco control history to find out.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Best avaliable knowledge from Swedish authorities and organisations on tobacco and nicotine use and purchase, company compliance to regulations and the connection between usage of tobacco and nicotine products, and the history of tobacco control measures in Sweden, is presented.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: During the 1990s, Sweden implemented decisive measures that had discouraging and normative effects, stemming from the first regulations in the 1960s. Public places have been made smoke-free, a ban on tobacco advertising was implemented early as well as an age limit, a sales permit requirement for selling tobacco was introduced and tobacco tax increased. These laws have been monitored and enforced by authorities, and tobacco use has been monitored continuously. Smokers have been offered cost-free smoking cessation continuously since 1998. Resources supporting tobacco prevention organisations have been available during this whole period.

Regulations of different tobacco and nicotine products currently differ greatly in Sweden. The taxation of nicotine is much lower compared to tobacco taxation, making nicotine snus more affordable to cost sensitive groups. Nicotine snus was introduced to market in 2016, unregulated until 2022.

During recent years, total tobacco and nicotine use is increasing in Sweden. Use is being picked up by young people and young women in particular, resulting in usage increasing rapidly among those groups.

CONCLUSIONS: Decisive tobacco control measures have led to decreased smoking prevalence in Sweden.

To reduce tobacco use, all tobacco and nicotine products must be regulated equally.

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Assessment of compliance with cigarettes and other tobacco products act (COTPA), 2003 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

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BACKGROUND: Indian is the second largest consumer of tobacco, claiming approximately 1.35 million lives annually. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, was introduced to tackle this crisis, focusing on measures like banning smoking in public places, restricting advertisements, and prohibiting sales near schools. This study assessed how well these provisions are being followed in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, highlighting gaps in their implementation.

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Background: Indian is the second largest consumer of tobacco, claiming approximately 1.35 million lives annually. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, was introduced to tackle this crisis, focusing on measures like banning smoking in public places, restricting advertisements, and prohibiting sales near schools. This study assessed how well these provisions are being followed in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, highlighting gaps in their implementation.

METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Bhubaneswar, covering 181 public places, 18 educational institutions, and 181 tobacco points-of-sale (PoS). Observations were made using a structured checklist aligned with COTPA guidelines. Compliance with smoking bans (Section 4), advertising rules (Section 5), sales restrictions (Section 6), and health warnings on products (Sections 7 and 8) was evaluated, with data analysed descriptively.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Bhubaneswar, covering 181 public places, 18 educational institutions, and 181 tobacco points-of-sale (PoS). Observations were made using a structured checklist aligned with COTPA guidelines. Compliance with smoking bans (Section 4), advertising rules (Section 5), sales restrictions (Section 6), and health warnings on products (Sections 7 and 8) was evaluated, with data analysed descriptively.

RESULTS: Compliance with key provisions was found to be inadequate. Only 11.6% of public places displayed 'No Smoking' signs, and active smoking was frequently observed, reflecting poor adherence to Section 4. For Section 5, 86.19% of PoS had oversized advertisements, and 98.3% openly displayed tobacco products. Section 6 compliance was mixed - 86.74% of PoS were located more than 100 yards from schools, but 37.02% sold tobacco to minors. While 94.48% of tobacco products displayed health warnings, 60.77% of locally made products lacked required pictorial warnings.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Compliance with key provisions was found to be inadequate. Only 11.6% of public places displayed 'No Smoking' signs, and active smoking was frequently observed, reflecting poor adherence to Section 4. For Section 5, 86.19% of PoS had oversized advertisements, and 98.3% openly displayed tobacco products. Section 6 compliance was mixed - 86.74% of PoS were located more than 100 yards from schools, but 37.02% sold tobacco to minors. While 94.48% of tobacco products displayed health warnings, 60.77% of locally made products lacked required pictorial warnings.

CONCLUSIONS: The study revealed significant lapses in enforcing COTPA provisions in Bhubaneswar. Strengthening law enforcement, increasing public awareness, and penalizing violations are critical to reducing tobacco use and its health impacts. Regular monitoring and community engagement are essential to ensure better compliance with tobacco control laws.

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The waning compliance of Health Warning Labels (HWLs): A case of policy deterioration in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: HWLs on tobacco packs in Pakistan have undergone significant changes since their inception in 1979. Under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) guidelines, pictorial health warnings were introduced in 2010, initially covering 40% of the pack. While the size increased to 85% in 2015, subsequent ordinances reduced it to 50% before a marginal increase to 60% in 2019. Since then, there has been no rotation or size increase in HWLs leading to compliance gaps and diminished effectiveness.

METHODS: A market survey and examination of (3000 purchased and used) cigarette packs was conducted across 28 smoke-free cities in Pakistan, including the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The survey assessed the presence, visibility, and quality of HWLs to evaluate compliance with existing laws and their impact on consumer awareness.

RESULTS: Initial findings reveal that almost 50% of cigarette packs from Rawalpindi/Islamabad lacked HWLs, while 8% featured blurred or faded warnings, compromising their clarity and diluting their impact. The average daily smoker in Pakistan (who smokes 13 cigarettes per day), is exposed to HWLs approximately 4700 times a year. However, as per the survey, desensitization and lack of rotation resulted in reduced HWL effectiveness and increased mental saturation.

CONCLUSIONS: The study highlights the diminishing returns of HWLs due to compliance/implementation gaps, lack of enforcement, and desensitization. This research signposts an urgent need for updating the policy including timely rotation, size enhancement, use of locally relevant images, and eventual adoption of plain packaging to restore the effectiveness of HWLs. This study further points to the robust regulatory measures and global best practices, such as standardized/plain packaging, pack color rotation, and warnings on individual cigarettes, guiding the future of tobacco control in Pakistan.

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Enhancing implementation of FCTC Article 12: A study on FCTC Parties' support needs

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BACKGROUND: Article 12 of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), focusing on education, communication, training, and public awareness, is a cornerstone of comprehensive tobacco control. However, its implementation remains limited globally; according to WHO, approximately 217 million tobacco users worldwide have not recently been exposed to any anti-tobacco mass media campaign. The WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Public Awareness, established in 2022 and hosted by the French public health agency, seeks to address this gap by supporting FCTC Parties to implement Article 12. This study aims to identify barriers faced by Parties, assess their needs, and develop actionable recommendations to promote broader and more effective implementation of Article 12.

METHODS: The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved analyzing data provided by the WHO FCTC Secretariat to assess global progress in implementing the Convention. In the second phase, a questionnaire was distributed to FCTC focal points in each country to assess existing areas of expertise and to identify resources deemed essential but currently lacking for the effective implementation of Article 12. Additionally, it explored successful local initiatives, and gathered additional insights from respondents.

RESULTS: Analysis highlights critical gaps, particularly in legal frameworks, political commitment, technical expertise, and dedicated funding for awareness-raising initiatives. These results underline the need for support and resources to strengthen countries' capacities in implementing Article 12.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the specific needs and challenges faced by countries in implementing Article 12 of the FCTC. By highlighting these gaps, the study aims to improve stakeholders' understanding of key components required for effective and comprehensive tobacco control strategies. These results will serve as a foundation for fostering targeted actions and stronger international collaboration to support Parties in achieving their tobacco control objectives.

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Evaluating tobacco tax laws and policies in Bangladesh: Identifying provisions favourable to the tobacco industry

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco tax structure in Bangladesh is highly complex. Tobacco companies manage to earn over five times the profit even when production doubles. Although the government announces measures to protect public health in the annual budget, certain weak terms and clauses in tobacco tax laws and SROs are exploited by tobacco companies. This allows them to maximize profits while evading taxes, undermining public health goals and fiscal accountability.

METHODS: The study was conducted using a qualitative approach. It involved analyzing tobacco tax-related laws, SROs, and various policies issued by the government from 2013 to 2024. Additionally, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with 10 NBR officials and tobacco control experts. The research was carried out between February and September 2024.

RESULTS: The term `and above' in budget proposals has created a more tiers, allowing tobacco products to be sold at very low prices. There is a significant flaw in the cigarette stamp/banderole policy, where stamps/banderoles are supplied based on color. If lower-priced stamps/banderoles are used on higher-priced cigarette packets within the same tier, it becomes difficult to identify. Additionally, the provision requiring three assistant revenue officers to be stationed at cigarette factories 24/7 is problematic. With millions of cigarettes produced per minute, it is impossible to manually monitor production effectively. Moreover, although regulations mandate selling cigarettes at MRP, enforcement remains absent. KIIs with NBR officials and tobacco control experts recommend urgent amendments to these laws, policies, and SROs. They believe these loopholes benefit tobacco companies while causing significant revenue loss for the government.

CONCLUSIONS: While every tobacco tax-related law, policy, and SRO is designed to increase revenue and protect public health, they are not sufficiently effective in practice. The specific terms and clauses in these laws that are exploited by tobacco companies to gain undue advantages and evade taxes must be urgently amended.

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Age-Period-Cohort Analysis of daily smoking trends in Turkey using Global Adult Tobacco Survey Data: Insights for effective tobacco control policies

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BACKGROUND: The patterns of tobacco use are shaped by a complex interplay of factors such as age, historical periods, and generational influences. Understanding these dynamics is essential for creating effective, targeted

interventions. This study uses Age-Period-Cohort Interaction (APC-I) modeling to explore daily smoking trends in Turkey and provide actionable insights to inform and strengthen tobacco control policies.

METHODS: The GATS data from three waves (2008, 2012, and 2016), were analysed focusing on daily smoking prevalence across eight age groups (15-19 to 65+), three time periods, and overlapping generational cohorts. The APC-I model was employed using 'apci' function in R-Software to estimate age, period, and cohort effects, along with inter- and intra-cohort deviations from expected smoking behaviors. Data visualization were made using heatmaps and bar plots.

RESULTS: Daily smoking was most prevalent among adults aged 30 to 44 years, with the highest rates observed in the 30-34 years (OR:1.67) and 35-44 years (OR:1.65) age groups. In contrast, smoking rates were significantly lower among the youngest (15-19 years, OR 0.55) and oldest (65+ years, OR 0.29) age groups. Over time, daily smoking prevalence decreased notably between 2008 and 2012 (OR 0.83, $p<0.001$) but picked again by 2016 (OR:1.17, $p<0.001$). When looking at generational patterns, cohorts born in 1950, 1970, and 2000 had higher-than-expected smoking rates. Interestingly, the 1950 birth cohort showed the steepest decline in smoking rates over their lifetime (slope -0.13, $p<0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS: This study using Age-Period-Cohort Interaction (APC-I) modeling, highlights the need for tailored tobacco control strategies to address the unique smoking behaviors of different age groups and generations in Turkey. Cessation efforts should focus on middle-aged adults, while preventive measures are critical for younger generations to reduce early smoking initiation. Strengthened regulations to limit access to tobacco and improved access to cessation resources are essential to tackling these challenges.

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Exploring smoking behaviours and the impact of smoke-free home interventions in slums of Kochi Corporation

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BACKGROUND: Second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure is among the top three global risk factors for disease burden, along with high blood pressure and household air pollution from solid fuels. However, smoke-free laws are not applicable in domestic spaces, and SHS exposure persists in homes. Therefore, the objective of the study is to understand the barriers, enablers, and impact of a smoke-free home intervention on household dynamics, health, and well-being from the perspectives of smokers, family members, and community health workers (CHWs).

METHODS: This descriptive qualitative study, part of a community intervention in Kochi slums, involved 15 clusters, each in intervention and control arms (657 smokers), using CHWs to promote indoor smoking cessation through health education and community engagement, aiming to assess the intervention's effectiveness. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted using semi-structured guides among smokers (who quit/reduced indoor smoking), spouses, CHWs, and children. FGDs and interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English and thematically analysed using MAXQDA software.

RESULTS: A total of 11 FGDs and 14 interviews revealed key themes about smoking behaviour and quitting challenges. Participants started smoking due to peer influence and struggled to quit indoors, despite reducing smoking over time. Key motivators for quitting included health concerns, family support, and CHW encouragement, while cravings, stress, and social pressure were barriers. Health improvements and financial savings were significant benefits. Family pressure, particularly from children, played a vital role in motivating cessation. Underpinning this were the CHW interventions. Despite positive changes, complete cessation remained difficult, with relapse triggered by environmental and personal factors.

CONCLUSIONS: The smoke-free home intervention successfully reduced indoor smoking and SHS exposure in Kochi's slums, driven by health concerns, family support, and CHW involvement. Challenges such as relapse and social pressures indicate the need for sustained efforts to achieve complete cessation.

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Facilitators and barriers to effective implementation of local SF laws: A qualitative study in 3 cities in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Over 370 sub-national jurisdictions in Indonesia have adopted 100% smoke-free laws but implementation remains a challenge. Several jurisdictions have demonstrated successful implementation of smokefree laws, including Bogor, Kulon Progo, and Klungkung. To better understand what has led to successful implementation in these cities, an evaluation was conducted to identify facilitators and barriers in implementing these laws.

METHODS: The evaluation was conducted in three

cities and had two arms, focus group discussions, and in-depth qualitative interviews. Interview materials followed tobacco control-specific constructs outlined in the academic paper 'Improving the implementation of tobacco control policies in low-and middle-income countries: a proposed framework' and were applied to the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research. Key stakeholders in each city were interviewed on their experiences implementing smoke-free policies, focusing on activities. FGDs included a sample of stakeholders comprised of retailers, venue managers, and enforcement officers. Questions covered knowledge and opinion of the law, perceived benefits, and implementation challenges. Interviews (n=X) and FGDs (n=X) were recorded, transcribed and then coded into the constructs, grouping into sub-constructs to identify facilitators and barriers to implementation.

RESULTS: Results showed common themes between the cities that lead to successful implementation. For example, strong political commitment, specifically engagement from the Mayor in each city, facilitated implementation. Tobacco industry interference was a common barrier between the cities, specifically evolving tactics deployed by the industry. The results also highlighted differences in implementation facilitators and barriers and displayed how each city adapted to their specific context to support implementation. For example, Klungkung created favorable social and political climate by engaging religious leaders and integrating TC policy with religious laws.

CONCLUSIONS: This evaluation showcased common facilitators and barriers that can impact implementation and enforcement of tobacco control policy. Findings can be used to inform effective future interventions for cities/districts implementing TC laws.

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E-Cigarette use in Malaysia: Drivers behind a growing phenomenon

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BACKGROUND: Awareness of e-cigarettes in Malaysia has risen significantly over the past decade, increasing from 21.0% to 68.0%, alongside a growth in current e-cigarette use from 0.8% to 5.8% between 2011 and 2023. Over this period, dual use of e-cigarettes and tobacco has also seen an increase from 0.8% to 3.9%. This analysis aimed to explore the determinants of current e-cigarette use among the adult population in Malaysia.

METHODS: Data of current e-cigarette users from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2023 was analysed. GATS is a standardized, nationally representative household survey of individuals aged ⩾15 years. Current e-cigarette use was determined by those who responded, 'daily or less than daily' to the question 'Do you currently use e-cigarettes on a daily basis, less than daily or not at all?'. Descriptive statistics was used to determine the prevalence and characteristics of e-cigarette use while multivariable logistic regression analysis was used to determine the factors associated with e-cigarette use among the Malaysian population.

RESULTS: The prevalence of e-cigarette use was 5.8% which is approximately 1.4 million adults. Highest prevalence was recorded among males; 10.5%, age group 15-24; 8.6%, those living in urban areas; 6.2%, non-government employees; 11.0%, single; 9.0%, and current tobacco smokers; 20.4%. The multivariable logistic regression analysis showed that males [AOR: 5.78 (95% CI: 2.27, 14.71)], age groups 15-24 years [AOR: 9.43 (95% CI: 2.43, 36.52)] and 25-44 years [AOR:4.44 (95% CI: 1.21, 16.30)] and current tobacco smoking [AOR: 6.00 (95% CI: 3.47, 10.36)] were more likely to use e-cigarettes compared to females, older age 45 to 64 years and non-tobacco smokers.

CONCLUSIONS: Policies and programs aimed at preventing a further increase in e-cigarette use should focus on the specific demographic groups identified in this study. Additionally, awareness campaigns targeting youth are essential to discourage the initiation of e-cigarette use.

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Tackling emerging tobacco challenges: Regulatory gaps and future strategies for NTNPs in Pakistan

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BACKGROUND: The rise of new tobacco and nicotine products (NTNPs) like vapes, e-cigarettes, and heated tobacco products poses a growing public health risk, particularly among youth in Pakistan. While marketed as safer alternatives, there is growing evidence about their harmful health consequences. Despite their growing use, there is little primary evidence on their market landscape and use in Pakistan

METHODS: This study employed a mixed methods approach to assess the regulatory gaps and challenges posed by NTNPs in Pakistan. The methodology comprised of three parts; a market survey across 28 cities to assess availability and regulatory compliance; a user survey administered to 500 respondents from over 50 locations to explore usage patterns and motivations and perceptions of harms; and a documentary review comparing national and international NTNP regulatory frameworks to identify gaps and potential opportunities

RESULTS: NTNPs are widely available near educational institutions, with 64% and 55% of stores selling NTNPs being located within 500m or 100m of an educational institution respectively, while 50% of NTNP vendors admit to not verifying the age of buyers. NTNPs mostly evade restrictions applicable to conventional tobacco products

(such as graphic health warnings and point-of-sale advertising), highlighting critical gaps in current tobacco control laws. The users survey found 55% of vape users and 53% of nicotine pouch users initiated use before the age of 25. 91% of vape users reported having initiated use with flavored vapes. Around 51% of vape users and 55% of nicotine pouch users also reported smoking cigarettes.
CONCLUSIONS: Comprehensive reforms are necessary to address the rapidly growing availability and use of NTNPs in Pakistan. Adopting effective regulatory practices from countries like India and Australia is recommended. Enhanced research and surveillance are essential to inform evidence-based policymaking.
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Understanding various dimensions of online beedi marketing in India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco companies have been using social media to market their products, including beedi cigarettes. These companies use various online marketing tactics to attract new consumers and retain existing ones. This is concerning as it promotes the beedi industry, imposing risks both to beedi rollers and end users. While limited research has been done regarding the online marketing of beedis, this study explores its various dimensions of social media platforms to understand the prevailing situation.
METHODS: Publicly available data was collected through an AI-based digital media monitoring tool. Data, consisting of images and texts, was curated data from various social and digital media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, online newspapers, and YouTube. Using Boolean keywords and 'scraping' tools, the platform identified relevant posts and tobacco marketing accounts. The search was set up using generic keywords like: 'beedi' OR '#beedi' OR 'bidi' OR '#bidi' OR 'bidis' OR '#bidis' OR 'biri' OR '#biri' OR 'बीडी' OR '#बीडी' combined with brand names. A systematic human check was also conducted to remove junk and refine data quality. Data was coded and analyzed manually using platform and MS Excel. Posts were identified in English and Hindi for a data collection period from December 16, 2020, to August 15, 2021.
RESULTS: We found that beedis are openly marketed on social media with clear product pictures versus other tobacco products, which are promoted inconspicuously to avoid being caught in existing laws. There were at least 30 distinct Facebook pages for beedi companies, accounting for the highest platform used for beedi marketing (98%).
CONCLUSIONS: Monitoring and reporting are suggested regularly to support restrictions on tobacco marketing. Beedi product marketing must be carefully monitored both online and offline. Consumers need to be educated, and clear laws should be defined for online marketing of such tobacco products.
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Gendered differences in smoking behaviours: A global intersectional scoping review

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable death globally, with gender disparities in smoking prevalence and intensity. While much research has explored these differences, the factors contributing to them remain under studied, particularly in cross-country comparisons. Existing studies often examine single-country contexts, examining the intersection of gender with social determinants like occupation, education, wealth, and marital status, however there is limited synthesis of how these factors intersect and vary across global regions.
METHODS: This scoping review aims to map the factors influencing gendered smoking behaviors across diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts. Comprehensive searches in PubMed and Scopus were conducted to capture a wide range of sources from biomedical, health, social science, and multidisciplinary literature.
RESULTS: Data from 77 countries, representing 44% of World Bank-recognized countries, revealed associations between education, occupation, and wealth with differences in smoking behaviours among men and women. For instance, in regions like Europe and Central Asia, lower education levels were linked to higher smoking prevalence, particularly among men. In contrast, in regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, women with higher education levels had higher smoking prevalence. Higher education typically leads to higher-paying occupations where workplace norms discourage smoking, while lower educational attainment is associated with lower-paying occupations where smoking may be more prevalent. Yet, for women in some contexts, higher education correlates with higher smoking rates, possibly due to social pressures or lifestyle factors in professional settings. Marriage and religion were generally associated with lower smoking prevalence across genders, but country-specific differences suggest that cultural expectations and social roles tied to marital status and religion influence smoking behaviour differently for men and women.
CONCLUSIONS: This review underscores the need for researchers to move beyond analyzing factors in isolation and to instead focus on how they intersect and contribute to these gendered differences.
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Exploiting loopholes: a case study on on-site and digital marketing by a tobacco giant in Eastern India

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BACKGROUND: In the digital age, industries, including tobacco, leverage innovative marketing strategies to expand their consumer base, often circumventing regulatory frameworks. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, aims to curb tobacco advertising, restrict sales to minors, and protect public health. This study investigates on-site and digital marketing practices of India Tobacco Company (ITC) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, focusing on promotional activities, product placement, and digital engagement through QR code campaigns. Findings are triangulated with COTPA provisions to identify systemic violations and their public health implications.

METHODS: A mixed-methods approach combined field observations and digital market analysis. Observations at vendor sites, including those near educational institutions, documented product placement, direct advertising, and compliance levels. Online browsing assessed the promotion of tobacco products on e-commerce platforms. Findings were triangulated with COTPA provisions to identify regulatory gaps, supported by photographic and video evidence.

RESULTS: Significant non-compliance with COTPA was observed. At vendor sites, tobacco products were placed near chocolates and toffees, violating Section 5(2)(d). Backlit boards, LED video screens, and posters advertised brands like Aromix and Classic Icon, breaching Sections 5(1) and 5(2)(a). QR code campaigns (e.g., QR code https://101rrp.cisplit.co/session2/odisa-scheme/index.php?text=DLDL) offered free cigarettes without age verification, violating Sections 6(a) and 6(b). Online platforms listed tobacco products without proper age verification or health warnings, contravening Sections 7(1), 7(2), and 8(1). These violations undermine public health efforts, particularly in protecting minors.

CONCLUSIONS: Both on-site and digital marketing strategies exploit regulatory loopholes, undermining public health objectives. Stricter enforcement of COTPA, robust monitoring systems, and accountability measures are essential to protect minors and uphold tobacco control objectives. These findings provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and advocates to address emerging tobacco marketing challenges.

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Interventions aimed at increasing intention to quit vaping among adults: A systematic review

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BACKGROUND: The use of e-cigarettes, or vaping, has surged in recent years, raising significant concerns about their effects on cardiovascular, respiratory, and mental health. While e-cigarettes may be effective for smoking cessation, their long-term efficacy and safety are unclear. Given the addictive nature of vaping and interest in cessation, strategies are necessary to address this growing area of need. Our goal was to summarize the available literature on interventions for the intention to quit vaping.

METHODS: A comprehensive search was performed in MEDLINE, Embase, Cochrane Central and Scopus. We included all interventional studies that examined 'intention to quit', and 'rates of vaping cessation' outcomes. Abstracts and full texts were screened independently in duplicate and main reason for exclusion was recorded. Risk of bias was also assessed in duplicate based on study performance along several domains.

RESULTS: The initial search yielded 7582 papers of which 3740 were removed as duplicates. A further 3758 papers were removed after the abstract and title screen. 84 full texts were screened, of which 75 were removed. Nine papers were included in the final evaluation. 6 randomized control trials examined 'intention to quit' outcomes (total sample 4537) but could not be compared due to differences in Likert scale and unavailability of necessary data. Overall, quality of evidence was poor, driven in large part by non-representative samples, high rate of selection bias, and lack of blinding of outcome assessors.

CONCLUSIONS: Our systematic review suggests that there is a growing body of evidence for interventions aimed at increasing the intention to quit vaping. However, there is limited high quality, reproducible studies. Further research should focus on the implementation of high quality randomized control trials with easy to reproduce and scale interventions to address this important clinical and research question.

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Examining the media contribution to enforce Maximum Retail Price (MRP) on cigarette packages in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: With annual production of 84 billion cigarettes, Bangladesh ranks among the top cigarette-producing countries. Weak enforcement of MRP regulations allows Tobacco Industries (TI) to increase an extra BDT 200 million daily, leading to tax evasion and excessive profits. The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection Authority (DNCRPA) was inactive to address this law violation.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: It was analyzed, why TIs are not interested to increase cigarettes price, while they interested to increase MRP for other items. Since there was no enforcement of MRP for cigarettes, TI's instructed retail sellers to sale cigarette higher price than MRP. Eight investigative reports (4.4 million viewed) exposed the government revenue loss due to the ignorance of selling cigarettes higher price than of MRP. Additionally, the necessity of implementing MRP has been discussed in two seminars and six workshops involving journalists, tobacco control advocates, and relevant policymakers, and

National Board of Revenue (NBR) officials.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: On April 7, 2022, a report revealed that in the absence of MRP labeling, TI's collecting an additional BDT 70 billion annually, resulting government's revenue loss of BDT 50 billion. Following this report, NBR investigated and later recommended the implementation of MRP. On June 6, 2024, NBR amended regulations to make it mandatory to display MRP on cigarette packets. Following complaints that TI's selling cigarettes at prices higher than the declared MRP, NBR conducted raids on the warehouses of BATB and JTI. The investigation led to the recovery of BDT 3920 million. The DNCRP also found BATB and supermarkets for non-compliance. Authorities continue nationwide operations to ensure adherence to MRP regulations.

CONCLUSIONS: The role of journalism in tobacco control is indispensable in this regard. However, due to lack of sufficient manpower for market monitoring nationwide, a more active role of the media is urgently needed to address this weakness.

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Decomposition analysis of Illicit cigarette smoking and racial disparities in South African individuals' response to hypothetical changes in cigarette prices

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BACKGROUND: The availability of cheap illicit cigarettes (IC) may undermine the equity effect of cigarette excise tax policy in decreasing smoking prevalence, especially among vulnerable populations. Yet, only limited nationally representative data is available from LMICs, quantifying how much IC smoking influence more vulnerable cigarette smokers' response to cigarette price increases.

METHODS: This study used data from the South African Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2021 (N=6,311 sample; n=1327 current smokers) to assess smoking behaviours in response to hypothetical increase in cigarette prices, including smoking fewer cigarettes or attempting to quit smoking (price-responsive) as opposed to switching to cheaper brands or sourcing for a low cost for same brand (price-avoidance). A weighted estimate of IC prevalence was derived using a previously validated question on participants' estimation of the proportion of cigarettes they have purchased that they considered 'illicit'. The multivariable-adjusted binary logistic regression model examined the associations between IC use and being price-responsive, adjusting for sociodemographic factors. A decomposition analysis then quantified the extent to which IC use contributes to racial and rural-urban disparities in response to price increases.

RESULTS: IC prevalence was estimated to be 46.8% and IC users (AOR=0.68; 95%CI=0.53–0.89) and nicotine-dependent smokers (AOR=0.57; 95%CI=0.43–0.76) were less likely to be price-responsive as opposed to being price-avoiding in response. Rural residents had lower odds of being price-responsive (AOR=0.55; 95% CI=0.41-0.74) and as compared to others, black Africans were more likely to be price-responsive (AOR=2.05; 95% CI=1.43-2.94). Decomposition analysis suggests IC use mediates the effects of racial disparities (in favour of other race groups) on response to cigarette price increases by 6.5% and effect of the urban-rural gap by 5.7%, in favour of urban residents.

CONCLUSIONS: Even with high prevalence of illicit cigarettes, price increases will likely motivate reduced cigarette consumption among most smokers, but their equity impact is partially mitigated by illicit cigarette availability.

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Teman aksi dialogue: effectiveness of a digital platform in increasing public awareness and participation for tobacco control in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Indonesia faces a concerning trend of increasing smoking prevalence, particularly among youth, Statista Consumer Insights data (2021) records 112 million smokers with a projected increase to 123 million by 2030. This is compounded by aggressive tobacco marketing, easy access to cigarettes, and low awareness of smoking hazards and Smoke-Free Areas. While The Indonesia Health Survey 2023 shows a slight decrease in youth smoking prevalence to 7.4%, it remains a significant concern, because it is still higher than the 2013 Riskesdas data of 7.2%.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To address this, CHED initiated Teman Aksi Dialogue, an online educational program on Instagram (June 2023-November 2024). The program aimed to raise public awareness through interactive discussions in collaboration with various communities. Activities included live discussions, Q&A sessions, quizzes, and visual content dissemination. This programm conducted by collaboration with other communities, such as the Tobacco Control Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah, Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Network, Muhammadiyah Cyber University, Lentera Anak, Banten Children's Forum, and Muhammadiyah Youth of Gorontalo.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Teman Aksi Dialogue proved effective in raising awareness, leading to the formation of the Teman Aksi community in August 2024 with 12 members and a launch event attended by the Deputy for Youth Empowerment, Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs Republic of Indonesia and 130 youths. The program achieved high public participation, with viewership ranging from 50 to 296 per session. Collaboration allows topical flexibility in discussing ongoing issues, including youth protection, smoke-free area advocacy, and multi-stakeholder engagement.

CONCLUSIONS: Teman Aksi Dialogue effectively increases literacy and community participation in tobacco control. It reaches a wide audience, fosters collaboration, and is tailored to contemporary issues. Collaborative efforts are very important to achieve a healthier and smoke-free Indonesia and this program will continue in 2025.

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Empowering youth through faith-based tobacco control: Lessons from Muhammadiyah Schools in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Indonesia faces persistent challenges in tobacco control, with aggressive marketing strategies targeting youth through advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Within this context, the Muhammadiyah Students Association (Ikatan Pelajar Muhammadiyah-TC IPM) launched faith-based school programs to align with Muhammadiyah's fatwa declaring smoking haram. These programs targeted Muhammadiyah schools in the Greater Jakarta area, engaging 70 students and 70 teachers in tobacco control initiatives. The programs aimed to counter tobacco's appeal to youth by promoting Islamic teachings, fostering advocacy, and strengthening adherence to tobacco-free policies. Key challenges included ingrained social acceptance of smoking and weak enforcement of tobacco control regulations.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: IPM implemented two major initiatives: the Tobacco Control National Leadership Training (TCNLT) and the National Young Teacher Training on Tobacco Control (NYTTTC). These programs combined expert-led training, focus group discussions, media advocacy projects, and support for implementing government regulations. The curriculum emphasized tobacco-free lifestyles, localized strategies to address community-specific challenges, and actionable plans to advance tobacco control measures in schools. Participants were equipped with skills to advocate for smoke-free environments and enforce the smoking prohibition outlined in the fatwa.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The program significantly strengthened smoke-free policies and tobacco control advocacy within Muhammadiyah schools. Teachers and students successfully promoted regulatory compliance and fostered a culture of tobacco rejection, enhancing awareness among peers and communities. This comprehensive approach has demonstrated the efficacy of integrating faith-based principles into public health strategies. However, the program highlighted the need for broader outreach and deeper engagement with stakeholders to ensure sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS: IPM's faith-driven approach demonstrates how integrating cultural and religious values can enhance tobacco control efforts. Expanding the program to train young doctors and journalists while leveraging lessons from teacher training offers promising opportunities for scaling impact. This model serves as an adaptable blueprint for other regions facing similar challenges in tobacco control.

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Comparative analysis of GYTS survey results in Georgia: 2017 vs. 2023

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BACKGROUND: The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is a global benchmark for systematically tracking youth tobacco use and evaluating tobacco control measures. This study compares the results of the 2017 and 2023 GYTS in Georgia, highlighting trends in tobacco use among adolescents aged 13-15 years and their exposure to tobacco-related influences.

METHODS: Both the 2017 and 2023 GYTS in Georgia employed a nationally representative, school-based survey design using a two-stage cluster sampling method. In 2017, 1345 students (954 aged 13-15) participated, while in 2023, 2569 students (1845 aged 13-15) completed the survey. Data were collected via standardized, anonymous, self-administered questionnaires covering tobacco use, cessation behavior, exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS), tobacco marketing, access to tobacco products, and knowledge and attitudes about tobacco use.

RESULTS: Cigarette smoking slightly decreased from 8.4% in 2017 to 5.2% in 2023, while electronic cigarette use rose from 13.2% to 11.3%. Smokeless tobacco use also saw a marginal decrease from 4.4% to 4.2%. The proportion of students attempting to quit smoking rose from 60.8% in 2017 to 60.4% in 2023. Exposure to SHS remained high, with 35.7% exposed at home in 2023 compared to similar levels in 2017. Additionally, 67.9% of underage smokers in 2023 were not prevented from purchasing cigarettes, showing limited improvement from 2017. Tobacco marketing exposure at points of sale increased from 50% in 2017 to 52.2% in 2023, despite existing bans.

CONCLUSIONS: The comparison of 2017 and 2023 GYTS data reveals persistent challenges in youth tobacco control in Georgia. While cigarette smoking rates have declined, the rise in electronic cigarette use and sustained exposure to secondhand smoke and tobacco marketing remain significant public health concerns. Stronger enforcement of tobacco control laws, comprehensive youth-targeted prevention programs, and tighter regulations on marketing and product accessibility are critical for reducing tobacco use among Georgian youth.

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Fresh (Making Smoking History) - Impact and lessons learned from longest running regional tobacco control programme in the UK

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The North East (NE) of England historically had the highest smoking rates in England, linked to deprivation and its industrial heritage. Whilst the region had stop smoking services in place from 2000, in 2005 smoking rates had stalled at 29% and it was recognised that a comprehensive tobacco control programme was needed to drive quitting and reduce uptake. Global learning was used to inform a new strategy and dedicated programme.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In 2005, the UKs first regional tobacco control programme was launched. Fresh has now been delivering this collaborative award winning eight key strand approach for 20 years involving multiple partners from health care, local government and working closely with national civil society partners. It has been recognised that a tier of evidence based tobacco control work between national and local has been important to drive down smoking rates across key groups. The leadership of local Directors of Public Health to maintain this funding and commitment has been pivotal.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: By keeping abreast of research and innovating, the NE has been able to have a significant impact to reduce smoking in the NE with overall adult rates reducing by 62% from 2005 to 2023 and the NE going from the highest regional rate to the 2nd lowest (11%) across all nine regions of England. This has been achieved by adhering to an evidence led approach that has united the overall system and has ensured that tobacco has remained a key priority focus to reduce health inequalities, despite many other important public health priorities.

CONCLUSIONS: A regional tier has been vital to make progress and to help achieve economies of scale and has also provided stability during various reorganisations under successive governments. Our key recommendations following 20 years of learning will be shared and our clear bold vision for a Smokefree Future articulated.

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Regulation of emerging tobacco and nicotine products in India and its implication for global tobacco control

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: To attract a new generation of tobacco and nicotine users, the tobacco industry has introduced emerging tobacco and nicotine products, such as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products (HTPs), and oral nicotine pouches. These products have flavors and designs that are attractive to young people. State governments in India banned the sale of emerging products using prevailing drug laws, and this resulted in the central government passing a comprehensive national law prohibiting the manufacture, import, sale, advertisement, etc., of e-cigarettes, HTPs and similar products. However, despite the adoption of this comprehensive law, the products are readily available through online and offline stores due to implementation challenges. Further, the industry has launched efforts to introduce oral nicotine pouches and disintegrating strips as nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs), which are available as over-the-counter drugs.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the enabling Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, regulates the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs and cosmetics in the country. Schedule K to the Rules exempts certain drugs from obtaining licenses, including nicotine gums and lozenges containing up to 2 mg of nicotine, and, therefore, the products may be sold over the counter.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Government records were reviewed to determine which other products have applied for this exemption under Schedule K to the Rules. Based on this review, it was determined that the industry has attempted to exploit the NRT licensing process to place emerging nicotine products on the market.

CONCLUSIONS: The Indian Government, with support from CSOs, has recently taken positive steps to strengthen the implementation of laws regulating emerging tobacco and nicotine products. It is also closely monitoring industry efforts to introduce new-generation products disguised as NRTs. This is necessary to stay ahead of the industry's tactics as it attempts to evade regulation and continuously place new, addictive products on the market.

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Opinions on tobacco price increases and impact on motivation to quit in France

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BACKGROUND: Increasing the price of tobacco is one of the most effective measures to reduce consumption, recommended by WHO. In France, while the prevalence of smoking is high (31% in 2023), plans to combat smoking have made it possible to significantly increase tobacco prices between 2018 and 2020 then, in a lesser extent, between 2020 and 2022. The objective of this study is to report on the evolution between 2018 and 2022 of the opinion of the French population on the increases in tobacco prices, and the declared motivation to quit smoking generated by these increases among smokers.

METHODS: Data come from the Health Barometers of

Santé publique France, the national public health agency, a representative repeated telephone survey relying on a random sample of the population of 18-75 year olds residing in France. It was respectively conducted among 9076 and 3229 individuals in 2018 and 2022.

RESULTS: In 2022, nearly half (48.8%) of 18-75 year-olds believed that tobacco tax increases were justified, a stable proportion compared to 2018. This proportion varied according to smoking status: from 19.4% among daily smokers, down compared to 2018 (23.4%), to 64.0% among people who had never smoked.

A third of smokers (33.9%) said that tobacco price increases motivated them to quit smoking, down from 2018. A third of ex-smokers who had quit less than 5 years ago said they had been motivated by tobacco price increases.

The likelihood of being motivated to quit smoking by tobacco price increases was higher among the one third of smokers with the lowest incomes.

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco price increases have an impact on opinion and motivation to quit smoking, particularly among the low socio-economic status smokers. However, a decline on these indicators has been observed among smokers, which could be related to the lower tobacco price increase over the last 2 years.

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Analyzing the representation of tobacco and related law violations in popular Eid television content

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among youth in Bangladesh remains a critical public health concern, with 35.3% of individuals aged 15 and above using tobacco products, as reported by the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2017. The portrayal of tobacco use in popular media, including dramas, movies, and web series, significantly influences youth behavior. Despite the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act prohibiting the advertisement and promotion of tobacco products, violations frequently occur in entertainment content, especially during culturally significant events like Eid.

METHODS: MANAS conducted a survey during Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha to assess compliance with tobacco control laws in dramas and movies aired on 14 popular TV channels. A total of 27 students from Dhaka International University and International University of Business Agriculture and Technology participated in this study, observing content during peak hours (7 PM–10 PM). They recorded instances of tobacco use, presence of warnings, brand promotions, and the necessity of smoking scenes for the storyline. Evidence, including pictures and videos, was collected for analysis.

RESULTS: Out of 72 dramas and movies observed during the first survey, nine instances of tobacco control law violations were identified. Similar findings were noted in the second survey, with six violations among 85 observed dramas. Channels like Channel 9 and Maasranga TV recorded higher instances of violations. Challenges included disruptions caused by load-shedding and limited programming on some channels.

CONCLUSIONS: The survey highlights persistent non-compliance with tobacco control laws in entertainment media, particularly during high-viewership periods like Eid. Such portrayals significantly influence youth, undermining efforts to achieve a tobacco-free Bangladesh. Stricter monitoring, enforcement of penalties, awareness campaigns for media professionals, and enhanced public education are critical to addressing this issue and ensuring law adherence in the entertainment sector.

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Accelerate smoke free campus with the implementation of health promoting university in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: As a member of AUN/ASEAN University Network, it is recommended for members of AUN to implement health promoting universities/HPU. The Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) started the HPU in 2019. After initiating HPU, UGM collaborated with the Directorate of Health Promotion, The Ministry of Health (DHP-MOH), to encourage other universities in Indonesia to develop HPU in 2019, 2020 and 2021. One activity of HPU is zero tolerance on tobacco. Advocating the campus to be a smoke free area was not simple, since tobacco control in Indonesia has not widely applied.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Collaboration with the DHP-MOH, UGM and a few big universities developed HPU in more than 50 universities in Indonesia. There were 3 strategies; system and infrastructure, health promotion area and zero tolerance area including tobacco. We started to develop HPU by a series of workshops, seminars, lobbying and advocacy.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The initiation of HPU was started with agreement among 23 universities and 34 health Polytechnique in 2019. Smoke free campus is one of the main activities in HPU. Several universities did advocacy to the board of universities. The development of HPU continued during the pandemic and we developed a healthy campus alert COVID-19 guidance book. The book was launched to 200 participants from 100 universities from all over Indonesia through 2 webinars. When the pandemic ended, in 2021 the collaboration between the DHP MOH and 5 big universities continued. The collaboration assisted 23 other universities to apply to HPU. Most universities that apply to HPU become smoke free campuses

CONCLUSIONS: Implementation of HPU gave an opportunity to the campus for applying for a smoke free area, although advocacy should be added. Universities that

have implemented HPU can encourage other universities to develop HPU and make the university become a smoke free campus.

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Impact of tobacco use on depressed mood among older adults in India

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use is a major health concern in India, particularly for older adults. Its impact on mental health, especially on feelings of sadness, feeling blue, or experiencing depressed days (SBDD), has not been studied in detail. This study aims to explore how tobacco use is linked to self-reported depressed mood (SBDD) among older adults in India and to identify patterns that could help guide mental health and tobacco control programs.

METHODS: The study uses data from the Longitudinal Aging Study India (LASI) Wave 1, which includes 10.487 participants aged 45 years and older who reported experiencing mood-related symptoms. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted to study the relationship between tobacco use and symptoms of depressed mood.

RESULTS: About 19.7% of older adults reported feeling sad, blue, or depressed for at least two weeks in the last year. Tobacco users, including those who used smokeless tobacco (e.g., chewing tobacco), were more likely to report such feelings compared to non-users. The analysis showed that tobacco use was strongly associated with prolonged feelings of sadness or depression.

CONCLUSIONS: The findings from LASI Wave 1 show that tobacco use is linked to a higher likelihood of experiencing depressed mood among older adults in India. This highlights the need for programs that address both tobacco use and mental health issues together to improve the well-being of this population.

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Harnessing social media for tobacco control: Lessons from Muhammadiyah Student Association Campaign in Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia's vision to become a developed nation by 2045 highlights the need for healthy, innovative youth. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), the prevalence of smoking among adolescents aged 13 to 15 increased from 18.3% in 2014 to 19.2% in 2019. The rise of social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok offers a powerful avenue for youth-focused tobacco control campaigns. This study evaluates the effectiveness of a social media campaign by Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) in educating youth about the dangers of tobacco and reducing smoking prevalence.

METHODS: The campaign employed a multi-faceted approach, leveraging social media platforms to deliver empathetic and fact-based narratives. Key strategies included collaborations with influencers and youth organizations, interactive activities like live Q&A sessions, and creative challenges. Diverse content formats, such as infographics, educational videos, and storytelling, were used to engage audiences. Quantitative metrics (follower growth, impressions, and shares) and qualitative feedback (audience participation and awareness) were analysed to assess impact.

RESULTS: The campaign resulted in an 11% increase in followers, 45.8 thousand impressions, and post engagement rates of up to 4353 likes and 9797 shares. Qualitative feedback indicated strong audience resonance, with increased awareness and active participation in interactive activities. Youth reported a deeper understanding of tobacco's harms and expressed motivation to act against its use.

CONCLUSIONS: Social media proved an effective tool for tobacco control among Indonesian youth, fostering emotional connections and behavioural change. Expanding the campaign to platforms like TikTok and YouTube, deepening collaborations with relatable influencers, and utilizing data analytics for personalized content can further enhance impact. Sustained and creative campaigns can significantly contribute to reducing tobacco use and empowering youth to champion a healthier future.

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Towards a endgame for smoking in Brazil

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Brazil has established a National Tobacco Control Policy aligned with the WHO FCTC and has a National Commission FCTC Implementation since 1999, which is responsible for the governance of this Policy.

This Policy includes strategies to decrease both the demand for and supply of tobacco products, addresses civil and criminal liability of the tobacco industry, protection of public policies from industry interference, and promotes scientific and technical cooperation as well as data exchange among countries.

In accordance with Art. 2 WHO FCTC, which encourages Parties to implement measures beyond treaty's obligations, Brazil is persistently adopting strategies to decrease tobacco use prevalence.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Several tobacco control legislation have been adopted in Brazil in the last 30 years and played an important role.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: Brazil's effective implementation of the WHO FCTC has significantly reduced smoking prevalence from 34.8% in 1989 to 12.6% in 2019. This achievement suggests that adopting endgame strategies to further decrease smoking rates is achievable. With continued efforts, Brazil could potentially lower smoking prevalence to below 5% by 2040 or even earlier.
To achieve this goal, Brazil should strengthen existing policies, such as increasing tobacco taxes, enforcing the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, and introducing innovative measures like implementing plain packaging and reducing the number of points of sale, among others.
CONCLUSIONS: The drive towards a tobacco endgame is crucial for advancing both global and national tobacco control policies. To effectively implement such an endgame, it is essential to clearly define the term 'smoking' to ensure that all tobacco and nicotine products are encompassed in the legislation. This approach is essential to prevent the emergence of a new generation addicted to alternative nicotine delivery systems.
Endgame strategies should bolster existing measures, address current shortcomings, and introduce innovative approaches to achieve a genuine and irreversible progression toward a nicotine-free world.
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Prevalence and correlates of secondhand smoke in tobacco growing regions of Zambia: Findings from the 2021 Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND: Exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) poses serious health risks as direct smoking. However, there is insufficient data on SHS prevalence and its correlates in tobacco growing regions.
METHODS: We used the Zambia 2021 Global Youth Tobacco Survey data to assess the prevalence of SHS and its associated factors on 1972 in-school adolescents in tobacco growing regions of Zambia. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20. Univariate and multivariate logistic regression were performed to produce adjusted odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals.
RESULTS: A total of 1972 students (45.7% males and 54.3% females) from tobacco growing regions participated in the survey. The study showed that 61.7% of students were exposed to SHS. Approximately 36.6% were exposed at home, 41.2% in enclosed public places and 46.6% in outdoor public places. Compared to students aged 17 years+, students < 12 years had higher odds of SHS exposure at home (AOR=1.61, 95% CI [1.51, 1.72]), enclosed public places (AOR =1.51, 95% CI [1.41,1.61]), and outdoor public places (AOR=1.67, 95% CI [1.56,1.78]). Those with most of closest friends that smoked were 29% more likely to be exposed to SHS (AOR =1.29, 95% CI [1.22,1.37]). Those that favored banning smoking inside enclosed public places were 19% more likely to be exposed to SHS at home (AOR= 1.19, 95% CI [1.16,1.21]), 40% more likely to be exposed in enclosed public places (AOR=1.40, 95% CI [1.37,1.43]) and 39% more likely to be exposed in outdoor public places (AOR 1.30, 95% CI [1.36, 1.42]).
CONCLUSIONS: The study revealed that SHS exposure remains a serious public health problem in Zambia. This signifies poor enforcement of the existing statutory instrument (SI) No. 39 of 2008 under the Local Government Act which prohibits smoking in public places. There is need to review existing tobacco control policies and ensure enhanced enforcement.
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Compliance with the comprehensive smoke-free law in nine cities of Indonesia: A need for better implementation capacity and commitment

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BACKGROUND: Until 2024, 449 of the 514 Indonesian cities/districts have adopted partial and comprehensive smoke-free law (SFL) to protect people from second-hand smoke exposure, in the country with 70 million adult smokers. However, the implementation of the regulation in Indonesia has not yet been optimal. This study aims to assess compliance of 9 cities/ districts of Indonesia who have adopted comprehensive SFL.
METHODS: This study was a cross-sectional survey conducted in 2023. A total of 4188 were selected through stratified simple random sampling and walking protocols for venues with no sampling frames. Compliance was assessed based on 6 indicators: absence of smoking, cigarette butt, ashtray, smoking room, smell of cigarette, and presence of no smoking sign. Three additional indicators: the absence of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; the absence of cigarette sellers; compliance to all 6 indoor indicators above for outdoor areas at four venues (healthcare facilities, school, university and children's playground).
RESULTS: The overall compliance was only 46.16%. Pontianak City showed the highest compliance (90.12%) while Denpasar City was the lowest (24.85%). Venues with the highest compliance were government offices (73.02%), lowest were nightclubs with zero compliance. The absence

of a no smoking sign was the highest violation (39.8%), followed by presence of cigarette butts (13.27%) and ashtrays (12.03%) found in indoor areas. The violation on the evidence of indoor smoking (people smoking, cigarette butts, ashtray), was 26.91%, the highest was at nightclubs (90%), then universities (57.89%).

CONCLUSIONS: Compliance to SFL was varied across cities which reflects the wide range of the implementation capacity and commitment. Measures to improve compliance must be taken which include strengthening the capacity of the enforcement agents, better collaboration across sectors, optimal commitment including budget allocation and improving community participation.

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The tax stamp hampers the effectiveness of pictorial health warning messages in Indonesia: Findings from cigarette pack survey

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BACKGROUND: Indonesia suffers a huge burden from cigarette consumption. Measures to control cigarette consumption have been taken including the display of a 40% pictorial health warning (PHW) on cigarette packs and excise tax which is displayed as an excise stamp on the pack. Both the PHW and excise stamps convey messages that the products are harmful and must be controlled. This report aims to portray the implementation of both policies on cigarette packs.

METHODS: This study was part of a price monitoring survey conducted in selected 81 districts/cities of Indonesia between April until June 2023. We collected cigarette packs from at least six types of retailers in each district/city including traditional markets, modern marts, street vendors, kiosks, train/bus stations, and gas stations. All cigarette packs available at the selected retailers were observed and digital photos of the packs were taken. Information on PHW, excise stamps, and types of cigarettes were documented. Data were analysed descriptively.

RESULTS: We collected a total of 11062 cigarette packs, 68.9% of the packs were machine-rolled kretek cigarettes. Most of the cigarette packs (99.7%) have excise bands, while 99.8% display PHW. However, almost three-quarters (72.2%) of the PHW was covered by the tax stamp. A high proportion of PHW covered by tax stamps was observed on machine-rolled kretek (89.6%) and machine-rolled white cigarettes (88.2%). We also found that 6.7% of the tax band on the packs was the tax stickers from 2019 to 2022.

CONCLUSIONS: Our monitoring showed a high proportion of PHW was covered by excise stamps especially machine-made cigarettes. This fact signifies the goal of displaying PHW to improve awareness and reduce consumption has not been optimally attained. The Government must address this issue to optimise both policy measures, by adjusting the size of the excise band and considering the use of digital excise stamps.

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Strengthening tobacco control in cinema: A case study on monitoring and enforcement in Bangladesh

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The portrayal of tobacco use in cinema in Bangladesh poses a significant challenge to public health efforts. Violations of the Smoking and Tobacco Use (Control) Act, 2005 (amended in 2013), are common, as revealed by MANAS's monitoring of 17 films (14 domestic and 3 foreign). None of the smoking scenes were necessary for the storyline, and mandatory health warnings were not displayed as prescribed. Additionally, some films promoted e-cigarettes, targeting the youth demographic. Weak enforcement, limited awareness among filmmakers, and the glamorization of smoking contribute to these violations, complicating efforts to ensure compliance with the law.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: MANAS has adopted a comprehensive approach to address these challenges:

- Regular Monitoring: Systematic review of films screened in cinema halls to identify violations.
- Advocacy: Film screening reports are submitted to the Bangladesh Film Certification Board (Censor Board), followed by advocacy meetings with its members.
- Proactive Measures by the Censor Board:
- Mandating prominent anti-tobacco warnings in films and promotional materials.
- Attaching anti-tobacco messages to foreign films approved for screening in Bangladesh.
- Recommending the removal of unnecessary smoking scenes and embedding educational content on the harms of tobacco use.

RESULTS AND IMPACT:

- Increased awareness of tobacco control laws within the film industry.
- Stricter enforcement of compliance measures by the Censor Board, including anti-tobacco messages in films and promotional content.
- Gradual integration of anti-tobacco warnings and educational documentaries in films.

CONCLUSIONS: Despite progress, tobacco use in films continues to receive insufficient attention. Sustained advocacy, robust monitoring, and collaboration between organizations like MANAS and the Censor Board are essential to ensure compliance with the Tobacco

Control Act. These efforts will foster a healthier media environment and protect youth from tobacco influences.

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Effective strategies for Graphic Health Warnings in Bangladesh: Promoting public health awareness and tobacco control

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco uses in Bangladesh remains a significant public health issue, with approximately 35.3% of adults using tobacco (GATS-2017). The country has a complex tobacco consumption pattern, with a variety and intricate packaging designs aimed at attracting consumers. One effective strategy to reduce tobacco use is the implementation of graphic health warnings (GHWs) on packaging. Since their introduction in 2016, the Tobacco Control and Research Cell of Dhaka International University has been monitoring their effectiveness. Despite challenges, the research team adopted a strategy to identify the supply chain, measure compliance, and report to enforcing authorities, resulting in a significant increase in compliance from 5% to 85%, fostering behavior change. This paper examines the strategies for effectively implementing GHWs in Bangladesh.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: To mitigate the issues, TCRC adopted innovative compliance monitoring tactics. Firstly, the team developed a research protocol and compliance check list based on section 10 of tobacco control law. Secondly, identify the wholesale shops by searching from retail shops. Thirdly, measure the compliance and sensitize wholesale shopkeepers to create pressure to the producer to implement the pictorial warnings, otherwise they will face legal punishment. Fourthly, organized the press briefing to disseminate the violation and submit the report to the task-force committee.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Pictorial implementation rate increased from 5% to 85% (2016 to 2024) and the public perception of tobacco packaging warnings shows that over 80% of smokers are aware of the health risks associated with tobacco use, but only 42% report that graphic health warnings influence their smoking behavior. Furthermore, evidence suggests that larger and more prominent images increase recall and the perceived seriousness of tobacco-related health risks.

CONCLUSIONS: Overall, the paper concludes that graphic health warnings, when properly designed and implemented, can serve as a powerful tool in Bangladesh's broader efforts to reduce tobacco use, improve public health, and save lives.

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MANAS successful advocacy ensured the Government of Bangladesh bans the import of e-cigarettes

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Among 180 million Bangladeshi population, about 60% them between 5 to 39 years old. Tobacco Industries (TI) see them as potential customers of their e-cigarettes and are running aggressive marketing and promotion focusing them on e-cigarettes as 'less harmful' and 'helpful to quit smoking'. Promote e-cigarettes through popular stars in dramas, movies and on social media. As a result, e-cigarette sale centers increased a lot, and the use of e-cigarettes has become a fashionable trend. Since e-cigarettes are not controlled by the existing Tobacco Control Act, these products are selling without any control.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: MANAS has been at the forefront of the advocacy to sensitize policy makers on banning e-cigarette in Bangladesh. MANAS met Health Advisor, Secretary emphasized the dangers of e-cigarettes and submitted policy briefs, sent several letters on banning e-cigarettes. On 9th October 2024, MoHFW issued a recommendation letter to the Ministry of Commerce requested to ban e-cigarette import as results of MANAS activity. Also, MoHFW called a meeting and formed an expert committee consultation with MANAS President. As a member of the expert committee, MANAS President provided critical insights throughout this process. In addition MANAS has conducted seminars, published articles in leading national newspapers, and led extensive social media campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of e-cigarettes and for the drive the policy progress.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Recently, the Ministry of Commerce banned import of e-cigarettes (electronic nicotine delivery systems) from the list of prohibited products under its import policy order. This step is a vital move to protect public health and shield the next generation from the deceptive traps of the tobacco industry.

CONCLUSIONS: It is the timely steps of the government for banning the import of e-cigarettes, prioritizing public health. This order will be supportive to fully ban e-cigarettes in Bangladesh including its production, marketing, selling, use, and disposals.

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Assessing the relationship between tobacco smoking and major depressive disorder among patients in Nigeria: A cross-sectional study

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BACKGROUND: The interplay between sex, lifestyle choices—such as smoking—and the prevalence and severity of depression is complex and significant. The SLC6A4 gene, which regulates serotonin transport, has been linked to depression. Additionally, smokers tend to exhibit elevated levels of inflammatory biomarkers, including IL-6. However, the relationship between inflammation and depression severity in Nigerian patients has not been thoroughly investigated. This study aims to explore the potential synergistic effects of gene-environment interactions and IL-6 levels on the severity of depression in this population.
METHODS: A total of 164 participants were recruited from 3 randomly selected tertiary facilities in Nigeria, and a 21-item Hamilton depressive rating score (HDRS) was used to measure the major Depressive Disorder (MDD) in the participants to ascertain severity. A score of 0-7 is generally acceptable to be within the normal range, while a score of 8-19 is considered moderate, and 20 or higher is severe. A questionnaire was also used to ascertain respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and smoking status. Descriptive statistics, chi-square, and t-test were used for the analysis.
RESULTS: The respondents ranged from 18-70 years, with a mean of 30.8 years; 77.4% were females, and 37.5% consumed alcohol. Many 60 (36.6%) of the respondents had a normal HDRS, while 55 (33.5%) and 49 (29.9%) had moderate and severe HDRS, respectively. There were no associations between being a smoker and being depressed (p=0.162; OR=0.456; POR=0.078; 95% CI=0.154-1.346).
CONCLUSIONS: The findings of this study indicate that smoking does not significantly influence the occurrence or severity of depression among the participants. Despite the known associations between inflammatory biomarkers and depression, our results suggest that smoking may not exacerbate depressive symptoms in this Nigerian population. Further research is warranted to explore the complex relationships between genetic factors, lifestyle choices, and inflammatory processes in the context of mental health.
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Unveiling adolescent e-cigarette use and accessibility in Mumbai, India

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BACKGROUND: The increasing prevalence of e-cigarette use among adolescents poses a significant public health challenge, despite the 2019 national ban under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) in India. E-cigarettes, often marketed as a safer alternative to traditional smoking, are gaining traction among schoolchildren, facilitated by covert networks and peer influences. This study aims to explore the prevalence, motivations, and patterns of e-cigarette use among school-going children in Mumbai, examining the social, economic, and psychological dynamics that sustain this hidden epidemic.
METHODS: Using a qualitative lens, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 72 students from diverse localities in Mumbai. Participants were selected to ensure representation across socioeconomic backgrounds. Discussions delved into awareness, access, usage patterns, peer influences, and perceptions of health risks associated with e-cigarette use. Data were analyzed thematically to uncover nuanced insights into the drivers of e-cigarette adoption and the mechanisms that enable its continued availability despite regulatory efforts.
RESULTS: The study unveiled a sophisticated network of access and affordability, with crowdfunding models and peer-driven ownership systems circumventing financial barriers. Despite a general awareness of e-cigarettes—commonly referred to as 'pen hookah' or 'vape'—knowledge of the health risks and legal implications remained fragmented and inconsistent. Availability persisted through shadow markets and discreet sales near schools. Peer influence and social validation emerged as dominant motivators for use. Misconceptions, such as e-cigarettes being harmless or safer, further fuelled adoption.
CONCLUSIONS: The findings highlight the need for multi-pronged interventions, including stricter enforcement of PECA, public awareness campaigns, and community engagement. Educating adolescents and families on the health risks and legal consequences, alongside dismantling shadow networks, is crucial. The study underscores the importance of proactive measures to curb the growing e-cigarette epidemic among youth and inform future policy and prevention programs.
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Cost-effectiveness of pharmacological treatments for smoking cessation in Argentina

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BACKGROUND: Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease worldwide, causing immense health and economic burdens. In Argentina, 26.1% of men and 18.6% of women smoke, leading to 44851 deaths annually, alongside over 68000 hospitalizations and 20620 cancer diagnoses attributed to tobacco use. These figures underscore the urgent need for effective smoking cessation interventions. Pharmacological treatments for smoking cessation (TFCT), such as nicotine replacement therapies (NRT), bupropion, varenicline, and nortriptyline, offer a proven means to reduce tobacco use and its associated health impacts. This study evaluates the cost-effectiveness of TFCT options to support their broader integration into Argentina's public health system.
METHODS: A first-order Monte Carlo microsimulation model, validated in multiple international contexts, was tailored to the Argentine healthcare system. The model incorporated demographic and clinical data, including

smoking prevalence, disease incidence, mortality rates, and direct healthcare costs linked to smoking-related illnesses. TFCT options were compared against usual care in terms of outcomes such as quality-adjusted life years (QALYs), incremental cost-effectiveness ratios (ICERs), and healthcare savings. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to assess the robustness of results across various scenarios and age groups.

RESULTS: Preliminary findings demonstrate that all pharmacological treatments significantly improve health outcomes compared to usual care, with varenicline and bupropion achieving the most substantial gains in QALYs and cost-effectiveness across most scenarios. Age-based variations were notable, as younger individuals showed greater relative benefits due to longer life expectancies. These interventions not only reduce the burden of diseases like cardiovascular conditions, cancer, and COPD but also generate substantial cost savings for the healthcare system.

CONCLUSIONS: Pharmacological smoking cessation therapies are cost-effective in Argentina, offering considerable health and economic benefits. Policymakers should prioritize the integration of these interventions into public health strategies, ensuring accessibility to reduce tobacco-related morbidity and mortality.

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The tobacco industry's interference in the Judiciary to invalidate the regulation of additives in tobacco products in Brazil

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2012, Anvisa, the Brazilian sanitary agency, published the RDC 14, to prohibit the use of flavoured additives and ammonia in tobacco products, to prevent smoking and encourage cessation, reducing the attractiveness, palatability and toxicity of these products. The tobacco industry judicialized the public policy through lawsuits and has managed to guarantee that cigarette manufacturers are exempt from complying with the rule, which allowed the registration of more than a thousand new tobacco products with banned additives between 2012 and 2023.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Hiring large and influential law firms and legal opinions by renowned jurists, in addition to the use of fallacious arguments, such as risks to the economic sector and increase in the illegal market, are some strategies adopted by the industry.

In contrast, governmental and non-governmental organizations, with global cooperation, have carried out intense work to bring information to decision-making bodies, participating in processes to enruse that judicial decisions and opinions by the Public Prosecutor's Office are aligned with the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, Brazilian Federal Constitution and scientific evidence, encouraging the public debate.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: As a result, all judicial decisions handed down to date and statements by the Public Prosecutor's Office have recognized the constitutionality of the public policy, such as the 2018 decision by the Federal Supreme Court. However, for reasons of quorum, the decision was not given binding effect and more than 40 lawsuits emerged. One of these cases reached the supreme court and will be judged as a precedent, which will end a 12 year debate that is encouraged by he tobacco industry.

CONCLUSIONS: The rapporteur minister, in the trial that began in 2024, presented a vote recognizing the constitutionality of the measure. Governmental and non-governmental organizations remain optimistic and take actions to ensure that the court final decision will be in accordance with the rapporteur vote.

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Trajectories and chutzpah of WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 policy in India: Enablers in policy processes

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BACKGROUND: Following the unanimous adoption of a series of guidelines and recommendations for the implementation of Article 5.3 (2008), success stories from India seem to follow a 'domino' effect, wherein the precedents at one subnational jurisdiction are followed by others. This research scrutinizes Indian tobacco control policy audacity in terms of Article 5.3 of WHO-FCTC and explores the enablers that facilitated it.

METHODS: A census approach-all sub-national Article 5.3 documents (circulars/letters/notifications/orders) were mapped, followed by objective discussions with key sources from each jurisdiction. Key themes were identified and compared across eligible Indian states/Union territories (UTs), to identify similarities and differences.

RESULTS: Till January, 2025, > 60% of Article 5.3 policy coverage is evident on India's map. Analyzed documents reveal notable omissions across states/UTs in the adoption of guidelines: only some districts/state governments refer to regulating 'socially responsible' industry activities, while none include pre-emptive measures preventing the industry from receiving preferential treatment. Government(s) of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have issued detailed notifications including a protocol, procedure for a meeting (if at all necessary), code of conduct, and empowered committee constitution. Following clustering across the states/UTs, the Ministry of Health was found to be the major enabler; with the Ministry of Higher Education as an outlier (Madhya Pradesh) and Uttar Pradesh en route for a 'top-down' model.

CONCLUSIONS: Lessons from India reveal that civil societies, along with policy actors and local governments have been integral in following the 'bottom-up' Article 5.3 policy adoption process. 'Whole of government approach', intersectoral and multi-jurisdiction collaboration, and lessons learned from previous policies with proactive

advocacy strategies are additional drivers that the states/UTs in India and other Parties to the FCTC can employ in adopting and implementing Article 5.3 policy, as they embark upon similar efforts

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A qualitative exploration of young South African women's patterns and reasons for using e-cigarettes

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BACKGROUND: Electronic cigarettes have been marketed as alternative tobacco products and have become increasingly popular, especially among young people when compared to other demographic groups. This study explored young South African women's experiences of using e-cigarettes. Age of initiation, patterns and reasons for using e-cigarettes, and the financial impact experienced with quitting were explored.

METHODS: This qualitative study used an interpretive research paradigm. Data were collected from three focus groups guided by a discussion guide. The total sample comprised 11 young women aged between 18 and 25 who had used or were using e-cigarettes. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo version 12.

RESULTS: Findings revealed five key themes: 1) Age of e-cigarette initiation ranged from pre-adolescence to adolescence, and adulthood; 2) Patterns of use included occasional and daily use, concurrent use with other tobacco products (dual use), and use with other tobacco products and alcohol (poly-use). Participants reported using e-cigarettes at social events, with other peers, and alone; 3) Reasons for use included easing stress, peer pressure, boredom, experimentation, the appeal of e-cigarettes' designs and flavours, ease of access, and enhanced social media presence; 4) The impact of e-cigarette use weighed on financial and familial issues; 5) Quitting: only one participant reported successfully quitting while some participants had tried to quit but had been unsuccess and advocated more cessation support.

CONCLUSIONS: Interventions are needed to raise awareness about the harmfulness of using e-cigarettes and how these disproportionately affect women. Interventions should include the management of peer pressure, boredom, and stress as well as policies to regulate the design and flavours of e-cigarettes. Cessation support is also needed to assist young people (especially women) who wish to quit using e-cigarettes.

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Read Aloud Challenge 2023: Engaging families in smoke-free advocacy through digital literacy

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The TC Read Aloud Challenge 2023 is an interactive event designed to leverage the power of storytelling to promote smoke-free environments within families. This initiative, initiated by LINKAR INISIATIF supported by TC LPAI in collaboration with the 'Read Aloud Yuk' community and other partners such as Let's Read Indonesia, Litara Foundation, and the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Language Agency, aims to educate and engage families on the dangers of smoking and the importance of establishing smoke-free homes.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: During the 21-day 'Read Aloud Challenge 2023,' participants selected a digital book from a collection designed by LINKAR INISIATIF, which promotes tobacco-free living through arts. Families read their chosen book aloud, reflected on its message regarding the harms of tobacco, and recorded this session. These recordings were then uploaded to social media to facilitate engagement, allowing followers to interact by liking, commenting, and sharing. This method effectively combined reading, reflection, and social media engagement to spread awareness and encourage dialogue about tobacco control within the community.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The 'Read Aloud Challenge 2023' saw impressive participation, with over 800 families actively engaging in the event, demonstrating substantial community involvement. Surveys and feedback collected after the challenge showed that there was a notable increase in knowledge about the harms of tobacco among participants. Furthermore, parents reported a heightened readiness to enforce smoke-free rules within their homes. The initiative also garnered positive media coverage, which played a crucial role in elevating community awareness and bolstering support for ongoing tobacco control measures.

CONCLUSIONS: The Read-Aloud Challenge 2023 exemplifies how literacy and public health advocacy can be intertwined to foster healthier communities. Through the power of reading and community collaboration, this initiative has made significant strides in promoting smoke-free environments, marking a step forward in public health education tailored for families.

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Monitoring the progress of tobacco control at the subnational level in India: The index for tobacco control sustainability

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BACKGROUND: India has taken the lead in enforcing tobacco control policies and initiatives, aiming to safeguard public health. Consistent and ongoing efforts are required

over time to ensure the success of tobacco control measures. The sustainability of tobacco control efforts is pivotal for moving toward a tobacco-free trajectory for the country.

METHODS: This index was developed through a literature review, followed by a modified Delphi technique among key experts representing various TC stakeholders and finally, all indicators were given operational definitions and illustrations based on a thorough review and expert feedback. Based on the indicators, the sustainability score was assessed in 27 states for the year 2022-23.

RESULTS: The institutionalisation of tobacco control was reported in 26 states and UTs. State Level Coordination Committee (SLCC) meeting held in five states and UTs. The institutionalisation of tobacco control in 90% or more districts was done in 24 states and UTs. District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) meeting held in more than 75% of districts of 18 states. Robust enforcement mechanism was present in 25 states and UTs. Only 12 states reported the presence of a state-level coalition for tobacco control. seven states had TVL policies and 14 states had state-level policy on WHO FCTC policy guidelines.

CONCLUSIONS: This is a first-of-its-kind exercise at a sub-national level and could be used for future evaluations of the National Tobacco Control Programme in India. It highlights the key areas that require more convergence and efforts to advance sustainable tobacco control at the subnational level.

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Monitoring the illicit tobacco trade in Colombia

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BACKGROUND: Colombia has some of the lowest cigarette prices in the Americas, and tobacco use is a significant public health concern among Colombians, contributing to nearly 4% of annual deaths and ranking as the second leading modifiable risk factor for mortality. Taxation represents one of the most cost-effective strategies for reducing tobacco consumption, yet the tobacco industry opposes such policies, contending that higher taxes will exacerbate illicit tobacco trade (ICT). The country implemented a tobacco tax reform in 2016, and a new tax increase is currently under consideration. Consequently, this study aims to monitor the prevalence of ICT in Colombia to inform the performance of the controlling tobacco policies

METHODS: A cross-sectional survey was conducted from June to July 2024 across five Colombian cities, which collectively account for 56.1% of the country's smokers. Participants were selected using stratified sampling, divided by sex and age into ten distinct strata, ensuring enhanced geographical representation. Cigarettes were classified as licit or illicit based on current Colombian legislation.

RESULTS: The study found that the prevalence of ICT was 10% based on smokers and 21% based on cigarette packs, ranging from 77% in Cúcuta to 12% in Bogotá. Among the illicit packs, 53.1% lacked identifiable origin, while 42% were marked as originating from the USA, primarily linked to the leading illicit brand, Rumba. ICT was associated with older age, lower education, and heavy smoking. Flavor was the primary factor influencing cigarette purchases, while 13% of consumers considered price a key factor.

CONCLUSIONS: ICT increased compared to prior research, even in the absence of recent tax increases. Implementing heightened tobacco taxes alongside complementary strategies to regulate ICT could enforcement the control tobacco policies and contribute to reducing tobacco use.

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The art of resisting the tobacco industry corporate social responsibility

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BACKGROUND: So-called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity by the tobacco industry (TI) is a widely used tool to influence policymakers, normalize smoking, promote vaping, greenwashing to distract from tobacco harms and undermining public health initiatives. This study aims to analyse how TI's level of CSR affects the country's ability to resist TI interference as indicated in the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index (GTI) which is a Civil Society Organisations (CSO) report covering 90 countries, tracking Article 5.3 implementation. The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) publishes the GTI with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

METHODS: GTI data was analysed to identify patterns of TI interference. Countries with the lowest (indicating minimal interference) and highest (indicating significant interference) GTI scores were identified. The intensity and frequency of TI CSR activities in these countries were examined. The World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory (2022) provided additional insights into the status of TI CSR bans in these countries.

RESULTS: The amount of tobacco CSR is hardly 20% of the weight of GTI scores and yet a country with high CSR is likely to be one of the worst scoring countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Switzerland, Japan, Indonesia, and Georgia. The converse is true suggesting that CSR has a very high impact on the country's ability to implement other parts of Article 5.3 such as avoiding unnecessary interactions between governments and the TI and its participation in policy development.

CONCLUSIONS: TI's CSR activities influence countries' abilities to resist industry interference and fully implement Article 5.3. Banning or strictly regulating TI CSR activities is essential for strengthening public health policies and safeguarding them from industry manipulation.

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Prevalence of exposure to tobacco marketing at points of sale and media: Global Youth Tobacco Survey, 2012-2021

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco industry media and sales tactics can shape perceptions, influence initiation, and sustain tobacco use among youth, posing significant health risks. This study aims to assess youths' exposure to pro-tobacco marketing to inform tobacco control policies/programs.

METHODS: We analyzed 2012-2021 data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, from 119 countries, to assess youth (aged 13-15 years) exposure to pro-tobacco marketing. We examined exposure to tobacco marketing at points of sale and in media, and tobacco companies' offers of free tobacco products. Weighted prevalence estimates with 95% confidence intervals were calculated for each indicator, by country. Median prevalence estimates for each indicator were calculated by World Health Organization (WHO) region*.

*The six WHO regions include African Region (AFRO), Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO), European Region (EURO), Region of the Americas (PAHO), South-East Asia Region (SEARO), and Western Pacific Region (WPRO)].

RESULTS: Youth exposure to tobacco marketing varied across countries and regions. Prevalence of exposure at points of sale ranged from 8.1% in Uzbekistan to 84.1% in Bhutan, with the South-East Asia Region having a median prevalence estimate of 42.3%. Prevalence of exposure to media portrayals of tobacco use ranged from 44.3% in Ecuador to 91.4% in Egypt, with the South-East Asia Region having a median prevalence estimate of 77.3%. Lastly, prevalence of exposure to free product offers ranged from 1.7% in Togo to 25.1% in Timor Leste, with the Western Pacific Region having a median prevalence estimate of 8.8%.

CONCLUSIONS: This study shows regional differences in youth exposure to pro-tobacco marketing and underscores its effects on youth. Findings support the need for stronger enforcement of policies aligned with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), particularly Article 13, which support eliminating tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.

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Canada's multi-level vape tax: Lessons from advocacy pursuits and industry tactics

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: As with many countries, vaping in Canada skyrocketed over the past decade. Rates among young adults are 5 times higher than older adults indicating this has become a generational problem. Research shows that many young people report vape products are easy to access, partly due to their low cost. Health groups advocated at national and regional levels for taxes on vape products to deter consumption. However, balancing harm reduction and risk prevention within government and across the country made advocacy efforts challenging.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Despite a significant amount of opposition from the vape industry who fought restrictions with a well-resourced grassroots campaign of vapers, public health advocates framed the tax as a revenue source and youth protection measure. In 2020, three provinces adopted sales and ad valorem vape taxes. This created a patchwork of pricing measures across the country and encouraged the federal government to create an excise tax whereby e-liquids would be taxed at $1 per 2 ml for first 10ml and $1 per 10 ml thereafter. The 2024 tax framework was a promising solution which standardized the tax rate across the country and doubled it ($2) if provinces bought in.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Prevalence is expected to decline following tax implementation. The excise tax on e-liquids with a collaborative provincial component was promising but not without limitations and industry manipulation. Following the tax, the vape industry modified their products and pricing strategies which in turn meant the cost per puff of nicotine remained low. A graduated tax model meant that bulk purchasing may be incentivized.

CONCLUSIONS: Industry innovation and vape product advancements mean that the Canadian vape tax model may need to be adjusted to further increase the price of nicotine products. Measures such as device taxation, minimum pricing strategies and graduated pricing based on nicotine concentration could be considered.

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Action of youth in four districts of Sri Lanka against tobacco industry strategies

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In an effort to combat the tactics of the tobacco industry, an initiative was undertaken across four districts in the central part of Sri Lanka with thirty-six youth groups. These groups were mobilized to identify the strategies employed by the tobacco industry to develop effective countermeasures.

This project, launched during the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic, initially focused on uncovering online strategies used by tobacco companies. It later expanded to involve youth from schools, vocational institutes, and rural societies. Facing declining sales, the tobacco industry intensified efforts through online sales, tax lobbying, and social media ads. Challenges included forming youth groups, mobilizing policy makers online, and countering tactics like cannabis legalization

promotion and indirect advertising in TV shows. Despite these hurdles, the youth groups continue to actively combat the industry's strategies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Youth groups were formed through online platforms, fostering connections and collaboration to identify tobacco industry tactics. Initial activities included setting targets, addressing challenges, and creating competitions to engage participants online and transitioned to in-person.

RESULTS AND IMPACT:

• Forming 36 gender-balanced youth groups, each comprising 40-50 members,
• Identification of 17 unique tactics, with a total of 432 individual strategies identified.
• Development of 33 online counter-platforms.
• Successful lobbying of 29 policymakers, 245 shop owners, and 82 artists.
• Implementation of 72 advocacy programs, 16 individuals quit smoking, an additional 43 identified as having quit.
• Encouragement of 37 outlets to cease tobacco sales.

CONCLUSIONS: This initiative underscores the potential of a sustainable system driven by well-trained and mentored youth groups. By identifying and countering tobacco industry tactics, engaging in advocacy and lobbying, and reducing tobacco use among their peers and communities, these youth groups have made significant strides in undermining the industry's influence.

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Youth in the crosshairs: Analysis of tobacco industry youth-targeting strategies and policy interference in Kenya and Nigeria

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: This paper examines the evolving tactics employed by tobacco companies to target youth populations and undermine tobacco control policies in Kenya and Nigeria which are two of Africas' large economies.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Drawing from social media analyses, market surveillance data and desktop research, documented are the ways in which the tobacco industry has adapted its marketing strategies to capture the youth in these key African markets. The paper reveals youth-targeting approaches including: Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, social media influencer campaigns disguised as lifestyle content, strategic product placement, sponsorship of youth-focused events and the introduction of shisha and flavored nicotine products marketed as 'safer alternatives' to traditional tobacco products. In both countries, tobacco companies have actively interfered with policies which are aimed at protecting youth, particularly through challenging graphic health warnings, opposing flavor bans and exploiting social media and online spaces to promote youth-focused initiatives.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Despite similar regulatory frameworks in the two countries, implementation challenges differ significantly: Kenya faces significant resistance to enforcement while Nigeria struggles with enforcing penalties for tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) and tobacco control violations in compliance with national tobacco control policies.

CONCLUSIONS: The concerning trends in both markets where tobacco companies exploit regulatory gaps in digital marketing oversight and employ third- party vendors to circumvent youth access restrictions is highlighted in the paper. To address such concerns, governments in the two countries should protect public health policies with respect to tobacco control from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO-FCTC. They should also commit to implementing these measures across departments of government that may have an interest in or the capacity to affect public health policies with respect to tobacco control and strengthen targeted interventions such as digital marketing regulations, school- zone enforcement and youth-led counter-marketing campaigns.

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Transforming tobacco perceptions: A community-based intervention for smoking prevention among men who have sex with men in Osun State, Nigeria

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use remains a significant public health concern globally, particularly among marginalized populations such as men who have sex with men (MSM). This demographic often faces unique challenges related to smoking behavior, influenced by social norms, mental health perceptions, and risk factors specific to their communities. This intervention therefore aimed to reduce smoking prevalence and improve participants' understanding of tobacco-related health risks.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Outreaches were conducted through parties, picnics and community dialogue as strategies for reaching MSM in the State. Needs assessments were conducted through eight in-depth interviews and five focus group discussions to identify the plight and perceptions of tobacco smoking and health consequences. We therefore implemented tobacco smoking prevention through sensitization workshops. A total of 131 MSM who were recruited for this project and 5 were lost to follow up. This intervention was carried out for 12 months and was evaluated at 6 months and 1 year.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Participants' knowledge of tobacco increased from 18.0% at baseline to 87.9% within 6 months. At baseline, 73.8% of the participants reported engaging in daily tobacco smoking in the last 3 months. During evaluation at 1 year, only 13.9% reported engaging in daily tobacco smoking. Prior to the intervention, 80.9% had a negative perception that tobacco smoking reduces depression and at 6-month evaluation, this reduced to

23.9%. A qualitative study revealed that the major risk factors for smoking among respondents include influence of family members or peers who smoke and sexual enhancement.

CONCLUSIONS: The intervention demonstrated significant positive outcomes in both knowledge and behavior regarding tobacco use. The increase in awareness from 18.0% to 87.9% within six months indicates that targeted educational efforts can effectively inform this population about the health risks associated with smoking. Furthermore, the substantial reduction in daily smoking rates highlights the potential for community-based interventions to alter smoking behaviors.

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Advancing tobacco taxation to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases in Mexico: Insights from a simulation model

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BACKGROUND: Despite recent progress in tobacco taxation in Mexico, including the implementation of an automatic inflation-based adjustment mechanism in 2020, the country lags behind in the most cost-effective measure of the World Health Organization's (WHO) MPOWER strategy to reduce smoking (PAHO 2023). Tobacco taxes currently account for 55.4% of cigarette retail prices, well below global best practices (WHO 2021). Cigarettes are also more affordable than in other Latin American countries like Ecuador (WHO 2023). At the same time, smoking prevalence has remained stagnant between 2009 and 2023 (INSP 2023), deviating from the 2025 goal (WHO 2013).

METHODS: Building on earlier work (Waters et al. 2010; Saenz-de-Miera et al. 2022), a simulation model was programmed in R to estimate the effects of tobacco tax increases on consumption and revenue. Inputs included tobacco taxes, value added tax, price elasticity, retailer margins, retail prices, tax pass-through, and inflation. The main scenario considers a one-time increase in the specific tobacco tax from 0.6166 to 3 pesos per cigarette, maintaining the ad valorem tax at 160% of the price to the retailer. An alternative scenario eliminates the ad valorem tax to reduce incentives for brand switching, increasing the specific tax to 4.4 pesos.

RESULTS: Raising the specific tax to 3 pesos would increase retail prices by 81.7% on average, raise the tax burden to 68.5%, reduce consumption by 44.2%, and increase revenue by 25.4%. Replacing the ad valorem tax with a specific tax of 4.4 pesos would yield similar results in consumption and revenue, but larger price increases for ultra-low-priced brands (196.6% vs. 147.5%) and comparable increases for premium brands (67.0% vs. 73.1%), reducing price differentials.

CONCLUSIONS: Higher tobacco taxes in Mexico could significantly reduce tobacco use and contribute to decreasing the burden of non-communicable diseases. A fully specific tax structure may help minimize price disparities across brands.

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The compliance of hospitality and public venues to smoke-free law in the world's popular tourist destination, Bali, Indonesia

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BACKGROUND: Bali is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Indonesia, with a huge number of hospitality and public venues to cater the domestic and international visitors. These venues are designated as smoke-free areas under the smoke-free law (SFL) adopted in all jurisdictions of Bali to protect from second-hand smoke exposures. This study aims to assess the compliance of the hospitality and public venues.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional conducted in all 9 cities/districts of Bali Province in 2023-2024. A total of 1288 hospitality venues including, hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, public places; worship places and public transportation, entertainment places; cafes, night clubs, pubs/bars, and other public places were obtained through stratified simple random sampling and walking protocols for places with lists of unavailable places. Compliance with SFL was assessed based on 6 indicators: absence of smoking activities, cigarette butt, ashtray, smoking room, smell of cigarette, and presence of no smoking sign.

RESULTS: The overall compliance of the hospitality and public venues in Bali Province was 15.06%, which by cities/districts were ranging from 8.62% - 20.26%. Compliance by venue types was low ranging from 7.14% - 25.88%. Entertainment places showed the lowest compliance (7.14%), followed by hotels (13%) and restaurants (14.94%). From an overall combination of 3 evidence of smoking violation (67.78%), entertainment places (83.19%) showed the highest violation, followed by shopping centers (81.18%) and hotels (71.30%). Absence of no smoking sign (76.79%) was the highest violation, followed by presence of ashtrays (26.79%) and cigarette butts (22.28%) found in indoor areas.

CONCLUSIONS: Compliance to SFL of the hospitality and public venues in Bali Province was extremely low, which showed the lack of implementation and supervision of SFL practices. In addition, needs to improve SFL through budgeting and resources plans for enforcement and routine inspections, also build venue manager's commitment to the SFL implementation.

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Susceptibility to tobacco use and associated factors among school-going adolescents in Zambia

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among adolescents is a major public health problem. Preventive policies and interventions should target non-users of tobacco that are susceptible to using tobacco. A study was carried out to descript the pattern of susceptibility to tobacco use in Zambia

METHODS: This was a stratified (Lusaka, Tobacco growing and Rest of country) cross-sectional school based survey. With the help of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, sample sizes of 25 schools and 1875 students for each region was determined. Overall, the sample sizes were 81 schools and 8336 students. Students were sampled using a two-stage cluster sampling technique. Applying weighted analysis, correlates were identified using adjusted odds ratios and their 95% Confidence intervals.

RESULTS: Overall, 34.1% (34.9% of male and 33.1% of female) students were susceptible to using tobacco in future. Main findings included: students aged < 12 years were 51% (AOR=1.51, 95% CI: 1.44, 1.59) more likely to be susceptible to tobacco use compared with students aged 17 years or older, offered a free tobacco product from a tobacco company (AOR=1.80, 95% CI: 1.77, 1.83), students who had no closest friend who smoked cigarettes were 15% (AOR=0.49, 95% CI: 0.48, 0.50), current use of electronic cigarette (AOR=1.42, 95% CI: 1.39, 1.44), and ever smoked shisha (AOR=1.47, 95% CI: 1.44, 1.49).

CONCLUSIONS: A high proportion of adolescents was susceptible to tobacco use. There is need to counteract tobacco industry advertisement, curb electronic cigarettes and shisha smoking in order to reduce the level of susceptibility by adolescents to tobacco smoking

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A multi-dimensional approach to tobacco control: Fostering wellbeing through nutrition and mental health

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use among adolescents in low-income urban areas is not just a behavioral concern but deeply interconnected with issues like poor nutrition, mental stress, peer pressure, and the easy accessibility of tobacco products. Social acceptance of tobacco consumption further complicates preventive efforts. Many standalone tobacco control initiatives fail to address these underlying factors, limiting their long-term impact. Salaam Bombay Foundation's In-School Preventive Health Education Programme was designed to overcome these challenges by integrating tobacco awareness with interventions addressing nutrition and mental wellbeing. Targeting over 50000 adolescents annually across 300+ schools in Mumbai, India, the program focuses on the holistic development of adolescents in economically disadvantaged communities.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The program employs a comprehensive strategy to simultaneously address tobacco use, nutritional deficiencies, and mental stress. Through engaging educational sessions, it generates awareness about the ill effects of tobacco while teaching adolescents practical ways to enhance the nutritional content of their diets using locally available food. Stress management is addressed by introducing healthy coping mechanisms and life skills training, reducing the likelihood of adolescents resorting to tobacco use. Peer-driven initiatives such as forming 'health monitor' groups encourage collective action to make schools tobacco-free zones and drive community-level campaigns.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The program has fostered significant behavior change among adolescents, leading to the creation of tobacco-free schools and youth-driven advocacy. Health monitors have successfully influenced policy changes, including raising tobacco taxes, enforcing gutka bans, and eliminating tobacco advertisements on public transportation. The program has demonstrated that integrating tobacco control with nutrition and mental health interventions is more impactful than isolated efforts.

CONCLUSIONS: Comprehensive approaches that address the underlying drivers of adolescent tobacco use are critical for sustainable impact. This model highlights the importance of integrating public health initiatives to improve adolescent wellbeing. Expanding similar frameworks can enhance tobacco control outcomes globally, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

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Understanding smoking behavior among Indonesian students: Drivers, prevalence, and strategies for prevention

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BACKGROUND: This study investigates smoking behavior among Indonesian students to understand key drivers and propose interventions for prevention. Using a nationwide survey, it examines the prevalence, underlying social and environmental factors, and the role of regulations in shaping students' smoking habits. The research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to curb youth smoking in Indonesia.

METHODS: The study surveyed 1275 junior and senior high school students across 175 districts/cities in Indonesia, employing a random sampling method with a 2.8% margin of error. Data on smoking behavior, initiation age, family influence, advertisement exposure, and access to cigarettes were collected through structured questionnaires. Statistical analyses identified correlations

between these factors and smoking prevalence among students.

RESULTS: The findings reveal that 27.8% of students have tried smoking, with 10.7% being daily smokers. The most common age for smoking initiation is 15 years. Advertisement exposure influences 93.65% of students, fostering positive perceptions of smoking. Family influence is significant, as 63.97% of students report smoking because their parents do. Weak enforcement of purchase regulations, including lack of age verification by sellers, facilitates easy access to cigarettes. Students express strong support for smoke-free area policies (KTR) and advertising bans, indicating awareness of preventive measures.

CONCLUSIONS: This study underscores the urgent need for stricter enforcement of cigarette sales regulations, comprehensive health education, and active family involvement to reduce smoking prevalence among students. Strengthening smoke-free policies and restricting tobacco advertising are critical steps to mitigate the influence of environmental factors. These findings advocate for multi-sectoral interventions to protect Indonesian youth from the adverse effects of smoking and promote a healthier, smoke-free generation.

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Exposure and likely effects of second-hand tobacco smoke among workers in hospitality venues in Abuja, Nigeria

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco poses a major global public health threat, with WHO report showing that over 7 million annual deaths occur from direct tobacco use and about 1.2 million deaths from second-hand smoke (SHS) exposure. Since no level of SHS exposure is safe, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recommends 100% smokefree public places. However, only 13 countries in the WHO African Region have legislation providing for 100% smokefree public places.

METHODS: This cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted between October 2021 and February 2022, assessed SHS exposure among 300 workers across 160 hospitality venues in Abuja, Nigeria. Variables examined included educational status, SHS indoor policy, designated smoking area (DSA) availability, ability to control SHS exposure, frequency of exposure, respiratory symptoms, and current tobacco use.

RESULTS: Of the participants, 69% were male and 31% were female. SHS exposure at work was reported by 34.01%. Significant associations were found between SHS exposure frequency and variables such as educational status, indoor SHS policy, DSA availability, and ability to control exposure ($p<0.05$). Logistic regression showed participants with post-secondary education and those able to control SHS exposure were less likely to report exposure (OR = 0.4; 95% CI, 0.23–0.92) and (OR = 0.28; 95% CI, 0.15–0.52), respectively. Workers serving customers in DSAs were over eight times more likely to be exposed to SHS (OR = 8.14; 95% CI, 4.42–15.00).

Self-reported respiratory symptoms were noted in 16.33% of participants, with significant associations found with SHS exposure frequency and control ability ($p<0.05$). Workers exposed to SHS > 15 days/month were over six times more likely to report respiratory symptoms (OR = 6.60; 95% CI, 2.32–18.62).

CONCLUSIONS: The study underscores the need for the amendment of Nigeria's National Tobacco Control Act, 2015, to mandate 100% smoke-free public places and protect the health of non-smokers, especially workers' hospitality venues.

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National Tobacco Control Strategy Pakistan (2022-2030): Policy guidelines for implementation of FCTC and SDGs at national and sub-national levels

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of NCDs, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory illness, and mental health disorders. In Pakistan, 17.53% of NCD-related deaths were attributable to tobacco, as reported by the Global Burden of Disease Study (2019). Recognizing the growing prevalence and associated health burden of tobacco use, a robust, multi-sectoral policy response was essential. The National Tobacco Control Strategy (NTCS), developed by the National Tobacco Control Cell under the Ministry of NHSR&C, serves as a comprehensive framework to address this challenge.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: The NTCS was formulated through an evidence-based and participatory process, engaging provincial governments, development partners, health groups, community-based organizations, and academia. Guided by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and aligned with its MPOWER strategies, the NTCS incorporates population-level tobacco interventions within the National and Provincial Essential Package of Health Services, advancing Pakistan's UHC Reform Agenda. The strategy's objectives include:

- Reducing all forms of tobacco use prevalence by 30% by 2030.
- Decreasing the availability and accessibility of tobacco products, including novel items.
- Strengthening cross-sectoral coordination for

sustainable tobacco control initiatives.
• Establishing robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with national TCLs.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: The NTCS provides a systematic approach to meeting SDGs 3.a: strengthening the implementation of the WHO FCTC. It fosters enhanced provincial and national alignment, policy coherence, and accountability mechanisms to achieve impactful and sustainable outcomes. After adoption of NTCS, this guided many national level consultation including related to tobacco taxation. It also served as guiding framework for various Provincial Implementation and Monitoring committees' meetings' agenda advancing tobacco control initiative in KP, Punjab and Sindh provinces.
CONCLUSIONS: Anchored in global best practices and SDG targets, the NTCS provides a replicable framework for countries aiming to reduce tobacco prevalence and its associated health burden while advancing universal health coverage and sustainable development objectives.
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Urgent global action to protect from exposure to second-hand smoke: A case of fundamental human rights violation

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco smoking continues to be a leading cause of preventable deaths and diseases globally. The global exposure of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure is significant, with around 62.9% of people reporting exposure in any place. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to SHS exposure. Around 1.2 million non-smokers lose their lives due to SHS exposure. This paper highlights the need for implementing human rights laws to protect vulnerable populations from exposure to SHS.
METHODS: A comprehensive review of national and international legal instruments has been undertaken to assess the rights of the individuals, children and women that are violated due to their exposure to SHS.
RESULTS: Every individual has a basic fundamental right to lead a life of the highest attainable standard of health. The right to live in a healthy environment and to lead a healthy life lies at the very heart of the human rights convention of the United Nations including the Article 3 and Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 24 Child Rights Convention, Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Article 12 of the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. While WHO FCTC Conference of Parties have highlighted the need to implement the FCTC to meet the Human Rights goals on several occasions, including at COP10 in Panama.
CONCLUSIONS: Protection from exposure to SHS may be ensured if such exposure is classified as an infringement of an individual's right to life guaranteed under the Constitution and International Human Rights Treaties. Governments should revisit tobacco control laws to align them with the provisions of international human rights treaties for the betterment of public health.
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Sex differences in nicotine and tobacco product use among Serbian adolescents

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BACKGROUND: Numerous studies indicate sex and age differences in tobacco use, but less is known about these differences regarding the use of nicotine products, which have been increasing among adolescents over the past decade.
METHODS: Secondary analyses of the 2022 Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey data in Serbia were conducted. The sample (N= 3962) included students 11, 13, and 15 years old. Five multivariate logistic regression models examined sex and grade differences in the lifetime use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, water pipes, oral nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products.
RESULTS: Lifetime prevalence of cigarette (15.1%), e-cigarette (19.7%), waterpipe (7.1%), oral nicotine pouches (4.9%) and heated tobacco products (6.3%) in total sample shows the difference in popularity of explored products. Five multivariate logistic regression models examined showed no significant differences by sex after adjusting for grade, but grade was a significant factor. Compared to 11 years old students, 13 years old were 2.81 times as likely to have smoked cigarettes ($p<0.001$) and 3.08 times as likely to have used e-cigarettes ($p<0.001$), adjusting for sex. Students 15 years old were 6.38 times as likely to have used cigarettes ($p<0.001$) and 5.82 times as likely to have used e-cigarettes ($p<0.001$) compared to 11 and 13 years old, adjusting for sex. Oral nicotine pouch use was significantly higher among boys than girls ($p<0.001$) and 2.79 times higher among 15 compared to 11 years old students ($p<0.001$).
CONCLUSIONS: Sharp increase in lifetime prevalence of all explored tobacco and nicotine products from 11 to 15 years confirming this period as crucial for interventions. Results show higher susceptibility to oral nicotine pouches use of boys compared with girls stressing importance of targeted interventions for them.
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Cost-effectiveness analysis of a disease-specific tobacco cessation intervention in the context of NCD clinics in India

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BACKGROUND: This study evaluates the cost-effectiveness of a tobacco cessation intervention tailored for patients attending non-communicable disease (NCD) clinics in India. Clinical effectiveness and cost data were sourced from a trial conducted at two district-level NCD clinics, involving patients who used tobacco in any form (smoked or smokeless). The intervention comprised four face-to-face, disease-specific cessation counseling sessions, disease-specific pamphlets, and short text messages in the vernacular language, compared to the usual care provided at these clinics.

METHODS: A decision tree model was used to simulate the cost implications and health outcomes over the patients' lifetime horizon. The primary outcome was the incremental cost per quality-adjusted life year (QALY) gained through the intervention. Analyses were conducted from an abridged societal perspective, applying a 3% annual discount rate as recommended by the Indian Health Technology Assessment Agency (HTAIn). Sensitivity analyses, including One-Way Sensitivity Analysis (OWSA) and Probabilistic Sensitivity Analysis (PSA), were undertaken to address uncertainties arising from potential variations in input parameters such as intervention costs, tobacco cessation rates, and health outcomes.

RESULTS: The lifetime incremental cost per person in the intervention scenario was estimated at ₹12.400, compared to the current scenario of usual care. The intervention resulted in a gain of 0.5 life years per person and 0.4 QALYs per person, with an Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio (ICER) estimated to be ₹31.000 per QALY gained—significantly below the Indian cost-effectiveness threshold of ₹1.94,081 per QALY gained.

CONCLUSIONS: This targeted tobacco cessation intervention is highly cost-effective in the Indian context, primarily driven by the prevention of expenditures on complications arising from prolonged tobacco use and the associated health losses. These findings advocate for the integration of tobacco control interventions into on-going public health services nationwide to optimize resource allocation and improve patient outcomes.

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Illegal sale of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices on the internet in Brazil

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BACKGROUND: In Brazil, the online sale of tobacco products is prohibited, as the marketing, advertising and sale of Electronic Smoking Devices (ESD). The artificial intelligence (AI) use may offer tools for detecting and combating this illegal activity. The present study aims to develop a diagnosis of the illegal sale of tobacco products and ESDs on the Brazilian Internet.

METHODS: A technology company was hired to develop a text and image tracking methodology with machine learning, using Google Search, Apify and SerpApi. The Due to Instagram's encryption the search was only for texts. After the quantitative survey, a sample of the content of websites and Instagram profiles were analyzed.

RESULTS: The search found: 706 websites selling ESD and related products; 44 websites selling only cigarettes and; 305 Instagram profiles selling ESD. The websites selling ESD, can be classified as:

- exclusively sale, as traditional e-commerce and;
- websites that combine sales and promotion, often using visual appeals aimed at young audiences.

The websites offer delivery and various payment methods. The websites that sell only cigarettes adopt a traditional marketing approach, without appealing to young people. The Instagram profiles were characterized as ESD points of sale, with delivery and aiming at young people. The ESD's promotion on social networks is similar to the websites.

Websites provide links to social networks such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and WhatsApp, highlighting the commercial integration between various platforms, intensifying the promotion of tobacco products.

CONCLUSIONS: The study shows that social media and e-commerce platforms are vectors promoting tobacco products and ENDS and the illicit sale of tobacco products on the Internet, remains in Brazil violating the current regulations, requiring the strengthening of online monitoring. The AI may strengthen surveillance by public authorities and a breakthrough capability in the analysis of voluminous amounts of data on the Internet, overcoming the boundaries of traditional monitoring methods.

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The Bangladesh Network for Tobacco Tax Policy (BNTTP): An ideal knowledge hub for research-based tax reform to reduce tobacco use

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Bangladesh Network for Tobacco Tax Policy (BNTTP) serves as a pivotal knowledge hub dedicated to advancing tobacco tax policy in Bangladesh. Its primary objective is to reduce tobacco consumption through effective taxation strategies. Despite high tax rates, tobacco products are remain affordable in Bangladesh due to its faulty taxation system. BNTTP advocates for a specific taxation system. This approach aims to implementing an effective tobacco tax system for effective tobacco control.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: By generating knowledge

and evidence through comprehensive research and policy analysis and disseminating them BNTTP support government to identify limitations, gaps, opportunities etc. to take effective policies for tobacco control. This initiatives also contribute to unveil the TI's tactics and manipulation. By collaborating with stakeholders, the network has identified gaps in the current tax system and proposed actionable reforms. Key recommendations include automating manufacturing processes, digitizing tax collection, implementing secure digital tracking and tracing systems and adoption of a comprehensive tobacco tax policy. To support government, BNTTP has prepared an outline for a comprehensive tobacco tax policy.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The network's efforts have sensitized policymakers about the limitations of the existing tax structure and the benefits of adopting a specific taxation system. In recent years, the government has significantly increased the price and tax rate of tobacco products every year. Stakeholders are now more positive to take policies that can contribute to reduce tobacco use. BNTTP website (www.bnttp.net) has recognized as an international resource hub of tobacco tax related knowledge products

CONCLUSIONS: BNTTP's advocacy represents a strategic approach to strengthening tobacco control in Bangladesh. By addressing the limitations of the current system and proposing targeted reforms, the network contributes to the development of a more effective and sustainable tobacco tax policy. This initiative holds promise for reducing tobacco consumption, improving public health outcomes, and enhancing revenues in Bangladesh.

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Empowering youth as change agents: Enhancing tobacco control through student-led advocacy and vendor compliance

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The tobacco industry uses tactics like placing vendors near schools and advertising to attract minors, leading to early addiction. Despite the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003, which bans tobacco sales to minors (Section 6a) and regulates advertisements (Section 5), non-compliance remains widespread in India. This highlights the need for interventions to protect youth from tobacco's harmful effects. Salaam Bombay Foundation's youth empowerment program addressed this by training 7th to 9th-grade students as leaders, equipping them with leadership skills to combat tobacco misuse in their communities.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Over a two-year period, 1053 students were trained to lead initiatives targeting tobacco vendors in their communities. The students engaged 355 vendors, sensitizing them about the legal requirement to display 'no sale to minors' boards under Section 6a, and addressed violations of Section 5, which bans tobacco advertising. These youth leaders leveraged their newly acquired skills to engage directly with vendors, emphasizing their responsibility in protecting children and adhering to COTPA regulations.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: The intervention resulted in notable improvements in vendor compliance. A total of 234 vendors displayed the mandatory 'no sale to minors' boards, affirming their commitment to protect youth from tobacco use. Additionally, 102 vendors removed tobacco advertisements from their establishments, aligning with Section 5 of COTPA. These changes contributed to safer environments around schools and urban areas, reducing minors' exposure to tobacco products and advertisements. The program demonstrated the effectiveness of empowering youth as change agents, fostering a sense of accountability and advocacy within communities.

CONCLUSIONS: This youth-led initiative highlights the potential of empowering young people to enforce public health laws and reduce tobacco accessibility to minors. The results emphasize the importance of in-school education programs on tobacco control and public health laws. The success of this intervention offers valuable insights for scaling similar initiatives to further strengthen tobacco control efforts.

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Lessons learned from Canada's experience with regulating vaping products, while tackling smoking and nicotine addiction

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2018, amidst cessation claims, Canada's federal government legalized with few restrictions the sale and promotion of nicotine vaping products. The sale of aggressively promoted products became more widespread and vyouth vaping surged.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Despite the later camp-down on advertising, a nicotine content cap to 20mg/ml and increased taxes, ever evolving product design, flavours and other attributes continue to render vaping easy, appealing and affordable.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: While federal and provincial campaigns, regulations and other efforts to address youth vaping have contributed to stabilizing rates, current vaping among youth and young adults remains high, and much higher than pre-2018 rates. Vaping remains popular among _ younger generations and never-smokers, while dual use is very common. Industry linked front-groups, such a Rights4Vapers, appear to have successfully delayed regulatory efforts to reduce products' appeal to youth through national restrictions on flavourings, making other controls on products and packaging even more distant.

Smoking continues its progressive decline, but youth represent essentially the same proportion of nicotine users as they did a decade ago. Indeed, Canada has as many nicotine users now as it had a decade ago. Meanwhile, overall smoking cessation rates have

remained unchanged for the past two decades.

CONCLUSIONS: In light of the growing health risks associated with vaping and dual-use, Canada's experience with nicotine vaping products serves as a reminder of the considerable collateral damage cause by the expansion of the recreational nicotine vaping market. The vaping industry's delinquent behaviour with respect to regulations combined with its sustained lobbying efforts and use of front-groups should prompt re-examination by Canada and other jurisdictions of how they control the nicotine industry and its products.

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Implementation of Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC: A global overview

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco is grown in 119 countries, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) aim to protect the livelihoods of tobacco farmers in response to the global decline in tobacco consumption while also safeguarding the environment and the health of those involved in the tobacco production chain. This study examines the implementation of these two articles by the Treaty's Parties nearly 20 years after its entry into force.

METHODS: This exploratory study used secondary data from the WHO FCTC implementation database, publicly available on the WHO FCTC Secretariat website, referring to 2023. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS v.30.

RESULTS: Among the 119 tobacco-growing countries, 97% are Parties to the Treaty. However, in the analyzed reporting cycle, of the 182 countries that responded to the WHO FCTC implementation questionnaire, only 85 (47%) reported tobacco cultivation within their jurisdiction. Among tobacco-producing countries, 31% stated that they had adopted or implemented measures to promote economically viable and sustainable alternatives for tobacco growers. Regarding Article 18, 34% reported implementing measures to protect the environment from the impacts of tobacco farming, and 33% had adopted actions to safeguard the health of those involved in tobacco cultivation. Concerning the environmental impact of tobacco product manufacturing, 39% reported implementing measures for both environmental and health protection. The questionnaire did not address final disposal of tobacco product waste.

CONCLUSIONS: Nearly two decades after the WHO FCTC's entry into force, Articles 17 and 18 remain among the least implemented globally. Despite growing awareness of the environmental and health impacts of the tobacco production chain, many countries still seem to believe that protective measures should apply only to tobacco-growing nations.

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Tobacco use in Brazil: Comparative analysis of cigarette consumption versus other tobacco products in 2013-2019

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BACKGROUND: This study investigates the prevalence of cigarette consumption (mostly industrialized, hand-rolled, clove cigarettes) compared to the use of other tobacco products, (cigars, pipes, hookahs, and smokeless tobacco products), among individuals (18 years or older) in Brazil. Using data from the 2013 and 2019 editions of the National Health Survey (PNS), the study aims to assess trends and evaluate consumption patterns across socioeconomic and demographic groups.

METHODS: Two indicators of cross-sectional research data (PNS 2013-2019) were analyzed: cigarette consumption prevalence and other tobacco product use. The study employed a complex survey design to ensure national representativity, incorporating stratification by geographic region, urban or rural residence, and socioeconomic strata.

RESULTS: There is an overall reduction in tobacco use products among adults in Brazil (14.9%-2013 to 12.82%-2019). Cigarettes remain the most consumed product, with prevalence decreasing from 14.43% to 12.27% over the period. Meanwhile, the use of other tobacco products increased from 0.81% to 1.02%. Among individuals who reported using any tobacco product, cigarettes decreased from 96.8% in 2013 to 95.7% in 2019, while the share of other products increased (5.42%to7.99%). Men consistently reported higher usage rates for both cigarettes (16.96%) and other tobacco products (1.27%) compared to women (10.05% and 0.61%, respectively) in 2019. Cigarette use was most prevalent among 45–59 years, while other tobacco products were more common among younger adults. Lower education was associated with higher tobacco use.

CONCLUSIONS: In 2019, 19.5 million adults smoked cigarettes, and 1.63 million adults used other tobacco products in Brazil. The increasing prevalence of other tobacco products highlights an emerging challenge in tobacco control. These products represent a growing portion of overall use among tobacco users, particularly among younger adults in specific regions. This shift underscores the need for comprehensive public health strategies that address the diverse landscape of tobacco products.

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Ending the puff: An ecological perspective on

loose cigarette bans and youth smoking trends across 13 countries

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BACKGROUND: Loose or individual cigarettes, sold individually, pose a substantial challenge to tobacco regulation, particularly among adolescents, by reducing economic and psychological barriers to initiating smoking. This study examines the impact of loose cigarette bans on youth smoking behaviors across 13 countries using data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) and timelines of tobacco control legislation.

METHODS: Smoking prevalence data from the GYTS were analyzed across 13 countries from Wave1 (2002–2004) to Wave5 (2019–2021). These countries were chosen for their implementation of loose cigarette bans and availability of pre- and post-ban GYTS data, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of the bans' impact. Youth smoking prevalence, including gender-specific trends, was assessed before and after the bans. Legislative timelines were mapped to identify the introduction of bans alongside measures like tax increases, smoke-free policies, and sales restrictions. A triangulated analysis evaluated the collective impact of these interventions.

RESULTS: Countries implementing loose cigarette bans demonstrated significant reductions in youth smoking prevalence. In Panama, prevalence dropped from 13.2% in Wave1 (2002) to 3.9% in Wave4 (2017) after the 2008 nationwide ban. Bhutan stabilized smoking rates between Wave2 (2006) and Wave4 (2013) following the Tobacco Control Act, which included bans and import taxes. Gender-specific trends revealed consistently higher male smoking rates, while female prevalence declined sharply, such as in Georgia, where rates fell from 12.9% in Wave1 (2003) to 4.4% in Wave4 (2017). Conversely, El Salvador experienced an increase in youth smoking prevalence in Wave4 (2021), likely due to weak enforcement or socio-environmental factors.

CONCLUSIONS: Loose cigarette bans, as part of comprehensive tobacco control strategies, significantly reduce youth smoking rates. Success depends on strict enforcement, gender-specific interventions, and complementary measures such as taxation and public awareness campaigns. GYTS data remains invaluable for tracking and enhancing global tobacco control efforts.

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Marketing of tobacco products at points of sale in ten Argentine provinces

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BACKGROUND: Argentina enacted the National Tobacco Control Law Nº 26.687 (NTCL) in 2011. This regulation imposes broad restrictions on the advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco products, including specific limitations on how these products can be marketed at points of sale. Given that points of sale represent a key marketing channel for the tobacco industry, FIC Argentina has conducted several studies (2015, 2016, 2019, 2021, and 2023) to evaluate compliance with NTCL standards in convenience stores and to analyze the marketing strategies employed by the tobacco industry.

METHODS: In 2023, the study was conducted in ten Argentine provinces and assessed 512 convenience stores. Data collection was based on the 'California Tobacco Advertising Study,' developed by the California Department of Public Health. This instrument was adapted and validated for use in Argentina, and a pilot study was conducted locally before implementation. Inter-rater agreement was assessed both before and after fieldwork to ensure consistency.

RESULTS: Results show that 90% of the points of sale present some kind of tobacco advertisement and 46.7% do not accomplish the standards established by the NTCL. The most used advertising strategy is the exhibition of tobacco products for decorative or sales purposes (87.1%) and the presence of signs that advertise tobacco products, presenting slogans, or references related to them (46.1%).

CONCLUSIONS: This study highlights not only a significant deficit in implementation but also various strategies employed by the tobacco industry to exploit loopholes in the regulations. Ensuring full compliance with existing laws is imperative, alongside advancing toward a complete ban on tobacco advertising at points of sale.

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Smoking cessation with a gender perspective in a tobacco cessation programme in Uruguay

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BACKGROUND: The epidemiology of smoking suggests a strong influence of socioeconomic and cultural factors. There is growing interest in evaluating processes from a gender perspective. Social transformation processes necessitate a review of concepts that can contribute to public policies aimed at tobacco control. This research aims to identify factors associated with smoking cessation from a broad gender perspective, contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon, and inform differential approaches.

METHODS: Cross-sectional observational study of patients who completed treatment for at least 6 months in the smoking cessation starting in 2023. Patients received cognitive-behavioural approach together and

pharmacological treatment in 6 sessions. The data collection tools were: telephone survey and review of medical records. STATA13 Software was used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS: Preliminary findings from a sample of 62 patients assisted during 2023, showed the following gender distribution: 60% (95% CI 53%-77%) identified as female, 32% (95% CI:0.21%-45%) male, 1.6% (95% CI: 0.2%-11%) 'other'. Mean age was 52.74 years (SD:13) Seven days point prevalence of abstinence rate was 27% (95% IC:17%-40%). There were no differences in the abstinence rate by gender, with a calculated power of 99%. However, women exhibited less severity in their dependency profile and received pharmacological treatment at a lower rate. No gender differences were observed in socioeconomic variables or in the prevalence of mental illness and addictions.

CONCLUSIONS: Although women seek more professional help to quit smoking and have lower levels of dependence, they receive suboptimal treatment, and their treatment outcomes are similar to those of men.There are factors that negatively smoking cessation in women that must be considered to improve policies and treatments aimed at this group. Further research is needed to explore these factors and develop new approaches to better describe the phenomenon.

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Assessing the impact of tobacco taxation on poverty in Argentina: An extended cost-effectiveness analysis

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco consumption remains a significant public health and economic challenge in Argentina, where high poverty levels exacerbate its impact, particularly on vulnerable populations. The financial burden of tobacco use disproportionately affects lower-income households, deepening socioeconomic inequalities. This study applies an extended cost-effectiveness analysis to evaluate the impact of increasing tobacco taxes in Argentina, focusing on its implications for poverty and inequality.

METHODS: We conducted an extended cost-effectiveness analysis model to assess the impact of tobacco taxation on poverty, catastrophic health expenditures, and the additional tax revenues generated. This model was used by the Global Tobacco Economics Consortium (GTEC) in 14 middle-income countries. Model inputs were obtained through literature review, national surveys, civil registrations, and vital statistics.

RESULTS: The findings indicate that a 50% increase in tobacco prices through higher taxes in Argentina would prevent 18000 individuals from falling into poverty, and protect 108000 people from catastrophic health expenses, where 36% of these benefits accruing to the lowest income quintile. The poorest income group would gain 27% of the life years and 25% of the avoided costs, while contributing just 5% of the additional tax revenue. In contrast, the richest income group would gain 15% of the life years and 16% of the avoided costs, yet contribute 34% of the additional tax revenue. These results highlight the progressive nature of the intervention, which is projected to generate $209 million in additional tax revenue.

CONCLUSIONS: ese results underscore the progressive impact of increasing tobacco taxes as a public policy tool to reduce health and economic inequalities. By protecting vulnerable populations from poverty and catastrophic health expenditures while generating substantial revenue, this intervention not only improves health outcomes but also supports equitable fiscal policies.

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Psychometric predictors of abstinence failure in an online cessation programme in Mexico

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BACKGROUND: Previous studies suggested that a higher craving level among smokers is associated with failure of attempting to quit smoking. However, integration with anxiety and craving has not been established, with reagents from specific instruments that are capable of generating an efficient model that determines the main predictors of failure in the cessation attempt. The aim of this study is to evaluate a structural equation model (SEM) in which anxiety and craving are predictors of abstinence failure in an online cessation program in Mexico.

METHODS: A prospective cohort in a smoking cessation treatment center in Mexico (n=256). All patients with at least 80% of attendance to the sessions were included in the analysis. Abstinence was self-reported. We used a SEM to evaluate our hypothesis that craving and anxiety symptoms predict abstinence failure with a diagonally weighted least squares estimator. The anxiety construct was measured using three items from the Beck Anxiety Inventory: feeling of choking, shakiness/unsteadiness, and fear of dying. The craving construct was assessed with three items from the Nicotine Craving Questionnaire: 'I had many urges to light a cigarette,' 'My desires to smoke were constant,' and 'The smoking desire was intense.' Items were selected according to polychoric correlation values. A third latent variable was proposed as a mediator between anxiety, craving, and abstinence failure.

RESULTS: A total of 256 patients were included; mean age was 49 (±13) years and 56% (n=145) were female.

Abstinence was reported by 88.9% (n=207) and 19.1% (n=49) failed abstinence. The model showed good fit, x2(12) = 3.12, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00, SRMR=0.035.
CONCLUSIONS: The model may be a useful and efficient clinical tool for assessing short-term abstinence failure risk, thus, could serve to enhance the effectiveness of smoking cessation efforts.
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The contribution of smoking in the gap between male and female life expectancy: A forecasting analysis of GBD 2021

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BACKGROUND: Smoking is a leading global risk factor, responsible for 6.18 million deaths and 142 million years of life lost in 2021, with 85% of deaths occurring among males. A recent analysis reported that eliminating all future smoking could increase global life expectancy at birth (LEX) by 1.5 years among males by 2050. In our analysis, we seek to identify the countries where elimination of smoking could have the largest impact on LEX in males as well as where elimination could close the gap between LEX in males and females.
METHODS: We leveraged IHME's future health scenarios platform to forecast LEX under two future scenarios: (1) a Reference scenario that is a probabilistic forecast of the most likely future given past trends and (2) an Elimination 2023 scenario in which smoking prevalence is eliminated from 2023 onward. Taking the difference between these scenarios allows us to capture the forecasted health effects under the Reference scenario that are attributable to future smoking.
RESULTS: The three countries with the greatest gains in LEX among males in 2050 under the Elimination 2023 scenario relative to the Reference are Armenia, Kiribati, and Kyrgyzstan. Our forecasts of male LEX in 2050 suggests that males could live an additional 3.38, 3.32, and 3.12 years if all future smoking were eliminated. Under our Reference scenario, in 2050 male LEX will be greater than female LEX in two countries. If no future smoking occurred, we forecast that the gap between male and female LEX would close in eight additional countries across North Africa and the Middle East, South Asia, and Oceania.
CONCLUSIONS: With elimination of smoking, it may be possible to narrow the gap in LEX between males and females. Tobacco policies must be strengthened and expanded to ensure that LEX continues to increase.
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Exploring the interplay of tobacco use, delinquent behavior, wellbeing, and family dynamics among young female sex workers in Oyo State

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BACKGROUND: The rising prevalence of tobacco use among young individuals poses significant public health challenges, particularly in vulnerable populations such as Young Female Sex Workers (YFSWs). This demographic often faces unique psychosocial stressors that can influence their health behaviors, including substance use. Understanding the interplay between tobacco use and various factors such as delinquent behavior, wellbeing, and family dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions. This study aims to explore these relationships within a specific context in Oyo State, Nigeria.
METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted in 37 brothels in 10 randomly selected local governments in Oyo State. All consenting 216 YFSWs between the age of 18-24 years were purposively selected and interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire to collect information on tobacco use, delinquent behaviour, wellbeing, general perception of tobacco use, and family dynamics. Pearson product moment correlation, and multiple regression were used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.
RESULTS: The result showed that there exists a significant relationship between tobacco use and delinquent behaviour ($r = .663$, $p<0.05$), wellbeing ($r=.712$, $p<0.05$), family dynamics ($r= .349$, $p<0.05$). Delinquent behaviour, wellbeing, and family dynamics jointly have positive effects on tobacco use among respondents ($r= .739$, $p<0.05$); delinquent behaviour ($\beta = .177$, $p<.05$), wellbeing ($\beta = .517$, $p<.05$), and family dynamics ($\beta = .176$, $p<.05$) relatively contributed to tobacco use among adolescents.
CONCLUSIONS: This study underscores the significant relationships between tobacco use, delinquent behavior, wellbeing, and family dynamics among Young Female Sex Workers (YFSWs) in Oyo State. The findings reveal that tobacco use is not merely a standalone issue but is intricately linked to broader psychosocial factors that affect the lives of these young women.
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Perception of promotion and advertising of nicotine products by young adults in Poland

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BACKGROUND: The availability of novel nicotine products

is increasing on the Polish market. They are particularly popular among younger users. The aim of the presented study was to explore the phenomenon of promotion and advertising of nicotine products to which young adults in Poland are subjected.

METHODS: The study was conducted in Poland between September and October 2024 among twenty respondents - ten females and ten males aged 18-25, differentiated by place of residence, marital and economic status. The study utilized the individual in-depth interview (IDI) methodology, which took the form of a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview. Each interview was structured, based on a script, and lasted up to 30 minutes with an audio recording that was later transcribed. Data were qualitatively analyzed for thematic structure, discourse and sentiment using WEFT-QDA software.

RESULTS: Influencers, whose collaborations range from showcasing products to sharing discount codes, play a key role in the promotion. Respondents also inidicate the influence of social media in shaping a positive image of nicotine products . Young adults indicate the presence of advertising and promotions, such as sampling, price reductions, which attracts consumers by creating a sense of favorable purchase and easy access to nicotine products. They are perceived by respondents as modern and less harmful than traditional cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS: Analysis of the interviews with respondents indicates the variety forms of promotion of nicotine products and their extensive presence in public spaces and social media, especially in the context of e-cigarettes.

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Temporal Analysis of tobacco use Indicators in Tunisia: 2012-2023

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BACKGROUND: We aimed to deepen the understanding of the temporal evolution of tobacco consumption habits in Tunisia by capturing trends in usage behavior across successive years.

METHODS: Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey in Tunisia, a UNICEF-conducted repeated cross-sectional survey, were used to compare trends in the prevalence and socio-demographic correlates of alcohol consumption among men and women in Tunisia, focusing on urban-rural differences, economic status, and educational levels across 2018 and 2023.

RESULTS: In 2023, 49.8% of men reported tobacco use, compared to 49.4% in 2018 (p=0.8). Tobacco prevalence was higher in urban areas (52.3%) than in rural areas (44.8%) (p<0.001). Men with no schooling reported higher prevalence (50.4%) compared to those with higher education (44.4%) (p<0.001). Prevalence increased with age, starting at 16.5% among adolescents aged 15-19 and peaking at 58.9% among men aged 35-39 (p<0.001). Furthermore, 49.8% of men had never used tobacco, compared to 97.4% of women in 2023 (p<0.001). Among women, tobacco prevalence was 1.9% in 2023 and 1.7% in 2018 (p=0.8). Urban women reported a higher prevalence (2.8%) compared to rural women (0%) (p<0.001). Prevalence was also higher among wealthier women (4.1%) compared to the poorest (0.3%) (p=0.03) and among women with higher education (1.8%) compared to those with no schooling (0.9%) (p=0.06).

CONCLUSIONS: Tobacco use among Tunisian men exhibits variations based on geographical location and educational attainment. Additionally, smoking prevalence escalates with age. Despite being relatively low, women's consumption of tobacco is comparatively higher in urban settings and among those from affluent backgrounds. Adapted public health interventions to combat smoking in Tunisia should prioritize high-prevalence areas and vulnerable populations while considering specific demographic factors to ensure effective intervention strategies.

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New and emerging tobacco and nicotine product bills in Latin America and the Caribbean amidst health concerns and industry interests

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BACKGROUND: Previous studies have analyzed the regulatory environment of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products (NETNPs) but it is less known about legislative and regulatory efforts and attempts. This is the first known study to analyze legislative bills to regulate NETNPs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

METHODS: Analysis of on-line national legislation databases to track NETNP bills using standard snowball search methods.

RESULTS: Bills were identified in 15 out of the 33 LAC countries, accounting for a total of 91 bills targeting NETNPs. Mexico had the highest number (n=38) of bills, followed by Brazil (n=16), Argentina (n=10), Colombia (n=8) and Chile (n=5). The remaining countries introduced two or fewer NETNP bills. Among the identified 91 bills, the majority (n=60) addressed both electronic cigarettes and HTPs, almost one third of bills (n=29) applied only to electronic cigarettes, and only two focused solely on HTPs. Six of the 15 countries with identified bills, enacted one NETNP law including Barbados, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guyana, Mexico, and Panama. Since 2019, there has been a steady increase in the amount of NETNP bills introduced in LAC. In 2017 and 2018, 10 NETNP bills were introduced each year followed by 23 NETNP bills introduced in each

2019 and 2020, 19 in 2021, and 16 by August 2022.
CONCLUSIONS: The substantial increase in the number of NETNP bills introduced since 2019 indicates the growing importance of regulating NETNPs in LAC. As NETNPs continue to evolve and grow it is important to continue monitoring and evaluating tobacco and nicotine regulatory initiatives while also staying ahead of the evolving market of NETNPs.
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Health advocacy strategies to influence new and emerging tobacco and nicotine product regulations in Latin America and the Caribbean

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry has a long history of promoting tobacco products and undermining efforts to implement the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) throughout the world. This is the first known study that adopts a regional approach to analyze key health advocacy actions and arguments attempting to influence new and emerging tobacco and nicotine product (NETNP) regulations in Latin America and the Caribbean.
METHODS: Analysis of public documents including news sources and national NETNP legislation triangulated with public health advocate interviews. Application of the Policy Dystopia Model (PDM) to analyze health advocacy strategies regarding NETNP regulations.
RESULTS: NETNP legislative activity mostly occurred in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico and Panama. Health advocates engaged in four instrumental (action-based) strategies attempting to influence NETNP regulations including coalition management, information management, direct involvement, and access to the policy process and litigation. Health advocates concentrated on exposing industry deception highlighting industry funded studies, conflicts of interest and providing scientific evidence and countries' experiences. Health advocacy discursive (argument-based) strategies centered on exposing increased NETNP usage due to aggressive industry marketing and argued governments should follow World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) mandates and its Conference of the Party (COP) decisions to regulate or ban NETNPs.
CONCLUSIONS: Applying the PDM regarding NETNPs provides a better understanding of how health advocates can preempt industry strategies to undermine WHO FCTC implementation. Unified transnational cooperative and coordinated health advocacy strategies utilizing modern communication platforms to educate youth and parents can strengthen efforts. Advocating for WHO FCTC mandates and COP decisions appear to be effective in helping to regulate and ban NETNPs and should be replicated elsewhere.
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Skirting regulation: How nicotine pouches were marketed and sold to children in Canada

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: In 2023, nicotine pouches were approved as a natural health product for sale in Canada and did not meet the requirements for traditional regulation because the nicotine content was under the threshold. As such, flavoured nicotine pouches were sold in various retail settings (convenience stores, gas stations, etc.) and without a minimum age of purchase. The products were marketed as 'a new way to quit' tobacco or vaping but were not approved as nicotine replacement therapies. Young people quickly started using these products and took to social media to share their experiences. As such, the products became more popular and starting trending online. A new culture of nicotine use was born. Nicotine pouches were promoted on social media using themes of improved cognitive function, masculinity and power, athleticism, rebelling and sensationalizing addiction.
INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Heath groups coalesced and mobilized quickly to draw attention to this regulatory gap and showcased how the industry was skirting regulations. There was a significant amount of media attention on the matter and much public outcry that children could buy nicotine products from stores. Prevalence data was unavailable and the magnitude of the issue was unknown.
RESULTS AND IMPACT: By mid 2024, the federal government responded to the public criticism and called out the industry for 'preying on kids' and creating a new generation of people addicted to nicotine. Policies were enacted to ensure pouches would only be available behind the counter at pharmacies. Flavour restrictions were restricted to mint and menthol. Marketing restrictions were adopted and packaging will be updated with a warning.
CONCLUSIONS: Despite a lack of data, quick collaboration of tobacco control groups led to a policy response by the federal government in record time.
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FCTC Governance Model: Does it enable coherent and coordinated policy making in low and middle income countries?

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BACKGROUND: Coordination and coherence hurdles are often experienced as particularly acute in the context of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Barriers and facilitators for coordination and coherence in tobacco control governance were examined through a case study of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the Framework

Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in the context of World Health Organization South East Asia region (WHO SEARO) in contrast to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative in Bangladesh.

METHODS: Qualitative research examined the two multi-level case studies. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews of representatives from governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies, academia and private sector affiliates. Interview data were thematically analysed using an interpretative approach.

RESULTS: Findings from the tobacco case study suggested that SEARO countries sought to use the COP as a platform to promote vertical coherence. However, weak health leadership, lack of financial resources, poor in-country coordination and tensions between diverse sectoral goals raised challenges for coherent policy making in countries. Prioritising tobacco control and building safeguards against tobacco industry interference, active health sector leadership, engagement of non-health sectors and setting up coordination systems for COP preparations enabled some of these countries in overcoming these hurdles.

In the nutrition case study, SUN's advocacy was reported to have increased awareness, stimulated nutrition-sensitive initiatives, raised the need for funding and nutrition integration in Bangladesh's development agenda. However, the response was considered fragmented from tensions in reconciling health and economic goals and the involvement of food companies.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings illustrate how tobacco governance approach enabling vertical coherence, while the nutrition approach promoting coordination in countries. Coordination and coherence in health governance in low- and middle-income countries could be supported through enhanced resource allocation, improved sharing of information, frameworks to effectively address conflicts of interest and mechanisms for civil society contributions.

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Waterpipe tobacco and public health: A content analysis of media discourse on waterpipe tobacco smoking across Africa

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BACKGROUND: Despite its known health risks, the tobacco epidemic is evolving with the growth of waterpipe tobacco smoking (WTS) in Africa. This study explores media coverage of WTS in Africa to identify key themes, misinformation, and opportunities for public health education.

METHODS: Between October and December 2023, we analyzed media articles using Tobacco Watcher, an online surveillance portal that compiles news from over 595.000 web sources. We searched for Englishlanguage articles published in Africa that discussed WTS between 2012-2023 with Boolean terms (i.e., 'shisha OR hookah OR waterpipe OR narghile AND Africa'). Themes identified include WTS regulations, health risks, venues, youth uptake, misconceptions/myths, and tobacco industry perspectives. We report the frequency of these themes and notable quotes.

RESULTS: We found 137 eligible articles from 15 of the 54 African countries. Most articles came from Kenya (n=39), Nigeria (n=21), and Egypt (n=17). Ninety-two (67.1%) discussed the health risks of WTS, thirty-seven (27.0%) referenced youth-uptake, and six (4.4%) discussed tobacco industry views about WTS. Over two-thirds (n=97, 70.8%) of articles discussed proposed or implemented WTS bans, with most originating from Kenya (n=34). Additionally, 27 (19.7%) discussed misconceptions/myths related to WTS, of which Nigeria (n=7) and Ghana (n=5) had the highest proportion.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings reveal widespread concern about health risks and strong interest in regulation of WTS in the media. A significant portion of articles discussed misconceptions about WTS, highlighting the need for targeted education campaigns to dispel myths and protect public health.

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Ban on ENDS and HTPs in Vietnam

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BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: The rise of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) in Vietnam presents significant public health challenges, particularly among the youth. These products are increasingly enticing due to the lack of comprehensive regulations, heightening concerns about nicotine addiction and negative health impacts. Acknowledging the urgent need to address this issue, the Vietnamese government has taken action at national and local levels. However, the implementation of these measures has faced obstacles, such as the belief that ENDS and HTPs are safer than traditional tobacco, a lack of public awareness about their health risks, and resistance from the tobacco industry.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: In response, the Ministry of Health initiated a multi-faceted intervention featuring vigorous public awareness campaigns across mass media, social networks, and community outreach to educate people on the risks of ENDS and HTPs. Extensive research was conducted to analyze usage patterns among youth and their health impacts, informing policy decisions. Collaborations with health organizations and NGOs have helped disseminate evidence-based information, exposing misleading claims from the tobacco industry.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: Ultimately, the Vietnamese government proposed a ban on ENDS and HTPs through a National Assembly resolution, seeking to establish strict regulatory measures for compliance and enforcement. After approval of this ban, the Ministry of Health faced

backlash, including protests on social media platforms. Effective January 1, 2025, the Ministry, along with the Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund and the Department of Legislation, will work with health organizations to revise regulations for effective enforcement of the ban.

CONCLUSIONS: This situation underscores the vital role of comprehensive tobacco control policies in protecting public health. Moving forward, Vietnam must focus on developing a strong enforcement framework and innovative communication strategies to reach the public and ensure compliance, providing lessons for other countries facing similar challenges.

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Tobacco control can not be achieved only by demand side measures

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BACKGROUND: Türkiye

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: Türkiye had implemented all Mpower strategies in between 2008 and 2011. A 13.4% relative decline in prevalence between 2008 to 2012 was achieved. However GATS showed a prevalence increase from 27.1% to 31.6% in 2016. Women prevalence rose by 46.6%. Increase in Point of Sales violations between 2015 to 2022 were also documented by shadow reporting. The cigarette manufacturing grew by 3.4 billion sticks per year. Two new sub brands per month were put on the market. Legal cigarette sales reached a record of 189 billion sticks in 2023. Türkiye had the 3rd highest daily smoking rate in Europa in 2020.

INTERVENTION OR RESPONSE: Supply side measures were monitored. Incentives given to Tobacco Industry (TI) showed 53 documents about VAT exemptions, tax deductions, custom duty exemptions, income tax withholding, insurance premium support, investment place allocations, investment incentives given to TI and tobacco sub industry were discovered. These applications were clear violations of the provisions of Article 5.3.

RESULTS AND IMPACT: International tobacco control community may take lessons from the Turkish experience. In order to improve the effectiveness of demand side measures, supply side needs to be curbed.

CONCLUSIONS: The international tobacco control community should take notice and draw lessons from the Turkish experience In order to improve the effectiveness of demand side measures ,
supply side needs to be curbed

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Unveiling tobacco vendor density and compliance gaps: Insights from a geo-spatial study in Eastern India Schools

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BACKGROUND: Tobacco use among youth remains a pressing global health challenge, disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income countries. Despite the enactment of robust laws such as India's Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), enforcement near educational institutions continues to fall short. This study explores compliance with tobacco control regulations and maps the density of tobacco vendors around schools in Bhubaneswar, Eastern India, providing valuable insights to strengthen global tobacco control efforts.

METHODS: A geospatial mapping study examined the 100-yard radius surrounding 56 high schools in Bhubaneswar. Data collection tools included ArcGIS 10.8, Google Maps, and observational surveys via Epicollect5, focusing on vendor characteristics, advertising practices, and adherence to tobacco control laws. Statistical analyses were used to identify compliance gaps and assess variations based on school types.

RESULTS: The study identified 347 tobacco vendors near schools, averaging six vendors per school. Alarmingly, compliance with COTPA regulations was found to be poor: nearly half (49.6%) of vendors sold tobacco products to minors, and only 30% displayed mandated health warnings. Promotional and indirect advertising was prevalent, observed at 60.9% of vendors, often using brand-specific designs appealing to youth. Smoking was reported within 100 yards of schools in 58.9% of cases. Most vendors were pan shops (44.9%) or grocery stores (36.4%), further emphasizing the accessibility of tobacco products to students.

CONCLUSIONS: Strengthening enforcement of tobacco control laws, fostering community engagement, and promoting intersectoral collaboration are critical to reducing youth exposure to tobacco. Findings from Bhubaneswar emphasize the urgent need for global strategies targeting youth-focused tobacco control. Policymakers and stakeholders must prioritize action to protect vulnerable populations, leveraging these insights to mitigate the long-term health risks posed by early tobacco use.

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Taming tobacco and nicotine retail environments? Industry tactics and innovative solutions to protect youth

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BACKGROUND: The tobacco industry exploits retail environments to sustain and expand its consumer base, particularly among youth. Industry targets points of sale near schools and youth-oriented facilities to drive early initiation and long-term dependence. New nicotine products present additional regulatory challenges, with industry actors leveraging retail loopholes to evade restrictions. Stronger supply-side measures to restrict youth exposure and access are urgently needed. This work integrates global evidence to highlight both industry tactics and innovative regulatory solutions.
METHODS: Findings are synthesised from global and country-specific analyses to assess the evolving retail landscape and current policy limitations, via a scoping review of regulatory approaches worldwide, a public perception study on retail restrictions, and an evaluation of retail policy impacts using case study analyses.
RESULTS: Findings demonstrate industry adaptation strategies, such as product placement, retailer incentives, regulatory loopholes, and undermine existing tobacco control efforts. The scoping review for solutions identifies 16 key regulatory measures, including four WHO FCTC guidelines and 12 additional national-level policies. In our case study, public support for retail restrictions is strong, with 53.1% of survey participants agreeing that such measures would reduce tobacco availability. Simulated implementation of retail regulations saw reductions in tobacco retailer numbers by 4% to 100%, particularly around youth-focused areas.
CONCLUSIONS: Stronger retail environment regulations can play a crucial role in reducing youth access to tobacco and nicotine products. Public support for such controls is evident, reinforcing the case for governments to implement and enforce comprehensive policies. Licensing schemes, retailer density caps, and zoning laws are effective countermeasures to industry influence and should complement existing tobacco control strategies. To strengthen tobacco control efforts, governments must integrate these supply-side measures into national policy frameworks. Future research should evaluate their long-term effectiveness and monitor industry responses to evolving regulations.
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Cytisine for tobacco and e-cigarette cessation: Trial and real-world evidence

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BACKGROUND: As a nicotine receptor partial agonist, cytisine could be used to help people to stop both smoking and vaping.
METHODS: We reviewed Cochrane reviews to provide an overview of trial evidence on cytisine for smoking and vaping cessation. We analyzed cross-country evidence from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) survey on the use of cytisine.
RESULTS: Cochrane systematic reviews have investigated cytisine for smoking and vaping cessation through meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. This includes comparisons with placebo, no treatment, and with other smoking cessation treatments, via pairwise and component network meta-analyses, showing promising findings related to smoking and vaping outcomes, as well as safety and tolerability. Trial evidence can indicate efficacy and safety, but other questions remain about real-world use. Using data from the 2022 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Survey, we estimated prevalence of cytisine and other smoking cessation medications (NRT, varenicline/bupropion) used by adults (aged ⩾18) at their most recent attempt to quit smoking cigarettes in the past 2 years in Australia(n=599), Canada(n=740), England(n=668), and US(n=638). Among adults who smoked ⩾weekly (n=1790) or quit smoking ⩽2 years (n=855), 0.4% used cytisine (country main effect:p=0.09): highest in England (0.8%) and lowest in the US (0.1%), 26.3% used NRT (country:p=0.01); highest in Australia (32.9%) and lowest in the US (20.6%); 9.5% used varenicline/bupropion (country:p=.09): highest in the US (12.2%) and lowest in England (6.2%).
CONCLUSIONS: Despite promising trial and systematic review evidence, use of smoking cessation medications was low in all four ITC countries studied. Cytisine was rarely used, demonstrating that its similarity to varenicline in both mechanism of action and effectiveness has not yet translated to clinical use.
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Tobacco Induced Diseases