ABSTRACT BOOK

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Aim & Scope

Tobacco Prevention & Cessation, (Abbr: Tob. Prev. Cessation; ISSN:2459-3087) is an open access, peer-reviewed online journal that encompasses all aspects of tobacco use, prevention and cessation that can promote a tobacco free society. The aim of the journal is to foster, promote and disseminate research involving tobacco use, prevention, policy implementation at a regional, national or international level, disease development- progression related to tobacco use, tobacco use impact from the cellular to the international level and finally the treatment of tobacco attributable disease through smoking cessation.

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Increased chances to quit with a smoking cessation specialists

Meike Pappens[1], Laurence Belenger[1], Herwig Boudrez[1], Sandrina Schol[1]
[1]Vlaamse Vereniging Voor Respiratoire Gezondheidszorg en Tuberculosebestrijding, Leuven, Belgium

Introduction

The chances of success to quit smoking are highest when behavioural counselling is combined with pharmacological aids. In Belgium, behavioural counselling is offered by Smoking Cessation Specialists (SCS), healthcare providers additionally trained during a university course to provide evidence-based counselling to smokers.

Aim

This study investigated the efficacy of SCS-counselling in Belgium.

Material and Methods

This cross-sectional study compared success rates of smokers who made a quit attempt in the past year (2020) with (n = 214) or without (n = 452) SCS-counselling. Self-reported continuous abstinence (CA, smoke-free since quitdate) and point prevalence (PP, not smoked in the past 7 days) were used as outcomes in logistic regression models.

Results

Success rates were higher in those who received SCS-counselling (CA 52.8%, PP 63.1%) than those who tried to quit by other means (CA 32.7%, PP 39.8%). Counselling could significantly predict successful quitting even after controlling for medical problems, smoking profile, previous quit attempts and pharmacological aid (ORCA = 2.929 [1.917 – 4.476], Z (1) = 24.678, p < .001; ORPP = 3.190 [2.097 – 4.854], Z (1) = 29.351, p < .001).

Conclusions

Smokers can increase their chances to quit by receiving SCS-counselling, regardless of their medical health, smoking profile, previous attempts and usage of pharmacological aids.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Prevalence of tobacco use in national heart institute

Wael Abd Elmeguid[1]
[1]Egypt Health Foundation, Giza, Egypt

Purpose

The study aims to overview the smoking habits, their prevalence, and their correlation with socio-cultural determinants by screening smoking in the national heart institute population.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted in the form of a face-to-face survey. The interviews were carried out by a well-trained team of interviewers, using a survey according to a stratified random sampling approach. The study design was mainly about meeting up to about 300 health care workers and 300 patients visiting the clinics in the national heart institute. Then, start to gather information from them if they smoke and learn more about the type of smoking, they do and their smoking habits. The survey included questions for smokers about quitting trials and their reasons for sticking to smoking. After that, the interviewers tried to raise awareness about the negative impact of tobacco. The next step was to try to advise these smokers to quit.

Findings

The study cohort was 160 visitors (36%), 82 employee (19%), 76 nurses (17%), 64
patients (14%), 41 physician (9%) and 20 technician (5%). Regarding the education level, 63% had primary school education, 17% had a university level, and 15% were illiterate. Smoking prevalence was 60% of the patients, 45% of the visitors, and 30% of the health care workers. In the study sample, smokers were more likely to have diabetes (P0.071), to be hypertensive (P0.034), and to have a history of heart disease (P 0.004). They were more likely to be males (P<0.001). There was no significant difference between smokers and non-smokers regarding geographical residence or educational level. Smokers are more likely to be aware of smoking hazards, including heart problems, COPD, cancer, and E.D (P<0.001).

Recommendations

This cross-sectional survey study showed only the association, therefore, the cause, pathogenesis, and effect were not evaluated. The study recommend further research with pre specified outcomes.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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An end game scenario for young people? Still yet to come

Pierre Gilbert Bizel[1], Anne-Marie Vansnick[1], Christian Massot[1], Helen Barthe-Batsalle[1]
[1]Observatoire de la santé, Province de Hainaut, Belgium

Introduction

The presentation is based on:

- the evolution of tobacco prevalence and control measures among young people from 1997 to 2020.
- the objectives of the main upcoming measures of the Belgian inter-federal strategy for 2022-2028.

Taking into account the persistent strong social gradient, it will be discuss recommendations towards young people.

Background

In Belgium, much of the reduction in the prevalence of tobacco use in young people can be attributed to general long-term policies, most of them adopted during the last twenty years at the federal and regional levels such as :

- legal measures :
  - smoking ban in schools, indoor public places, cars when a minor is present ,
  - advertising ban, neutral packaging,
  - gradual increase in taxation;
- adoption of health promotion policies encouraging protective factors related to addiction.

A legal and social process to denormalize tobacco use has been implemented and produced results in particular for young people.

Results

Recurrent surveys on teenagers 10 -17 yrs from the Health

Observatory of Hainaut (HOH,CSSV network) since 1997 report significant progress towards a smoke-free generation. For example, although the province of Hainaut has a disadvantaged context compared to other Belgian provinces, current smoking prevalence fell to 7.0% in 2020 (age 16) compared to 30% in 1997.
Moreover, these progresses are not equally distributed among socio-economic groups:
In 2020, current smoking prevalence among 15-17 yrs old was 12.5% among professional training school , against 2,9% for general education.

Discussion

New measures included in the inter-federal plan could be the tool to reach an end-game. Among them : smoking ban on railway station platform, prohibition at external entrances to schools, display ban and reduction of sale points, pouches ban, puffbars ban, automat display ban, increase in taxes ; etc. ...
Particular attention should be paid to ensure that young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds can benefit from these positive developments.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco control in The Gambia: Strategies, results, and Recommendations

Kemo Conteh[1], Siaka Sawo[1], Omar Bah[1]
[1]African Network for Information and Action Against Drug (RAID- The Gambia), Banjul, The Gambia

Background

Recent studies have shown a decline in tobacco use among students aged 13 to 15 in The Gambia. However, previous research has revealed interesting findings regarding tobacco prevalence in different contexts. The STEPS Survey (2010), a national population-based survey, indicated an increase in tobacco use among Gambians aged 24 to 64. This survey found that 16.3% of adults in this age group reported tobacco use, with 15% being daily users. Daily tobacco use was higher among men, especially those aged 25-34 and 35-44, with an average consumption of ten cigarettes per day.

Objective

This study aims to assess the impact of tobacco control measures implemented in The Gambia and identify key lessons learned for future initiatives. The specific objectives are as follows:
1. Evaluate the effectiveness of government interventions and policies related to tobacco control.
2. Investigate the role of government-civil society relations, coordination, and media participation in achieving successful tobacco control outcomes.
3. Assess the importance of involving youth, women's groups, and religious leaders in tobacco control initiatives.
3. Examine the impact of increased taxes on tobacco consumption and public health improvement.
4. Highlight the significance of tobacco advocacy, sensitization, and awareness campaigns across all age groups.

Methods

This study will deploy a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis and qualitative assessments. Quantitative data was used to collect data through surveys to measure changes in tobacco use prevalence and compliance with tobacco control regulations. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions, was a explored perceptions and experiences related to tobacco control efforts in The Gambia. Additionally, existing literature and reports on tobacco control activities in The Gambia was reviewed as well.

Results

The preliminary findings of this study indicate several key lessons learned in tobacco control and public health improvement:
1. Strong collaboration between the government and civil society is crucial for effective tobacco control.
2. Coordinated efforts among various stakeholders significantly contribute to successful outcomes.
3. Media participation plays a vital role in raising awareness and supporting tobacco control initiatives.
4. The involvement of youth, women's groups, and religious leaders is essential for effective tobacco control and public health campaigns.
5. Increased taxes on tobacco products are fundamental and necessary for reducing tobacco consumption.
6. Comprehensive advocacy, sensitization, and awareness campaigns are crucial for all age groups.

Conclusions

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions and recommendations are proposed:
1. Enhance the capacity of tobacco control advocates, particularly civil society organizations, journalists, and health journalists, through training and workshops to ensure effective monitoring and control of tobacco.
2. Strengthen tobacco control advocacy efforts by utilizing evidence-based research and expertise.
3. Foster increased coordination among civil society tobacco control advocates, a multi-sectoral working group, and law enforcement bodies to ensure effective implementation of The Gambia's comprehensive tobacco control law.
By implementing these recommendations, The Gambia can further advance its tobacco control efforts, leading to improved public health outcomes and a reduction in tobacco-related harm.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco industry arguments against new laws and regulations

Danielle Arnold[1], Anouk Boerman[1]
[1]Health Funds for Smoke Free, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Since the establishment of the National Prevention Agreement in 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.
We wanted to gain insight in the arguments most commonly used by the tobacco industry. We instructed a research

company to summarise, analyse and systematically organise the arguments used by the tobacco industry to change, delay or block regulations, between 2019 and 2022.
From the 4388 public responses to in total 17 online consultations, 4113 responses contain arguments against tobacco control regulations. Most responses from the tobacco industry and its allies follow a specific pattern. They state they fully support the governmental goal to achieve a Smokefree Generation, but that they are against the tobacco control measure in question as a means to achieve this goal. Most responses contain the argument that the specific measure is not effective, as well as arguments related to e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products as a tool to quit smoking. Other common arguments relate to illicit trade, effects of tobacco control measures on the economy and technical issues. Often literature is cited or examples from abroad are given to substantiate arguments. The tobacco industry tried to delay certain measures by pleading for a transition period that provides sufficient time to prepare for the measure. The consultation regarding the ban on e-cigarette flavours generated by far the most responses. This seems to be caused by tobacco industry campaigns to get e-cigarette users and retailers to speak up.
Insight in the arguments most commonly used by the tobacco industry can help NGOs to better prepare for industry interference and improve their advocacy strategies.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems, a global and comparative overview of the tax systems designs and rates, legislative framework, Big Tobacco's marketing strategies, and case studies

Claudio Tanca[1], Deniece Carrington[1], Estelle Dauchy[1], Andrii Skipalskyi[2], George Bakhturidze[3,4]
[1]Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Washington, United States, [2]World Health Organization, Ukraine, [3]University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia, [4]The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia, Georgia

Introduction

Electronic nicotine and non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDS/ENNDS) are attracting new nicotine users, particularly non-smokers, and youth. Although the long-term health effects are uncertain, ENDS contain nicotine—a highly addictive product, and most of the existing evidence on ENDS/ENNDS shows that they are not without risks. Moreover, youth and non-smokers using e-cigarettes are more likely to initiate conventional cigarettes and start at earlier ages. Furthermore, ENDS are not very effective as cessation aids and are often used in combination with conventional tobacco products. The taxation of ENDS/ENNDS remains a challenge for most governments, especially in light is the tradeoff between, on the one hand, the potential that smokers would use ENDS to quit conventional cigarettes successfully and, on the other hand, the new health risks that these products pose and the uptake of use by young people and non-smokers.

Objective

About ENDS/ENNDS, this session will examine, globally and comparatively, three key areas critical for advocacy: taxation, legal (non-tax and price) frameworks, and communications used by manufacturers and vendors.

Material and Methods

First, it will present and evaluate the tax systems used currently in countries that manufacture or sell ENDS/ENNDS and compare these systems based on their tax burdens and designs. Second, it examines the various legal (non-tax and price) frameworks used in these countries and compares them with conventional cigarettes. Third, it will present the media used by manufacturers and vendors of ENDS/ENNDS, the messages, and the audience they use to promote them. Finally, the session will present and compare case studies to provide concrete examples.

Results

There is a significant variation in the types of tax systems used for ENDS/ENNDS, and most countries impose very low tax rates on these products compared to cigarettes.
As WHO has concluded, e-cigarettes are "harmful" and countries that have not banned e-cigarettes should ensure that "their tobacco control laws and regulations are comprehensive enough to regulate all forms of novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products."
E-cigarette manufacturers, including the major tobacco companies, are spending millions of dollars on lobbying decision-makers in countries around the world to seek favorable e-cigarette regulation. Further, the industry targets non-smokers and young people through product design, nicotine delivery, flavorings, and by marketing on social media.

Conclusions

Encourage countries to follow WHO recommendations and impose high taxation for ENDS/ENNDS and regulations that match those of conventional cigarettes.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Environmental impacts of the tobacco industry - a survey of the research situation 2023

Niclas Malmberg[1]
[1]Tobaksfakta, Stockholm, Sweden

Some sectors of the tobacco industry have been keen to position themselves as active in reducing the negative environmental impact they cause. All attempts by tobacco companies to reduce their impact on the environment are of course welcome. But comparing what the companies say with a survey of the research of today makes clear the companies only address a few of their environmental impacts. When it comes to deforetration, climate change, impoverishment of agricultural land and impacts on biological diversity, the tobacco industry have a very negative impact. What stands clear is that there is no
such thing as environmentally friendly tobacco:

- Tobacco cultivation occupies extensive areas of arable land better used for food production.

- Tobacco cultivation destroys the land by causing erosion, lowered groundwater levels, nutrient depletion and loss of important terrestrial organisms.
- The extensive use of pesticides causes health problems for tobacco growers and affects surrounding agricultural and aquatic environments, not least in the form of reduced biological diversity.
- Tobacco growers are at risk of contracting "Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS)" from skin contact with nicotine. The 1.3 million children under the age of 14 who work in tobacco farms are particularly vulnerable.
- The utilization of new arable land as well as the use of firewood for tobacco curing causes extensive deforestation, and thus also a reduction of biological diversity.
- All stages of tobacco production impact on our climate, from deforestation to carbon dioxide emissions during manufacture and transport.
- Production gives rise to large volumes of waste, some of it hazardous, which risks being handled in substandard ways when tobacco companies move production facilities into countries with weak environmental legislation.
- Production involves extensive water consumption, which among other things depletes groundwater resources in arid areas.
- Even after a cigarette has been extinguished, there is a continued release of cotinine and other toxins that form in thirdhand smoke (created when smoke settles on textiles, etc.).
- Not only are cigarette butts and other tobacco- related products the most common litter in our cities, they also contain a wide range of environmental toxins, such as cadmium.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Strategy of tobacco industry and heat not burning tobacco

Florin Mihaltan[1]
[1]Romanian Society of Pneumology, Bucharest, Romania

Heated tobacco represents a new challenge for current generations

The tobacco industry is trying new variants of strategies that are oriented towards a concept of harm reduction combined with splitting the medical world and proving to the consumer the interest in his health.

In reality, we unravel these policies whose main objective is the social reinsertion of smoking, ensuring the continuation of making profit on the back of the consumer.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Indoor pollution with fine and ultrafine particles from cigarettes and shisha

Manfred Neuberger[1], Patabendhi Nipuni[1], Anna Lena Szettele[1], Aleksandra Trochanowska[1]
[1]Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

Background

In November 2019 smokefree hospitality industry went into force in Austria without exceptions for roofed spaces surrounded by walls >50%. The legislation bans also shisha, HTPs and e-cigarettes. In Vienna compliance increased at first from 95% to 99% within one month, but seemed to decrease again after surveillance authority had stopped controls.

Objective

Therefore we tested air quality repeatedly in a number of bars, cafes, discotheques, pubs, and restaurants in Vienna and compared PM10, PM2.5, PM1, and PNC & LDSA of ultrafines with concentrations found indoors before the ban and with current outdoor values. 2019-2021 in 39 venues at identical locations significant declines in both fine and ultrafine particle concentrations were found in the former smoking areas for all parameters as well as in the former non-smoking areas for PM2.5, PM1 and LDSA. 2022 a second study in 40 Viennese establishments mainly frequented by young people confirmed earlier results, but some outliers indicated, that control of compliance has to be continued.

Methods

Sampling strategy and measurements of PM and UFP had been described before (Mattar & Neuberger. Ultrafine Particles in Viennese Gastronomy after Introduction of a National Smoking Ban. Adv Clin Toxicol 2023, 8: 264).

Results and Conclusions

In Linz 9 of 53 measurements indicated that in these venues cigarettes and/or water pipes were still used in 2021-2022 and the indoor smoking ban had been ignored. In 2023 in Vienna we selected only enterprises which advertised shisha, found 11 for unannounced sampling and in 8 cases violation of the law by indoor smoking at the time of our visit. There we measured in room air a mean particle (>10nm) number concentration of 370,241/cm^3 and a mean LDSA of 987 µm^2/cm^3, which indicate a health hazard. Concentrations were a magnitude higher than outdoors and increased with the number of smokers.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Understanding and tracking tobacco industry influence in the UK: the United Kingdom tobacco industry interference index 2021-2023

Raouf Alebshehy[1], Tom Gatehouse[1], Karin Silver[1], Louis Laurence[1], Marzia Violini[1], Britta Matthes[1], Phil Chamberlain[1], Anna Gilmore[1]
[1]University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom

Background and Objective

The Global Tobacco Index (GTI) evaluates government implementation of Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). This legally binding Article aims to prevent tobacco industry influence over public health policy.

Methods

Using a standardised tool of twenty indicators developed by the South East Asian Tobacco Control Alliance we have examined the commitment of the UK to its obligations under

Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. Data has been gathered since 2017 to create a UK chapter within the GTI report. The first was published in 2019. Data is collected through searches of the academic literature, media and government websites, and routine monitoring reported on the Tobacco Tactics resource. This is supplemented by submission of Freedom of Information requests and consultation with the UK's leading tobacco control advocates.

Results

Data from the period January 2017 to April 2021 (inclusive) showed that the UK government performance in preventing tobacco industry interference has declined somewhat. The lower the score, the more robust a government is in resisting interference. The UK scored 26 in the 2019 report and 32 in the 2020 and 2021 reports. Data for the period April 2021 to March 2023 is currently being collected and analysed and will be reported at the conference to show changes in the UK`s performance and identify any specific issues under the seven areas of assessment.

Conclusions

The UK is a global leader in tobacco control. While it retains a high ranking in preventing tobacco industry interference in policy, it has moved being the first ranked in the 2019 Index to third in the 2021 Index. This latest Index will provide an evidence-based assessment of the UK`s status and a blueprint for the government to improve its performance.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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A willingness to be orchestrated: why are diplomats continuing to undermine public health for the benefit of the tobacco industry

Raouf Alebshehy[1], Karin Silver[1], Phil Chamberlain[1]
[1]University of Bath, Bath, United Kingdom

Background

The tobacco epidemic is global and addressing it requires global collaboration. International and national policies have been adopted to promote collaboration for tobacco control, including an obligation on diplomatic missions to protect public health from the vested interests of the tobacco industry. However, incidents of diplomats lobbying for the benefits of tobacco industry is still occurring despite these regulations. This paper presents a case study of a British ambassador engaging with the tobacco industry, and it points to some of the challenges researchers face in monitoring such incidents.

Methods

The incident studied in this paper was first identified through regular media monitoring conducted by the Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath. The incident was further investigated by using the tools made available by the United Kingdom (UK) Freedom of Information Act, including submitting request, asking for internal review, and submitting a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Results

We identified clear evidence of the UK ambassador to Yemen opening a cigarette factory, part owned by British American Tobacco (BAT), in Jordan. Our investigation revealed a lack of documentation of this and similar incidents of interaction between diplomats and the tobacco industry. We raise concerns about the actions of diplomats which contravene both national and international policies.

Main Conclusions

Monitoring and reporting such activities produces several challenges. Diplomats' interactions with the tobacco industry represent a major concern for public health as such interactions seem to be systematically repeated. This paper calls for action to better implement national and international policies to protect the public health including in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Associations between marijuana and tobacco use among Croatian pupils in 2022 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey

Tonka Karin[1], Ivana Pavić Šimetin[1], Dijana Mayer[1], Ivona Keč[1], Maja Valentić[1], Ana Ištvanović[1], Lara Petković[1]
[1]Croatian Institute of Public health, Zagreb, Croatia

Background

Marijuana is mostly used illegal drug among pupils. The interconnection of cigarette smoking and marijuana smoking in population of Croatian pupils in 2022 will be presented.

Methods

We analyze the data of HBSC research conducted in 2022 among pupils in Croatia. Sample included 705 boys in the age of 15 and 840 girls in the age of 15. Person Chi-Square was used.

Results

12,1% of boys and 12,9% of girls tried marijuana at least once in lifetime. 2,5% of boys and 0,7% of girls smoked marijuana already at age 11 or younger, 1,6% of boys and 0,7% of girls at age 12, 1,7% of boy and 2,3% of girls at age 13, 2,8% boys and 3,9% girls at age 14, 3,4% boys and 5,3% at age 15. In the last 30 days 25,5 % of boys and 28,7% girls smoked cigarettes at least once. Among boys who never tried marijuana, 16,8% smoked cigarettes at least once in last 30 days, while among boys who tried marijuana, 77,5% smoked cigarettes at least once in last 30 days (p<0,001). Among girls who never tried marijuana, 19,3% smoked cigarettes at least once in last 30 days, while among girls who tried marijuana, 87,7% smoked cigarettes at least once in last 30 days (p<0,001). Among boys who never smoked marijuana, even 82,8% never smoked cigarettes; among boys who smoked marijuana at age 11 or younger, only 25,0% never smoked cigarettes; among boys who smoked marijuana at age 12-15, 16,7-33,3% never smoked cigarettes (p<0,001). Among girls who never smoked marijuana, even 80,6% never smoked cigarettes; among girls who smoked marijuana at age 11 or younger, only 33,3% never smoked cigarettes; among girls who smoked marijuana at age 12-15, 6,7-21,1% never smoked cigarettes (p<0,001).

Conclusion

For the first time since 2002 (first time in 6 survey waives) in 2022 girls smoke marijuana more frequently than boys. Cigarette smoking is associated with life time marijuana smoking and early onset of marijuana smoking.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adherence and outcomes of the varenicline-based smoking cessation (STOP FUMAT) program in Mureș county, Romania

Corina Marginean[1], Nimród László[1], Alina Chifiriuc, Cristina Alexandra Man[1]
[1]George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, and Technology of Targu Mures, Mures, Romania

Background
Romania has a high prevalence of adult smoking, necessitating effective cessation interventions like the STOP FUMAT program. Recent global events, like the COVID-19 pandemic, may influence smoking behavior and cessation attempts, posing challenges for public health interventions.
Objectives
This study aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on treatment adherence, smoking cessation outcomes, and reasons for resuming smoking among participants in the STOP FUMAT program.
Methods
We conducted a retrospective cohort study of 98 participants who enrolled in the program between 2020 and 2021, using a phone-based survey. Variables of interest included demographic factors, health status, smoking behavior, completion of the smoking cessation treatment, and perception of the pandemic's impact on smoking behavior.
Results
Treatment completion was not significantly associated with demographic or health characteristics. However, those who completed the treatment were more likely to believe in its efficacy (68.6% vs. 47.8%, p=0.038). Most patients resumed smoking within three months of treatment, with a significant difference between completers (42.1%) and non-completers (67.5%, p=0.014). Stress and the COVID-19 pandemic were major reasons for smoking resumption, and those who felt affected by the pandemic expressed a stronger desire to re-engage with the program.
Conclusions
The pandemic did not significantly impact treatment adherence, but it influenced patients' smoking behavior and perceptions. The study underlines the importance of addressing stress-related triggers for smoking and communicating the benefits of treatment, particularly during global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Tobacco use among Croatian schoolchildren two years after the begging of COVID-19 pandemic

Lara Petković[1], Ivana Pavić Šimetin[1], Dijana Mayer[1], Ana Ištvanović[1], Ivona Keć[1], Maja Valentić[1], Tonka Karin[1]
[1]Croatian Institute of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia

Background
The aim was to analyze the association between tobacco smoking and the impact of COVID-19 on mental health, in Croatian schoolchildren aged 11, 13 and 15.
Methods
The data of the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) research conducted in Croatia in spring of 2022. The sample included 2411 boys and 2589 girls. Pearson Chi-Square was used.
Results
Frequency of smoking among the youth increases with age. While the negative COVID-19 impact didn't vary among boys, older girls reported a higher impact.
Among 11-year-olds, 6.6% of boys with negative COVID-19 impact on mental health smoked in the last 30 days, alongside 1.6% of boys with neutral/positive COVID-19 impact (p=0,001). The same goes for 2,0% of girls with negative and 0.7% of girls with neutral/positive COVID19 impact on mental health (p=0,171). Among 13-year-old boys, 9,9% with negative and 6,2% with neutral/positive COVID-19 impact on mental health smoked in the last 30 days (p=0.119). In the same age group, 12,7% of girls with negative and 5,5% of girls with neutral/positive COVID-19 impact on mental health smoked in the last 30 days (p<0,001).
32.4% of boys with negative and 22.3% of boys with neutral/positive COVID-19 impact on mental health, aged 15, smoked in the last 30 days (p=0.015). Meanwhile, 38.1% of girls with negative and 20,4% of girls with neutral/positive COVID-19 impact on public health, aged 15, also reported smoking at least once in the last 30 days (p<0,001).
Conclusion
There was an increase in tobacco use in 2022. While 11- year-old boys smoke more frequently than girls, the difference disappears with age, with 15- year-old girls notably smoking tobacco almost more frequently than boys. Cigarette smoking is associated with perceived negative COVID impact on mental health in boys aged 11 and 15, and girls aged 13 and 15.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Enhancing the legislation and implementation of tobacco control policies in Türkiye

Sedef Erçetin Gencosmanoğlu[1], Sara Ozhan[1], Melis Şahin[1]
[1]Turkish Green Crescent Society, Istanbul, Turkey

Turkish Green Crescent Society (TGCS) is an NGO working on tackling different kinds of addictions; namely tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations. The work of TGCS can be summarized as conducting prevention, recovery, rehabilitation, social reintegration, and advocacy work, and these are based solely on evidence and science to be able to have a global vision. TGCS carries out collaborations and partnerships with public and private entities such as Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids to enhance the legislation and implementation of tobacco control policies in order to raise the protection standards in Türkiye. In this regard, the presentation of TGCS at the AGM will be focusing on three sub-topics:

First, TGCS's recent advocacy activities on tobacco control; which include legislation improvement suggestions to be submitted to national decision-making bodies. These suggestions include a better definition of smoke-free places that fits to the description of FCTC, creating smoke-free outdoor spaces in neighborhoods of educational facilities, decreasing the extensity/plurality of point-of-sales of tobacco products, and limiting the visibility of tobacco products in point-of-sales where children also have a free entrance.
Secondly, we will be explaining the monitoring project targeting points-of-sales that TGCS conducts all around Türkiye via its nationwide branches. We are collecting data and evidence on the implementation gaps and/or systematic violations of tobacco control legislation via our workers and supporters nationwide. These works also constitute a convincing justification package for legislation improvement ideas set forth above.
Lastly, the presentation will then include TGCS's mobile application on tobacco cessation, which was made available during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have a solid public health service that attracts more appeal each day.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Achieving a tobacco free Ireland whilst leaving nobody behind: An analysis of smoking and quitting behaviours in people with mental health disorders in Ireland

Maria Deery[1], Paul Kavanagh[2]
[1]Health Service Executive, Dublin, Ireland, [2]Health Intelligence Unit, Health Service Executive, Dublin, Ireland

Background

While Ireland has made considerable progress in tackling the harms caused by smoking, 1 in 5 adults (18%) continue to smoke, and inequalities are widening. People with mental disorders risk being left behind as Ireland pursues its tobacco endgame goal, but smoking and quitting behaviour have been poorly described in this group.

Objectives

1) To quantify and describe tobacco product use patterns in people with self-reported probable mental disorders (PMD) in Ireland.
2) To quantify the prevalence of smoking, quitting behaviours quit aid use in adults with self-reported mental disorders.
3) To quantify contact with health professionals and stop-smoking care by those with self-reported mental disorders.

Methods

A secondary analysis of the 2021 Healthy Ireland (HI) survey dataset was conducted. The HI Survey is conducted annually with a representative sample of the population aged 15 years and older (n=7,454). Descriptive statistics and logistic regression compared smoking and quitting behaviours across those with and without a PMD.

Results

Smoking prevalence was significantly higher in those with a PMD than those without (26.1%-v-16.9%, p<0.001). There was no difference in positive intention to quit (p=0.21) and making a quit attempt in the past 12 months was similar (p=0.856) across both groups. However, making a successful quit attempt was higher in those without a PMD compared to those with a PMD (27.7%-v-24%, p<0.001). This is despite those with PMD having more frequent contact with healthcare staff than those without (p<0.001).

Conclusions

While people with PMD have a need and interest in stopping smoking, these findings underline a gap in the provision of stop smoking care to this group which means they risk being left behind as Ireland becomes tobacco-free. This study will act as a catalyst for greater focus in the fight against the ongoing epidemic of smoking related harm in Ireland.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The Italian clinical practice guideline for the treatment of tobacco and nicotine dependence

Renata Solimini[1], Simona Vecchi[2], Alice Josephine Fauci[3], Antonello Napoletano[3], Daniela Coclite[3], Luisa Mastrobattista[1], Claudia Mortali[1], Ilaria Palmi[1], Laura Amato[2], Roberta Pacifici[1], Experts Panel Group, Evidence Review Team, Simona Pichini[1]
[1]Istituto Superiore di Sanità, National Centre on Addiction and Doping, Rome, Italy, [2]Department of Epidemiology of the Regional Health Service, ASL Roma 1, Rome, Italy, [3]Istituto Superiore di Sanità, National Centre for Clinical Excellence, Rome, Italy

Background

Recently, new products have appeared on the market containing tobacco and/or nicotine (e.g. heated tobacco cigarettes, electronic cigarettes or other new and emerging products). In Italy, these new products mainly lead to dual use or poly-use.

Objectives

The Italian Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the treatment of tobacco and nicotine dependence includes both the treatment of conventional tobacco dependence and the treatment of nicotine dependence, induced by the new and emerging products containing tobacco and/or nicotine. The National Centre on Addiction and Doping of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità defined the objectives and scope of this updated CPG.

Materials and Methods

A multidisciplinary panel of clinical experts, together with experts in systematic literature review, identified and prioritized 9 clinical questions related to the treatment of tobacco and nicotine dependence. The applied process was consistent with the Methodological Manual for the production of CPGs (by the National Centre for Clinical excellence, National Guidelines System). The Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) methodology was used to assess the certainty of evidence and make recommendations. The reporting of the guideline was prepared in accordance with the AGREE Reporting Checklist (Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation).

Results

The guideline included 9 clinical questions, 4 of which related to behavioral interventions (including brief advice, counselling and digital interventions), 4 related to pharmacological interventions (including pharmacological interventions alone or in association with behavioral support), and one related to the training of healthcare professionals. The results of the systematic reviews conducted for each question were discussed with the multidisciplinary panel and, by using the GRADE Evidence to Decision (EtD) framework, 29 recommendations for clinical practice, 1 recommendation for further studies and 8 Good Practice Statements, were issued.

Conclusions

To our knowledge, this is the first CPG that includes the treatment of nicotine dependence as well as the treatment of conventional tobacco dependence following a standardized and internationally recognized methodology.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Teachers against tobacco summarize their project on attitudes to tobacco and nicotine at fairs and political parties' municipal days

Björn Sundin[1]
[1]Teachers against Tobacco, Stockholm, Sweden

Background and Purpose

Teachers against Tobacco works with influence at fairs and where politicians gather. Since 2019, questionnaires have been distributed in connection with a prize competition with some questions about attitudes to tobacco and nicotine products. The purpose of the questionnaires is to start a conversation about tobacco issues, to arouse the respondents' interest in the issues and to obtain figures on the attitudes in the various contexts.

Method

We handed out the survey on an A5 paper. The results were then compiled in an Excel file.

Results

A majority of respondents want a more restrictive tobacco policy. However, Liberals and Center Party members are less negative to a more restrictive tobacco policy.

Conclusions

The respondents request a more restrictive tobacco policy. The respondents in the political parties are also in favor of a more restrictive tobacco policy, significantly more than what is expressed in the parties' policies in the Riksdag.

Implications

There is every reason to highlight that the political parties do not represent the views of their members on the tobacco issue.

Limitations and Future Research

The sample is limited to those who are willing to answer the survey. On some occasions there are few respondents but the answers do not differ significantly. More information can be obtained from materials such as e.g. about men or Women have different attitudes as well as the attitudes of those who use tobacco and those who do not.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Initial validation of the satisfaction and perceived usefulness questionnaires for evaluating smoking cessation interventions among individuals with diabetes

Joseph Grech[1], Ian Norman[2], Roberta Sammut[1]
[1]Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta, Mater Dei Hospital, Msida, Malta, [2]Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care, King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Background

Evidence suggest that individuals with diabetes do not easily adopt smoking cessation interventions. Assessing the acceptability of such interventions is crucial before implementation, yet there are no quantitative measures which evaluate satisfaction and perceived usefulness of smoking cessation interventions among individuals with diabetes.

Objectives

Validate and assess the internal consistency of two self-developed instruments measuring satisfaction and perceived usefulness of a smoking cessation intervention among individuals with diabetes.

Methods

The instruments were developed and validated in English, then translated into Maltese. The satisfaction questionnaire contained eight statements while the perceived usefulness questionnaire had fourteen; both rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Content validation involved five tobacco cessation facilitators rating item relevance using a 4-point ordinal rating scale, suggesting improvements, and later assessing the conceptual equivalence of the translated questionnaires using a similar scale. Unanimous agreement among experts was required for item relevance and equivalence. Thirty-four individuals with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, attending a diabetes-specific smoking cessation intervention, received either the Maltese or English versions of the questionnaires. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha scores.

Results

Two rounds of content validation resulted in minor changes to the questionnaires, including removing one item and adding another to the perceived usefulness questionnaire. Experts unanimously agreed on item relevance and conceptual equivalence. Fifteen participants completed the Maltese versions of the questionnaires, while sixteen completed the English versions. Cronbach's alpha scores were 0.87 and 0.91 for the Maltese and English versions of the satisfaction questionnaire, and 0.94 and 0.96 for the Maltese and English versions of the perceived usefulness questionnaire. All item-scale correlations were >0.4.

Conclusions

These findings provide initial validation for utilizing the developed instruments to assess satisfaction and perceived usefulness of smoking cessation interventions among individuals with diabetes. Further validation with a larger sample and factor analyses is recommended.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Development of a multi-component smoking cessation intervention for individuals living with diabetes

Joseph Grech[1], Ian Norman[2], Roberta Sammut[1]
[1]Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Malta, Mater Dei Hospital, Msida, Malta, [2]Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery & Palliative Care, King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Background
Smoking cessation is an integral aspect of diabetes management. Given the diabetes-specific challenges faced by individuals with diabetes in attempting to quit smoking, the provision of tailored smoking cessation support has been recommended. However, there has been limited research on the development of tailored smoking cessation interventions for this cohort.
Objectives
Develop a diabetes-specific smoking cessation intervention, based on evidence and the needs of individuals with diabetes.
Methods
A scoping review of the literature on smoking cessation interventions for individuals with diabetes, and on the challenges and barriers to quitting was carried out to identify the most promising smoking cessation methods for this cohort. This was followed by a systematic review and intervention component analysis of the identified smoking cessation methods, for identifying the most effective smoking cessation elements. Additionally, a qualitative descriptive study was held amongst 20 Maltese former and current smokers with diabetes to explore their needs to quit smoking and views on the identified intervention components.
Results
Based on the reviews and the qualitative descriptive study's findings, a multi-component smoking cessation was developed. This consists of three to four behavioural support sessions (about 30 minutes each) and a six-week provision of Nicotine Replacement Therapy. To address the documented need for more impactful communication about tobacco-related harm, the intervention includes three brief video clips featuring a person with diabetes who experienced tobacco-associated diabetic complications. Participants from the qualitative descriptive study also expressed the need for smoking cessation support in local diabetes practice, presenting an opportunity to integrate the smoking cessation intervention into local diabetes education initiatives.
Conclusions
This study reports on the development of a unique multi-component smoking cessation intervention based on evidence and the needs of individuals with diabetes. The intervention will now be piloted as part of local diabetes education efforts.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The history of smoking cessation support in Hungary

Zsuzsa Cselkó[1], Márta Fényes[1]
[1]National Koránvi Institute of Pulmonology, Budapest, Hungary

Background
Tobacco use remains the greatest preventable cause of death in Hungary, with a smoking-related death rate (2019: 360/100 000 age-standardized death rate) among the highest in the WHO European Region. Despite WHO FCTC-defined tobacco control measures in place, smoking prevalence is high (2019: 27%) and has not decreased since 2014.
Objectives
This study attempts to summarize the progress of smoking cessation support in Hungary aiming to identify strengths and areas for improvement to lessen the toll caused by smoking.
Methods
A literature search was conducted using the Hungarian Digital Archives Database. After 2012, the data has been derived from the National Methodology Center for Cessation Support (Center) reports.
Results
The National Koránvi Institute of Pulmonology (NKIP) established the first organized network of cessation counseling services in 1987 at outpatient pulmonary clinics (OPCs) sponsored by a State Insurance tender. By 1999, individual behavior counseling with medication was accessible at 130 healthcare providers thanks to pharmaceutical company support. Since 2005, the National Health Insurance Fund has supported, albeit at a low value, behavior counseling at OPCs. The Center at NKIP was established in 2012 and entrusted with the following: education of healthcare workers in cessation support (2430 persons between 2012-2023), operation of the national quitline (on average 1000 persons counseled per year), formulation of relevant guidelines, and coordination of cessation support programs. Having recognized that OPCs are overburdened by the organizational tasks of cessation support and funding was intermittent, from 2020 counseling service has steadily transferred to the existing network of health promotion offices, although without specific funding for cessation programs and communication.
Conclusions
To achieve tobacco control advances, adequate and regular funding for established counseling services and nicotine withdrawal treatment is essential. Furthermore, the role of healthcare professionals in reducing the tobacco epidemic toll is outstanding, therefore individual responsibilities should be recognized.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Quitting smoking without gaining weight: short- and long-term results from a study of individuals with overweight and obesity

Andrea Krotter[1], Ángel García-Pérez[2], Gema Aonso-Diego[3], Amalia Udeanu[3], Gloria García-Fernández[3]
[1]Addictive Behaviors Research Group, Department of Psychology, University of Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain, [2]University of Leon, Castilla and Leon, Spain, [3]University of Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain

Background
Post-cessation weight gain, which has been estimated as 4-5 kilos (kg) after one year of abstinence, is a major barrier for smoking cessation.
Objectives
To analyze the efficacy of an intervention for smoking cessation and weight gain prevention among smokers with overweight or obesity at the end of the treatment (EOT) and follow-ups in terms of rates of seven-day point prevalence abstinence, days of continuous abstinence, and weight change among quitters.
Methods
120 smokers (MBMI=31.75; SD=4.31; 54.16% female) were randomly assigned to cognitive behavioral therapy for smoking cessation and weight gain prevention (CBT; n=60) or CBT plus contingency management for smoking cessation (CM; n=60). Individuals completed an assessment at baseline, at EOT, and at follow-up sessions (1, 3, 6, and 12 months after the EOT). Abstinence was biochemically confirmed (CO levels ⩽4 ppm and cotinine levels ⩽80 ng/ml), and weight was measured in kg with a calibrated medical scale. Abstinence rates were examined following the intention-to-treat analysis, and no imputation of weight missing data was performed.
Results
Abstinence rates in the total sample were 70%, 49.17%, 37.5%, 33.33%, and 25% at EOT and 1-, 3-, 6-, and 12-month follow-ups, and mean days of continuous abstinence were 13.35±10.27, 22.22±25.10, 36.68±50.99, 54.98±86.55, and 83.51±153.44. No differences were found between groups in abstinence rates at any assessment (all p-values ⩾.073) or in days of continuous abstinence (all p-values ⩾ 254). Quitters gained 1.07±1.88, 2.16±3.43, 2.91±4.54, 2.92±3.43, and 3.7±4.70 kg respectively at each time point (all p-values <.001). Weight change was similar in both groups (all p-values ⩾.229).
Conclusions
Abstinence rates were higher than found in previous studies with this population. CM for smoking cessation did not improve smoking cessation outcomes at any time point. Although quitters gained weight, the increase was lower than reported in prior interventions without weight gain prevention.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Efficiency of smoking cessation programs: results based on a systematic review

Laure Fillette[1], Isabelle Varescon[2]
[1]Université Paris Cité, Boulogne Billancourt, France, [2]Université Paris Cité, Laboratoire de Psychopathologie et Processus de Santé, Boulogne Billancourt, France

For decades, health professionals have actively promoted smoking cessation. Nicotine replacement therapy has proven its efficiency in treating the physiological aspect of the addiction but, to this day, it is still unclear what variables are involved in the treatment of the psychological and behavioral aspects of the addiction. For the past fifty years, therapeutical programs have been created but, due to the huge diversity of protocols, interventions and evaluations, it is still unclear what variables are in fact involved in the efficiency of a smoking cessation program.
Therefore, the purpose of this communication is to show the main results based on a systematic analysis of the literature from the first smoking cessation programs in the 70' to 2023. Using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method, 49 articles were included in the review with, overall, results showing a positive association between the personalization of a smoking cessation program and its efficiency.
The results of this work highlight the importance for health professionals, when determining which intervention is best, to consider which smoker is faced in order to adapt the indication. When most of the existing programs offer one single form of intervention for all users, it appears necessary for future programs to offer a variety of interventions. And it is important, when evaluating the efficiency of a program, not only to observe the variables of the program itself, but also the characteristics of the users such as their sociodemographic profile as well as their motivational status and their smoking background. Therapeutical interventions in the field could benefit from a systematical review of those characteristics.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Tobacco, human rights, and racial health disparities

Kelsey Romeo-Stuppy[1]
[1]Action on Smoking and Health, Washington, United States

Tobacco negatively impacts the right to health. In many countries, tobacco also contributes to health inequalities, as vulnerable populations are targeted by tobacco companies, often smoke at higher rates, and are provided with less cessation support. Participants will learn how to use human rights arguments at a local, national, and international level. Participants will learn how to engage with the human rights treaty body, the Committee on the Elimination on Racial Discrimination, on the upcoming general recommendation on the right to health. The general recommendation provides an opportunity to ensure that tobacco is included in the work of human rights bodies, as well as provides support for tobacco control advocacy at the local and national level.
Conflicts of interest
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Enhancing tobacco control and business accountability: The potential of the EU Due Diligence Directive

Grazia Scocca[1]
[1]University of Salerno, Fisciano, Italy

This abstract examines the potential of the EU due diligence directive in contributing to tobacco control policies and enhancing the right to health for EU citizens. The implementation of mandatory due diligence measures plays a crucial role in holding businesses accountable for their impact on environmental and human rights issues. The tobacco industry, in particular, requires rigorous scrutiny due

to its detrimental effects on public health. By incorporating the EU due diligence directive, the tobacco control policies can be strengthened, ensuring that tobacco companies operate responsibly and transparently.

The directive serves as a framework for tobacco businesses to assess and manage the social, environmental, and health risks associated with their operations, supply chains, and products. It enables the identification and prevention of practices that compromise the right to health as well as the right to a healthy environment, promoting greater transparency and accountability within the industry. Furthermore, the directive provides a platform for collaboration between governments, civil society organizations, and tobacco companies to collectively address the challenges posed by tobacco use.

The integration of the EU due diligence directive into tobacco control policies offers multiple benefits. It facilitates the enforcement of stricter regulations and encourages the adoption of evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco consumption. By emphasizing business accountability, the directive supports the protection of EU citizens' right to health by curbing tobacco-related harms. Additionally, it promotes the dissemination of information and awareness campaigns to educate the public about the risks associated with tobacco use.

In conclusion, the EU due diligence directive has the potential to significantly impact tobacco control policies, enhancing the right to health for EU citizens. The integration of due diligence measures paves the way for a healthier and more informed society, promoting the well-being of EU citizens.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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A smoking-free generation

Emanuela Oana Costin[1,2], Camelia Pescaru[2], Andrei Pescaru[2]
[1]Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, [2]Victor Babes Clinical Hospital, Timisoara, Romania

Tobacco use and exposure is the most common cause of preventable death and disease around the world, claiming more than 8 millions of lives every year.

The majority of current smokers report that the most defenseless age for future nicotine addiction is the adolescence, when youth are very vulnerable, with a faster progression to smoking dependence and an exposure which raise critical concerns.

Tobacco use disorder arises from a complex interaction of neurobiological, behavioral, and social-environmental factors. Furthermore, almost 40% of children with ages up to 11 are regularly exposed to secondhand smoking in United States and data shows that these rates are increasing yearly. Helping youth to quit tobacco is extremely important. There are many interventions for tobacco cessation around young generation and continuous research is needed. Some studies claimed that healthcare providers should advise people to stop smoking in front of their children. While almost half of our children breathe a tobacco polluted air and more than 65000 young people die every year because of second-hand smoke related illnesses, prevention is considered to be the key to protect the youth.

There are several recommendations for pediatricians about limiting and treating nicotine dependence among children and adolescents. The US Public Health Service advocates tobacco screening as primary psychosocial assessment among teenagers. Stopping smoking initiation among youth it is much easier than treating it. Education and counseling school-aged children could be the key to decrease the rates for tobacco user and disorders.

Moreover, pharmacotherapy could be considered as a part of the treatment for smoking cessation even for younger age groups, but the challenge comes with enrollment and treatment adherence.

Furthermore, the new devices called e-cigarettes which can contain nicotine or not are extremely harmful and undoubtedly unsafe. These products are very dangerous for our health, even though their exact long-term effects are not known completely.

While tobacco companies are taking steps ahead with new e-cigarettes and vaping devices, health organizations and multi-disciplinary medical teams around the world need to work together for developing a smoking free generation.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Switching up the game and tackling the tobacco industry

Louise Johansson[1], Shannelle Sahlin[1]
[1]A Non Smoking Generation, Stockholm, Sweden

Background

We got comfortable. As tobacco usage declined in Sweden, we took a breath, and the tobacco industry plotted a big comeback. They did not intend to accept their losses. Instead, they closely studied youth. And since 2016, the industry has used clever tactics to recruit a new generation.

Objectives

With marketing strategies exploiting feminism, activism, environmental consciousness and ethics – the number of young tobacco users has once again skyrocketed. This leaves us wondering: will we be hunting the tobacco industry forever? In our oral presentation, we will cover four strategies implemented by the tobacco industry in Sweden to recruit youth: health-washing, fem-washing, green-washing, and ethics-washing. We aim to inspire the implementation of proactive and sustainable solutions when regulating all forms of tobacco.

Methods

If the tobacco industry is rapid and innovative - shouldn't we be as well? It took Sweden five long years to somewhat regulate new nicotine products (such as white snus) after launching in 2016. This new law is both a victory and a loss; the legislators want to "figure out the exact health implications before regulating them". Meanwhile, thousands of young people have and will enter a life-long nicotine addiction via the strategies mentioned.

Results

Once again, lawmakers have fallen for the tobacco industry's narrative of harm reduction, i.e., health-washing. The tobacco industry's interference extended the length of the process and

influenced the regulations. And what's even worse: we can already see the industry circumventing the new laws just one year after implementation.

Conclusions

To prevent the tobacco industry from repeating history over and over again, should we keep trying to predict the industry's next move, or should we employ entirely new approaches? Perhaps by learning from history, we can take more long-term actions before it's too late and become the movement that ends the tobacco epidemic – once and for all.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Profile of carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in relation with smoking status in COPD patients

Antigona Trofor[1], Ioana Buculei[1], Mona Elisabeta Dobrin[2,3], Cristina Vicol[1], Daniela Robu Popa[1,3], Oana Elena Melinte[1]
[1]University of Medicine and Pharmacy Grigore T. Popa din Iași, Iași, Romania, [2]Medical Science Department, Iuliu Hațieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, [3]Clinical Hospital of Pulmonary Diseases, Iași, Romania

Introduction

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a class of complex organic substances, consisting of carbon and hydrogen atoms that contain at least two benzene rings. Six PAHs have been classified as possible carcinogenic compounds to humans: benzo(a)anthracene (BaA), benzo(b)fluoranthrene (BbFlu), benzo(k)fluoranthrene (BkFlu), benzo(a)pyrene (BaPy), dibenzo(a,h)anthracene (DahA) and indeno1,2,3-cd-pyren (IPy). It is known that PAHs compounds, such as benzopyrene, anthracene and acenaphthylene, are capable of producing toxic, mutagenic and carcinogenic effects, being an important risk factor for respiratory diseases, such as lung cancer and COPD.

Material and Methods

This observational study aimed to evaluate the serum concentration of carcinogenic PAHs (BA, B(b)Flu, B(k)Flu, BaPy, D(a,h)A, IPy) according to smoking status (smoker, non-smoker/ex-smoker) and to smoking consumption (number of packs-years, PY) in 52 patients diagnosed with COPD in different stages of disease severity.

Results

BaPy was significantly higher in the group of smokers diagnosed with COPD (mean concentration = 1.21 ng/mL) and was higher than in the group of former smokers (mean concentration of 0.56 ng/mL), but also compared to the group of non-smoker patients (mean concentration = 0.87 ng/mL). The regression summary for the dependent variable showed an important correlation between BaPy concentration and PY. The factorial analysis applied to the data set generated 3 factors with a variance of 52% represented by carcinogenic PAHs, such as BaA, DahA, B(b,k)Flu and BaPy.

Conclusions

The accumulation of pollutants according to smoking status showed higher serum concentrations of carcinogenic PAHs in smokers (ΣPAHs = 6.76 ng/mL) compared to non-smokers and ex-smokers COPD patients. The most abundant carcinogenic PAHs were BaPy in smokers, DahA for non-smokers, and B(b) Flu for former smokers.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Assessing reporting patterns and implications of non-compliant electronic cigarettes in the European market: a comprehensive study

Irmina Michałek[1,2], Florentino Luciano Caetano dos Santos[3], Monika Durzynska[1], Marta Manczuk[1], Pawel Koczkodaj[1,2]
[1]Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [2]Medical Research Agency, Warsaw, Poland, [3]Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Boston, United States

Background

Given the increasing prevalence of e-cigarette usage and potential risks associated with non-compliant products, understanding their reporting patterns is crucial for public health regulation.

Objectives

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which non-compliant electronic cigarettes, which are being sold in the European market, are being reported in relation to the prevalence of e-cigarette usage.

Methods

We conducted a comprehensive search using the EU Rapid Information System for dangerous non-food products, commonly referred to as Rapex, to identify instances of non-compliant e-cigarettes reported between the years 2005 and 2022. This system encompasses data from 28 current and former member states of the European Union (EU-28). To determine the fraction of individuals who have ever used e-cigarettes, we accessed the latest Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2020. Additionally, we obtained population data for each country in 2020 from the World Bank. Subsequently, we computed an index for each country, namely the number of alerts per 100,000 ever e-cigarette smokers, hereafter referred to as the "alert index."

Results

During the period from 2005 to 2022, a total of 150 alerts were recorded for violations of electronic cigarette legislation within the EU-28 region. Among the member states, Ireland exhibited the highest alert index of 4.2, followed by Bulgaria with 3.2 and Lithuania with 1.3. In 16 out of the EU-28 states, the alert index remained at 0.0 per 100,000 individuals who have ever smoked e-cigarettes. Notably, four of these 16 states, namely Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Poland, were identified as the countries of origin for the reported products.

Conclusions

In conclusion, our findings highlight the need for stricter enforcement and monitoring of non-compliant electronic cigarettes in the European market.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Examining non-compliance and regulatory implications of flavored electronic cigarettes in the European market

Paweł Koczkodaj[1,2], Florentino Luciano Caetano dos Santos[3], Monika Durzynska[1], Marta Manczuk[1], Irmina Michałek[1,2]
[1]Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [2]Medical Research Agency, Warsaw, Poland, [3]Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Boston, United States

Background
Flavored electronic cigarettes have gained popularity in the European market; however, concerns have been raised regarding their compliance with regulations and the potential need for policy revisions.
Objectives
The primary objective of this research was to conduct a thorough investigation into the reported instances of violations associated with non-compliant flavored electronic cigarettes, specifically those being marketed and sold within the European market.
Methods
We conducted an extensive search using Rapex, the EU Rapid Information System for dangerous non-food products, to identify reported violations of non-compliant flavored e-cigarettes between 2005 and 2022. We thoroughly reviewed complete reports and accompanying photographic documentation to assess the presence of characterizing flavors. Descriptive statistics were utilized to present mean, standard deviation (SD) for numeric variables, and numbers/percentages for categorical variables.
Results
Between 2005 and 2022, a total of 110 alerts were recorded, with 78 (70.9%) related to flavored e-cigarettes and 32 (29.1%) to refills. Safety information deficiencies accounted for 87 alerts, while volume violations comprised 33 alerts. Seventeen alerts indicated exceeding permitted nicotine concentration. Among these, 10 cases were identified based on producers' declarations, with an average nicotine concentration of 48.40 mg/ml (SD 12.20). Laboratory tests conducted on eight reported products revealed an average nicotine concentration of 31.09 mg/ml (SD 8.45).
Conclusions
In light of the substantial number of alerts associated with flavored e-cigarettes and the identified safety information deficiencies, volume violations, and excessive nicotine concentrations, our findings underscore the necessity for a reassessment of EU legislation to include a prohibition on flavored e-cigarettes, similar to that implemented for conventional cigarettes.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Implementation of tobacco-free school policies: A study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Pierre Laloux[1], Nora Mélard[1], Vincent Lorant[1]
[1]Institute of Health and Society, Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

Background
In Europe, more than half of smokers started before 18. Tobacco-free school policies (TFSP) were implemented as school plays a decisive role in smoking. Yet, there is inconclusive evidence that such policies are effective, as there are few well-designed and long-term experimental studies. In this study protocol, we describe the ADHAirE Project that aims to improve the implementation and effectiveness of TFSP.
Methods
We will conduct a randomized controlled trial with 10 secondary schools in the experimental group and 10 secondary schools in the control group to test the effectiveness of the project on different smoking outcomes. The project will take place in the Hainaut province, which has the lowest income level and one of the highest smoking prevalence in Belgium. It is composed of three main components: regular evaluation of the school's situation regarding its tobacco policy and adolescent smoking, creation of an advocacy coalition, and support provision regarding the implementation of the policy. Collaboration with smoking cessation programs will also be provided. A survey will be conducted among school staff and students at baseline, one-year, and two-year follow-up to collect data on smoking status and perceived smoking norm at school.
Discussion
The project aims to make TFSP a social norm that is shared and enforced by a large coalition of school stakeholders, improve its implementation fidelity, and, ultimately, prevent and decrease adolescent smoking. The advocacy coalition will allow to gather stakeholders like principals, teachers and students to share reasons and beliefs to move toward a new "non-smoking norm". As smoking is socially embedded, adolescents have to feel that they do not act alone when changing a common behavior. Similarly, school staff has to feel confident to enforce the TFSP. Findings from this project will contribute to the existing literature on school-based interventions and on adolescent smoking prevention.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Adapting an innovative smoke-free home intervention in Catalonia through a stakeholder-engaged and systematic approach (IM-Adapt)

Olena Tigova[1,2,3,4], Nathália Rosa[5], Laura Anton[1,2,4], Maria Fernandez[6], Esteve Fernández[1,2,3,4], Cristina Martínez[1,2,3,4,7]
[1]Centre for Biomedical Research in Respiratory Diseases (CIBERES), Madrid, Spain, [2]Catalan Institute of Oncology, Barcelona, Spain, [3]University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, [4]Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute, IDIBELL, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain, [5]Department of Medicine and Life Sciences, University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain, [6]Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Research, School of Public Health, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Houston, United States, [7]University of California, San Francisco, United States

Background

A few evidence-based interventions exist that have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting smoke-free homes yet have not been widely adopted and implemented. The purpose of this study was to adapt the "Some things are better outside" smoke-free homes intervention in Catalonia.

Methods

We used a modified approach to Intervention Mapping (IM-Adapt) to guide adaptation. We used mixed methods approaches to better understand the factors that might influence smoke-free home policies in Catalonia. We convened an expert group comprised of researchers, representatives of local public health organisations, communitary health and participative research experts. The group performed an initial review of the intervention materials, mapping the intervention components and comparing them to local needs. In-depth interviews were conducted with intervention implementers and potential program participants. Further, focus groups were conducted to review and discuss the materials with the potential users. The expert group discussed preferences for various materials including the design elements, language, and look, and reached a consenus about the modifications to be made.

Results

Overall, key stakeholders and potential users of the intervention reported a good fit of the intervention in terms of messaging and images although there were some specific recommendations to better respond the local cultural characteristics (e.g., photos of local people, housing characteristics, etc.). The most common adaptations included tailoring, refining, changing packaging, adding, and substituting. The major goals of the modifications were addressing cultural factors, increasing reach, improving the fit with users, and reducing cost. Stakeholders had many suggestions about implementation through schools in Catalonia and believed it would be an effective way to reach parents allowing smoking in homes.

Conclusions

A systematic mixed methods approach involving key stakeholders of the intervention implementation was important for adapting a smoke-free home intervention to the Catalan context. We recommend the use of this participative approach to guide intervention adaptations.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Ukraine is grappling with the consequences of the unregulated promotion of HTPs and vapes

Dmytro Kupyra[1]
[1]Advocacy Center LIFE, Kyiv, Ukraine

Background

Until January 1, 2021, there were no restrictions on the sale and promotion of HTPs, HTP devices, e-cigarettes, and e-liquids in Ukraine, except for prohibiting smoking e-cigarettes in designated public places. The tobacco industry aggressively promoted the concept of alternative tobacco and nicotine consumption, leading to a staggering increase in e-cigarette use among 13-15 y. o. children. In 2017, the GYTS survey revealed an 18.4% prevalence of e-cigarette smoking in that age group.

The decline in tobacco use has halted among the adult population, and there is a concerning trend of increasing tobacco and nicotine consumption, particularly among youth and women.

Objective

Control over advertising and using HTPs and e-cigarettes.

Methods

The public has appealed to the WHO FCTC policies, its guiding principles, decisions made by FCTC parties, and Directive 2014/40/EU.

Through collaborative efforts between the public and tobacco control advocates in Parliament, a comprehensive anti-tobacco law, Law No. 1978-IX, was successfully passed.

Results

As of June 1, 2022, HTP products were classified as tobacco products, subject to corresponding requirements such as health warnings and advertising and promotion bans. Textual health warnings were also mandated for e-cigarettes and liquids.

From July 11, 2022, smoking HTP in designated places, including all public premises, was prohibited, with airports being the only exception.

From July 11, 2023, a new set of measures to protect the population from tobacco and ENDS will come into effect:

the ban on selling flavored e-liquids, cigarettes and rolling tobacco.

the ban on advertising of HTP devices, e-cigarettes, and e-liquids

e-cigarette, e-liquid content requirements in accordance with Directive 2014/40/EU.

Conclusions

Research shows that cafés, bars, and restaurants comply with the ban on smoking HTPs and e-cigarettes indoors. Ukraine is confidently moving towards reducing the popularity of HTP and ENDS, especially among children and youth.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The trends in tobacco product consumption in Serbia in 2023

Boban Nedeljković[1], Jovan Zubović[1]
[1]Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

Background

This study represents a 2023 update of our continuous tracking of tobacco product use in Serbia.

Objectives

We aimed to explore the frequency of use of traditional (manufactured and roll-your-own) and novel (heated and vaping) products in tobacco users as well as the transitions in use of these products. Also, we explored whether the products used were purchased (il)legally.

Methods

To address the aims, we conducted the field survey on 1000 adult participants aged between 18 and 87. The sampling procedure was probabilistic and included the individuals who use any of the products: manufactured and roll-your-own

cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and vaping products. The participants were also asked whether they had used each of the products in the past and about the place of the purchase of the products they currently use.

Results

The results showed that the use of manufactured (83.3%) and roll-your-own (13.6%) cigarettes is the most frequent, while the use of heated tobacco products (3.0%) and vaping products with (2.1%) and without nicotine (1.0%) is less frequent. The total overlap of the product consumption among the users was 3.0% (i.e., 30 out of 1000 used more than one product). Considering the transition between the products, we observed that former users of manufactured cigarettes comprise the majority of current users of roll-your-own cigarettes (62.5%), heated tobacco products (76.7%), and vaping products with nicotine (76.2%). The manufactured cigarettes (over 99%), heated tobacco (100%), and vaping products (100%) were almost entirely purchased legally, while more than 60% of roll-your-own tobacco was purchased illegally.

Conclusions

Although manufactured cigarettes are still the most frequently used tobacco product, there is an evident transition to roll-your-own tobacco and heated and vaping products, which aligns with our previous findings.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Nicotine pouches perception among its users – in-depth interviews with young Polish adults

Lukasz Balwicki[1], Olga Kalinowska-Beszczynska[1], Agnieszka Wojtecka[1], Malgorzata Basinska[1]
[1]Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland

Background

Nicotine pouches (NPs) are gaining popularity. These are small, white sacs, which include nicotine in the form of salts enriched with several types of additives, mainly different types of flavors. Lack of tobacco in the NPs is an important factor that is used in communication strategies of its producers. Despite the above characteristics, there is still insufficient data on patterns of use, motivations, as well as perceptions of this new, emerging product.

The aim of the study was to broaden the knowledge on perceptions of NPs among its users in relation to other tobacco products.

Methods

Qualitative approach was utilized. In December 2022 there were seventeen structured In-depth Interviews (IDIs) conducted. The sample included of adults aged 18-22, both male and female.

Results

We found that from NPs users' perspective, these products are seen as a better alternative to other tobacco products. The arguments were: they do not produce smoke, so they do not smell nor affect/bother other people. Because of lack of smoke or vapor, they are seen as are healthier than traditional cigarettes or electronic ones. They can be hidden while using, so are ideal for those who want to be discrete, ex because are ashamed of their nicotine addiction. NPs are also seen as products for smarter/clever people who take care of health or want to be physically active while continuing addiction.

Conclusions

Nicotine pouches image is superior to other tobacco products. They are seen as healthy way of nicotine intake. Such perception can speed up their popularity.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Smokers' attitudes on control policies and an overview of the current state in Serbia

Olivera Jovanovic[1], Jovan Zubovic[1]
[1]Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia

Background

Serbia is one of the countries with the weakest tobacco use control policy (e.g., smoking indoors is allowed in restaurants and bars; the promotion is not entirely banned), relatively low prices, and consequently a high prevalence of smoking and smoking-related diseases.

Objective

In this research, we examined how tobacco product users would react to health-promoting non-price and price policy measures: indoor smoking and vaping bans and tobacco product price increases. Also, we explored the current state of exposure to tobacco product commercials.

Methods

For this purpose, we analyzed the data from a large-scale field survey conducted on a sample of 1000 adult participants (56.% males, 43.5% females), representative of the Serbian population of tobacco product users.

Results

The results showed that 40.4% of participants would support the complete smoking and vaping ban indoors, and if such a policy were to be implemented, 26.2% would reduce smoking, and 3.9% would probably quit. The support for a 20% increase in tobacco product prices was 13.6%; however, 40.3% of participants would support that measure if the governmental revenues from such an increase were redistributed for healthcare, education, and social welfare services. The exposure to various types of traditional cigarette commercials ranged from 2.1% (seeing special discounts on tobacco products) to 14.8% (seeing printed logos and brand names on t-shirts, pencils, or lighters). The participants were even more exposed to commercials on heated or vaping tobacco products, whereby the exposure ranged from 5.2% for noticing gifts or discounts on other products up to 14% of them who were exposed to promotions in a restaurant or cafe.

Conclusion

The share of tobacco product users who would support the measures of indoor bans and price increases seems encouraging. On the other hand, a high level of tobacco product promotion exposure could be seen as alarming.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The smokescreen of tobacco industry's social responsibility strategies

Laura Graen[1]
[1]German Cancer Research Center, Heidelberg, Germany

Most countries in the European region still allow corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of the tobacco industry1. Throughout the region, tobacco companies and related entities engage in disaster relief, social welfare, cultural and environmental projects. They manage to involve policymakers and governmental institutions in their activities, build relationships with non-governmental actors and achieve media coverage. In 2020 to 2022, Philip Morris International alone spent USD42 million on donations in the European region2.

CSR strategies are central to the tobacco industry's (and other harmful industries') business model as part of their reputational management practices3. They enhance legitimacy and credibility towards the public, consumers and policymakers.

Tobacco corporations use CSR to gain access to policymakers at all levels and across various government sections. Furthermore, CSR projects are a way to polish up their public reputation and divert attention away from their deadly products and practices. They also aim at influencing norms and promoting voluntary solutions as opposed to statutory regulation.

This presentation will give examples from various European countries and industry actors. It aims at raising awareness of corporate strategies and counter-strategies, including regulatory opportunities and FCTC guidelines.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Usage and accessibility of cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, and heated tobacco products among 13-15-year-old students in Italy: Temporal trend results from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), 2010-2022

Valentina Minardi[1], Federica Asta[1], Laura Timelli[2], Lorenzo Spizzichino[2], Giuseppe Gorini[3], Benedetta Contoli[1], Maria Masocco[1]
[1]National Centre for disease prevention and health promotion, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy, [2]Ministry of Health, Rome, Italy, [3]Oncologic network, prevention and research institute (ISPRO), Florence, Italy

Background

In Italy, tobacco smoking among adolescents is highly prevalent and has been increasing in recent years. Introduction of alternative products has led to a shift in smoking habits among younger, which needs to be monitored.

Objectives

To assess the temporal trends in the use and accessibility of cigarettes, electronic cigarettes (e-cig), and heated tobacco products (HTPs) among 13-15-year-old students enrolled in Italian schools.

Methods

Data from four editions of GYTS were used: from 2010 to 2022, for a total of 6,602 adolescents.

Results

Prevalence of current cigarette users among 13-15-year-olds decreased from 21% in 2010 (19% for boys and 22% for girls) to 15% in 2022 (13% vs 17%). Ever cigarette smokers followed a similar trend. For e-cig, considered from 2014, the prevalence of current users was 8% in 2014 (11% for boys and 6% for girls), and it increased to 20% in 2022, 21% for girls and 18% for boys. HTPs were ever used by 23% of adolescents in 2022 (20% for boys and 27% for girls) and currently used by 14% (12% vs. 16%).

In 2022, 24% of smokers obtained cigarettes directly from tobacco shops (compared to 49% in 2010), and among current smokers who attempted to purchase cigarettes from a store, 73% reported no refusal from the seller due to their underage status (compared to 92% in 2010). 15% of adolescents (9% of boys and 20% of girls) purchased e-cig directly from retailers, and only one in four experienced a sales refusal due to their age.

Conclusions

Italy has seen an increase in e-cig use, especially among girls, and a decrease in traditional cigarette use. HTPs are widespread and will require continued monitoring in the coming years. Monitoring tobacco and nicotine consumption among adolescents is strategic to support policies against tobacco and nicotine use.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Media monitoring: advertising for e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products in social media in Germany

Katrin Schaller[1], Christopher Heidt[1], Nobila Ouedraogo[1], Sarah Kahnert[1], Jana Seiler[1]
[1]German Cancer Research Center, Heidelberg, Germany

Background

In the European Union, advertising for tobacco products and e-cigarettes is banned on TV, radio, print and Internet. Some social media platforms have voluntary self-regulation for products that are harmful to health, such as tobacco.

Objectives

To our knowledge, no data on the extent, forms and content of advertising for e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products

(HTPs) in German social media is currently available. The goal of this project is to detect whether there is advertising for e-cigarettes and HTPs in German social media and to describe how it is designed.

Methods

Social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest und Tiktok is being monitored by using an automated social media analytical tool. Search strategies for e-cigarettes and HTPs were established. Results were restricted to German language and categorized.

Results

From February to March 2023, we found 1.159 relevant posts for e-cigarettes. 79 % were on Instagram, 13 % on Facebook and 6 % on Pinterest. More than 600 posts were on e-cigarettes, over 100 posts on liquids. More than 100 brands were being advertised. Most advertising was posted by commercial accounts (996 posts), 114 posts were from influencers.

From February to April 2023, we found 241 relevant posts for HTPs, mostly on Instagram (55 %), Facebook (36 %) and Pinterest (8 %). Most advertising was posted by commercial accounts (220 posts), 11 posts were from influencers. In general, the heaters were shown without tobacco sticks. Advertising portrayed themes like lifestyle and partnership.

Conclusions

Despite being banned, there is advertising for e-cigarettes and HTPs in social media. A large part of the advertising is made by producers and retailers. The data can serve as a basis for strengthening the implementation of existing policies to effectively protect adolescents from advertising for e-cigarettes and HTPs.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Expansion of, compliance with, and enforcement of smoke and aserosol free environments in Europe: Barriers and opportunities

Melinda Pénzes[1,2], Dolors Carnicer-Pont[3,4,5], Anna Mar Lopez Luque[4], Esteve Fernández[3,4,5,6,7]

[1]Health Services Management Training Centre, Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary, [2]National Korányi Institute of Pulmonology, Budapest, Hungary, [3]Catalan Institute of Oncology, Barcelona, Spain, [4]Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute, IDIBELL, Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain, [5]CIBER in Respiratory Diseases, CIBERES, Madrid, Spain, [6]University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, [7]JATC2-WP8 group

Background

Despite recent advances on smoke-free environments in the European Union (EU), there are important gaps in the current legislation and its implementation. Some European countries started the extension of Smoke and Aerosol-Free Environment (SAFE) policies to some outdoor places and private indoor places, but both enforcement and compliance are poor.

Objective

The aim of this study is to explore barriers and opportunities for the expansion, compliance, and enforcement of SAFE policies in Europe.

Methods

Within the Joint Action on Tobacco Control 2, Work Package 8 launched an experts' consultation about SAFE policies. We invited 110 experts from 31 European countries to complete an online quali-quantitative questionnaire between June 21st and September 12th 2022 (response rate: 57% from 29 countries). We assessed barriers and opportunities for the expansion of, the compliance with or the enforcement of SAFE policies.

Results

Near half of the respondents identified the lobbying and funding activities of the Tobacco and Nicotine Industry (TNI) as the main barrier to the expansion of SAFE, while the main opportunity was expanding SAFE policies to outdoor public places. Regarding the compliance/enforcement, the main identified barrier was the lack of human/financial resources to apply sanctions, while powerful competent authorities with increased capacities were recommended as the main opportunity to enforce SAFE policies. Near half of respondents believed that TNI largely interfere with the expansion of SAFE policies, but perceived large TNI interference with the enforcement was low.

Conclusions

Comprehensive regulation of TNI interference and dedicating human/financial resources to SAFE policy enforcement should be a priority to expand the EU SAFE policies.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Communication supporting strategy of the new SF law enforcement during martial law in Ukraine

Oksana Levytska[1], Olesia Kozlova[1]

[1]Advocacy Center LIFE, Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction

Approximately 13 000 Ukrainian non-smokers die as the result of being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Anti-tobacco law 1978-IX regulating e-cigarettes and HTPs was adopted in December 2021. Its smoke-free provision came to force in July 2022 (public spaces and workplaces are 100% exempt from any secondary tobacco and nicotine emissions).

Due to the military full scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine, conducting smoke-free implementation communication support for the Government was very challenging.

Objectives

Raise awareness of new SF regulations (incl. SF for HTPs). Build supporting environment for new SF law enforcement.

Methods

PHC of the MOH of Ukraine, NGO Life and Vital Strategies conducted the multi-channel integrated mass-media campaign "No smoking friendly. Taking care of your health is your contribution to victory".

The campaign incorporated SF messaging to warn about harms of SHS, new SF regulations, complaining service nosmoking.phc.org.ua and strong supportive messages which resonate with Ukrainians during martial law.

Sociological agency KIIS conducted the end line survey among Ukrainian smokers and nonsmokers aged 18-55 to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes towards the SF regulations and the effectiveness of the mass-media campaign.

Results

Estimated, the "No smoking friendly" campaign reached 20 million people on TV, street posters, Indoor and social media despite a very limited budget and martial law.

Some of the sociological survey conclusions:

48% know about new anti-tobacco measures

78% responders would take some measures in case someone smokes in a place where it is prohibited

85% agreed that the materials were easy to understand

According to public monitoring (end of 2022) about 80% of cafes, bars and restaurants in Ukraine comply with the ban on smoking indoors.

Conclusions

Mass media communication is an integral effective component to support the TC law implementation. Strategic partnership between government, domestic and international public health non-for-profit organizations and private companies was a key to success. During the war it is especially important to continue strong TC activities to save the life and health of Ukrainians.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The economics of tobacco farming in North Macedonia

Bojana Mijovic Hristovska[1], Tamara Mijovic Spasova[1], Marija Trpkova-Nestorovska, Biljana Tashevska, Borce Trenovski, Kristijan Kozeski

[1]Analytica think tank, Skopje, North Macedonia

Tobacco leaf cultivation occupies around 3.2 percent of total arable land in North Macedonia. North Macedonia is the second largest producer of oriental-type tobacco leaf after Turkey. In 2021, the total production of tobacco was 24,329 tons from 15,457 hectares of land, with an average yield per hectare of 1,574 kilograms. North Macedonia ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2006, which introduced a legal commitment for the reduction of tobacco production and consumption as well as to help those who are employed in the tobacco sector to find alternative viable livelihoods. The process of EU integration will require the reduction of crop-specific subsidies, likely leading to less income to tobacco farmers and an eventual reduction in the area harvested. The Government adopted a new Strategy for Tobacco Production (2021–2027) in which there is envisaged indirect support for tobacco farmers, but preparations will be made with education and counseling for future change to other crops.

Tobacco farming traditionally has been supported by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. However, there is not enough research on the economic livelihood of tobacco farmers. To fill this gap and to provide results to support evidence-based policy and decision-making, a survey with a nationally representative sample was conducted. The survey comprises 806 farming households from 14 municipalities (urban and rural) in the top tobacco- producing regions in North Macedonia. Target groups (categories of respondents) for the survey are the following: 1. tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who grew tobacco in 2021); 2. former tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who grew tobacco in any year before 2021 and now cultivates other agricultural crops); and 3. never tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who cultivates any agricultural crop other than tobacco and never cultivated tobacco previously).

Survey results:

- Around half of tobacco farmers are not turning a real profit. While most tobacco farmers believe they achieve positive "perceived" profits (excluding the value of household labor), with only a few households perceiving negative profits, around half of the households actually achieved negative "real" profits.
- Most farmers struggle financially, living with an average monthly income below the average net monthly wage and below the value of the minimum household consumer basket.
- Pensions and remittances are one of the most important components for maintaining an adequate level of income and standard of living for tobacco farmers' families. Although they spend the most time in the field, current tobacco farmers have a higher incidence of poverty compared to former and never tobacco farmers.
- Compared to former tobacco workers or never tobacco workers, the median current tobacco farmer devotes more time to growing crops. The median male farmer worked 1400 hours on tobacco cultivation, while the median male former and never tobacco farmers worked 1000 hours and 1260 hours, respectively.
- The children of tobacco farmers are more involved in farming relative to other farmers' children. Children's help in the harvesting of tobacco is 2.3 times more common compared to children's help in harvesting other crops; however, no farmer reported hiring children to help with tobacco cultivation and children do not appear to be engaged in potentially harmful activities related to pesticide/ herbicide application.
- Compared to other crop activities, tobacco cultivation typically requires significantly more pesticide. Pesticides are related to persistent health challenges for farmers and damage the environment through contamination of groundwater and watersheds.
- Tobacco farmers show signs of green tobacco sickness, a form of acute nicotine poisoning.
- Current tobacco farmers are more likely to rent land for farming compared to former and never tobacco farmers. In the survey, 22.2 percent of current tobacco farmers and 13.7 percent of former tobacco farmers stated that they rent land from others.
- The vast majority of farmers reported having a contract with a leaf buyer. Survey results shows that almost all tobacco farmers (94 percent) in all major tobacco-growing regions have signed contracts with tobacco leaf buyers. More than half (57 percent) of the tobacco farmers say they are satisfied with the concluded tobacco agreement, while 36 percent are not.

Tobacco cultivation is not as profitable as the government

suggests. Thus, highlighting tobacco as a highly profitable crop is unfounded. This research indicates it would be much better for tobacco farmers, in terms of labor and economic efficiency, to reorient and grow another crop or pursue other economic activities in their local economy (such as wage work or small business). Around half of tobacco farmers are not turning a real profit. The opportunity cost for unpaid family labor makes growing tobacco unprofitable. Revenues of tobacco farmers decrease significantly when the opportunity costs are calculated. Household members could better allocate their labor to other tasks that earn money; not doing so results in significant economic loss for those tobacco families. Poverty rates among tobacco farmers are slightly higher than the nationwide poverty rate. Current tobacco farmers have the highest incidence of poverty when considering per capita income. Despite their high poverty rate, only a small share of tobacco farmers use some form of social assistance. Input costs for growing tobacco are typically very high, particularly compared to most other crops.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco control in Ukraine in an emergency situation - Russia's armed aggression

Nataliia Hryb[1], Ira Soroka[2], Daryna Krenytska[1]
[1]Center for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, [2]Department of Prevention of Non Communicable Diseases, Center of Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

Russia's armed aggression has had a substantial influence on many aspects of Ukrainian society. Tobacco control is one of these sectors, which need systematic solutions and effective services to address tobacco addiction. We will discuss three significant breakthroughs that aid in the support and control of tobacco addiction in Ukraine, even in extremely difficult situations.

Prior to the conflict, Ukraine established a smoking cessation program, which included a helpline and a professional website. The website has important information about quitting smoking, and the hotline counselors offer expert assistance to individuals who wish to quit. Despite the difficult circumstances surrounding the emergency, we are dedicated to restarting the helpline and the website to assist smokers in overcoming their addiction.

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine registered an order on groups of medical warning packets on smoking tobacco products as part of the reforms in anti-tobacco laws. These new health warnings meet EU regulations and encompass 65% of the package space with graphic pictures on the two largest sides. Each set includes a QR code that links to the website of the stop smoking service stopsmoking.org.ua, where smokers may get the necessary help and information. To strengthen tobacco control in Ukraine, a site for monitoring anti-tobacco law infractions was established at nosmoking.phc.org.ua. Citizens can use this service to report legal infractions and make complaints. The portal allows individuals to participate in monitoring the execution of anti-tobacco laws and streamlines the complaint-filing procedure. This improves the efficacy of Ukraine's tobacco control system by strengthening interaction between citizens and regulatory authorities (executing state authorities).

Despite the emergency conditions, Ukraine is nevertheless actively engaged in tobacco control and meeting its duties under the WHO Convention on Tobacco Control. The creation of stop smoking support programs, the application of cigarette labeling requirements, and the enhancement of the system for monitoring anti-tobacco law infractions are all essential stages in Ukraine's battle against tobacco addiction.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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SinHumo App as an adjunct to a smoking cessation videoconferencing-based intervention: preliminary data on intervention acceptability and satisfaction

Carmela Martínez-Vispo[1], Ana López-Durán[1], María Barroso-Hurtado[1], Daniel Suárez-Castro[1], Elisardo Becoña[1]
[1]University of Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña, Spain

Background

The development of psychological interventions addressing smoking behaviour based on information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been growing in recent years. Specifically, mobile Apps to quit smoking have shown promising results. However, scarce research has explored real-time videoconferencing-based interventions using Apps as an adjunct to quit smoking.

Objectives

The present study has two folds: (1) to describe the blended videoconferencing-based intervention combined with the "SinHumo" App; and (2) to examine preliminary data on acceptability and satisfaction with the intervention.

Methods

The psychological intervention design was constructed on evidence-based cognitive-behavioural techniques to quit and scientific literature regarding smoking cessation Apps. The blended intervention was implemented in 52 seeking treatment smokers (53.8% female; Mage = 45.18; SD = 11.68). Acceptability and satisfaction with the intervention were assessed through a questionnaire filled out by participants at the end of the intervention.

Results

The intervention consists in eight-sessions in group format through a videoconferencing system and an adjunct App designed to be available during the sessions and the one-year follow-up period. The App includes components like cigarette use self-tracking, an autogenerated list of reasons to quit smoking, a tool for setting weekly tobacco reduction goals, and motivational notifications. During follow-ups, users can access personalized components according to their smoking status (smoker, abstinent or relapsed). Satisfaction with the blended intervention was high (92.7%) and most participants reported that the App helped them quit smoking (87.8%). Qualitative comments indicated high acceptability overall.

Conclusions

The present blended intervention based on ICTs showed good acceptance and was considered helpful for most participants.

These findings have significant clinical implications, as previous studies have shown that acceptability predicts and explains outcomes, including user engagement and the effectiveness of digital health interventions. These preliminary results suggest that digital technologies could be an opportunity for reaching smokers considering quitting smoking.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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EPR schemes and the tobacco industry: A game of cat and mouse in the EU regulatory landscape

Chloé Momas[1]
[1]Smoke Free Partnership, Brussels, Belgium

As the EU moves towards implementing more comprehensive Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for tobacco products, the tobacco industry is likely to respond in ways that minimize the impact on their revenues. This presentation will explore potential industry strategies, including product redesign, lobbying, and the use of EPR funds for sustainable product development, and discuss the challenges these present for effective tobacco control. It will also explore hypothetical scenarios of how the industry can leverage EPR to undermine WHO FCTC provisions for all tobacco products waste, including novel products.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Challenges of the flavored novel tobacco products control policy in Georgia

Tamar Abuladze[1], George Bakhturidze[1], Lela Sturua[2]
[1]The University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia, [2]Non-communicable Diseases Department, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Tbilisi, Georgia

Introduction

Excessive tobacco consumption is an important public health problem in Georgia. 28.2% of the Georgian population are smokers and 11,400 people die annually from tobacco-related diseases. In 2017, tobacco control (TC) legislation strengthened significantly, although novel products (HTPs, ENDS/ENNDS - shown in the Georgian market since 2019), remained outside of some regulations. In recent years Georgia has become a favorable market for the novel tobacco product industry attracting young using different marketing means, especially the flavorings.

Objectives

To analyze existing tobacco control policy in Georgia regarding flavored novel tobacco products from the perspective of EU approaches.

Methods

Descriptive legal research, historical analysis, comparative analysis methods, and the methodology of policy inquiry were used.

Results

There are no restrictions or limitations on using flavorings/additives in any type of tobacco in Georgia. Only the concentration of emitted substances in cigarettes and amount of nicotine in e-cigarette liquid is limited, but compliance with these requirements was never checked. There is no local laboratory that tests any kind of tobacco product and no samples have ever been sent to any laboratory abroad. ENNDS appeared as a big policy challenge, as they are not considered as tobacco products, and no TC legislative requirements apply to them. Given the alarmingly high index of tobacco industry interfere in the country, it is likely that introduction of the control policies on novel product will be met with great resistance, especially since no research has yet been conducted to reveal rates of novel tobacco products use by youth.

Conclusions

Georgia is far from the EU regulations regarding control of the flavored tobacco products. But this momentum can be the biggest incentive for Georgia to introduce a strict policy of controlling flavored novel tobacco products as according to the EU Association Agreement Georgia is obliged to get closer to the EU legislation.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Could TikTok be a promising platform for anti-tobacco communication? – Experiences from Hungary

András Kulja[1], Tamás Joó[1], Melinda Pénzes[1]
[1]Data-driven Health Division of the National Health Security Laboratory, Health Services Management Training Centre, Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary

Background

TikTok is one of the most popular video-based social media platform with significant potential for professional health communicators to share health-related contents, including anti-tobacco messages. To date, little is known about the visibility and audience engagement of anti-tobacco contents on TikTok, especially in Central Europe.

Objective

The aim of this study is to explore the reach and engagement of anti-tobacco video posts on a popular TikTok health communicator page authored by a Hungarian, macro-influencer physician.

Methods

The TikTok page @andras.doktor posted five anti-tobacco videos (about Elf Bar, heated tobacco products, snus, hookah, and an Elf Bar announcement video) in May–June, 2022 (baseline). TikTok's built-in account analytics was used to evaluate views, mean video length, retention rates at 10-, and 30 seconds, engagement (likes, comments, shares), like rate, and engagement rate of videos from baseline to the end of June, 2023 (follow-up).

Results

At baseline, the platform had 150,000 followers, which increased up to 300,000 followers at follow-up. Out of the five tobacco-related posts, 3 were sponsored (paid by the Hungarian Focal Point for Tobacco Control) and 2 were non-sponsored. The overall views of the 5 videos were 4,122

million. The most popular video was the effects of Elf Bar with 1,4 million views. In overall, the mean video length was 79.4 seconds (range 26–132 seconds), the mean view was 824,400 (range 314,000–1.4 million), and the average like rate was 8.3% (range 6.1%–9.0%). Non-announcement videos showed 42–44% retention rate at 10 seconds, while 30–34% at 30 seconds. The engagement rate of the 5 videos was 8.45% (range 6.2–10.3%).

Conclusions

TikTok could be a promising platform for posting anti-tobacco contents by authentic health communicators. In-depth analysis of video metrics is necessary to achieve success in influencing a broad audience.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Perceptions towards the adoption of tobacco-related recommendations of the European Code Against Cancer (4th ed.) among the European Union population: a qualitative study

Ariadna Feliu[1], Paweł Koczkodaj[2], Patricia Pinto[3], Marga Pla[4], Helena Vučković[5], Carolina Espina[1]
[1]International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon, France, [2]Maria Skłodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [3]Liga Portuguesa Contra o Cancro, Lisbon, Portugal, [4]University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, [5]Croatian League Against Cancer, Zagreb, Croatia

Background

Cancer is a major public health problem. Tobacco is linked to 80% of lung cancer deaths and associated with 16 other cancers, all of which could be prevented. The European Code Against Cancer (ECAC, 4thed.) is a health education tool aimed at raising awareness about evidence-based actions to prevent cancer. It reports 12 recommendations to reduce individuals' cancer risk, including "not smoking or using any form of tobacco" and "making your home smoke-free and supporting smoke-free policies".

Objectives

To explore perceived barriers towards the adoption of tobacco-related cancer prevention actions recommended by the ECAC in 7 European countries.

Methods

The COM-B model of behaviour change was used as a framework for the design and analysis of the study since it identifies factors (capability, opportunity, motivation) that need to be present for any behaviour to occur. We designed an exploratory research qualitative study by means of in-depth semi-structured interviews among adults with no previous cancer diagnose. Participants were selected using a quota sampling strategy according to sex, age and education level (N=18/country). Interviews were conducted in their native language by trained researchers. We conducted a thematic content analysis to identify common topics.

Results

Participants who smoked reported that their main barrier to quit smoking was not being capable to overcome their nicotine addiction. Other reported barriers were not knowing where to find professional help, peer pressure, living with someone who also smokes, and lack of a support network. As a main barrier for second-hand smoke (SHS), participants declared not having control among others' behaviours, however, they recognized smoke-free laws importance.

Conclusions

Understanding how the ECAC recommendations are perceived by EU citizens and the barriers they encounter to take action to reduce their cancer risk from tobacco and SHS is key to promote adoption of the recommendations and improve supportive societal structures to overcome these barriers.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco product waste: typing cigarette butts collected in different areas at Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Martina Antinozzi[1], Maria Assunta Donato[1], Francesco Mondera[1], Maria Sofia Cattaruzza[1]
[1]Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Background

Tobacco smoking is the first avoidable cause of death in the world. In Italy 74.4% of smokers started smoking between the age of 15 and 20, with a mean age of 17.7 for men and 19.4 for women (ISS-DOXA 2023).

Italy is working on developing a smoke-free campus network and the Tobaccology Unit (UNITAB) at Sapienza University of Rome has been specifically working towards this goal lately. In particular, every year UNITAB creates youth-targeted campaigns for multiple occasions throughout the year, to raise awareness on the damages that tobacco products cause on people's health and on the environment.

Objectives

In October 2022 the UNITAB team collected tobacco waste smoked on campus, to type the different kinds of cigarette butts present in different areas of the campus.

Methods

We identified three areas to sample next to scientific, humanistic and convivial places. From 24th to 27th of October 2022, all kinds of cigarette butts - traditional cigarettes, heated-tobacco products (HTPs), roll-your-own (RYO) - were discreetly collected in the afternoon, when students' attendance is low, so that our presence interfered as little as possible with their behaviors.

Results

3394 pieces of cigarette butts from different origins were collected: 1262 (37.2%) coming from RYOs, 1246 (36.7%) from HTPs and 886 (26.1%) from traditional cigarettes. In addition to "legal tobacco products" we found 58 pieces of butts coming from weed smoking.

Conclusions

Our results show that HTPs' use among young people seems to have exceeded traditional cigarettes. However, we should consider that these products are often smoked together with traditional ones, transforming smokers into dual users. This evidence and the lack of clear and reliable data on HTPs' health impact, has to be considered for further investigation,

in order to protect young generations from the tobacco-related health risks.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Using the COM-B model to identify barriers and facilitators in smoking behaviour to support both stop smoking practitioners and service users at everyone health, England

Elizabeth Gilbert[1], Caroline Kenny[1]
[1]Everyone Health Limited, England, United Kingdom

Background

The COM-B model of behaviour is a simple and easy framework that can be translated effectively for many purposes, including in the delivery of public health interventions, such as stop smoking services.

Objectives

Training and a tailored tool to support the implementation of the COM-B model in intervention delivery was developed, to increase and improve application of the model and service user outcomes.

Methods

Everyone Health include training on the COM-B model as part of their mandatory training for all practitioners across all services. In addition, a pre/post evaluated workshop to translate the theory into practice was developed, including a tool for practitioners to use to identify barriers and facilitators for service users when planning behaviour change and achievement of their goals.

Results

Everyone Health's Stop Smoking Practitioners feel better equipped to support service users to identify barriers and facilitators to achieve their behaviour change goals. Provisional evaluation shows that by providing Stop Smoking Practitioners with simple and effective tools to implement the COM-B model has increased their confidence and competence in using the model and has improved service user outcomes. For example, if barriers are identified in Physical and Social Opportunity, such as someone trying to make a quit attempt but they associate breaktimes at work with smoking, which would be a barrier in these areas, a change to overcome these barriers would be to use their NRT (an inhalator) and go for a walk during their breaktime, as opposed to standing with work colleagues in the smoking area.

Conclusions

Everyone Health have adapted and tailored the COM-B model to intervention type and have demonstrated that it can easily be translated to stop smoking delivery and can improve outcomes for service users and Stop Smoking Practitioner confidence in delivery.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Targeting patients suffering with long term conditions who smoke on their General Practitioner's Quality Outcomes Framework (QoF) list, in England

Caroline Kenny[1], Elizabeth Gilbert[1]
[1]Everyone Health Limited, England, United Kingdom

Background

All General Practitioners hold a register of smokers within their practice. The have incentivised targets (QOF Points) to collect their patients' smoking status and offer stop smoking support or health based education if they decline the offer of support.

Objectives

Assist GPs to reach their QoF targets for smoking denominators and also to increase referrals into community Smoking Cessation services.

Methods

Stop Smoking Practitioners help to achieve these targets by either making telephone calls to patients on their QoF register whilst in-house at the GP surgery who update smoking status and offer community smoking cessation services to the patients. Alternatively, supplying practices with seasonal/condition relevant text templates to send out in bulk to patients on their QoF registers.

Results

Provisional results show that via the SMS template referral service, 59% of self-referrals had been reached by this method in North East London. In addition, GP surgeries are able to achieve their QoF point targets as the SMS would constitute as an offer of support.

Conclusions

Everyone Health have rolled this approach out to our wider services due to the success of increasing referrals and building good relationships and reputation with local GP services.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The healthy schools stop smoking and vaping service provides Catch Your Breath – a school-based smoking and vaping programme for young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, England

Caroline Kenny[1], Elizabeth Gilbert[1]
[1]Everyone Health Limited, England, United Kingdom

Background

There has been a rise in the number of students in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough identifying themselves as regular vape users, an increase from 2% in 2021 to 5% in 2022. The programme aims to reverse the trend over the next two years.

The 'Catch Your Breath' offer has been developed to support young people aged 11 – 18 who are known to be smokers/vapers and is delivered free of charge.

Objectives

- Referral pathways for any young person who wishes to quit smoking or vaping or would benefit from some advice on the potential risks of these behaviours.
- Reverse the upward spiral of young people vaping (as evidenced by the data collected through the Health Related Behaviour Survey).

Methods

Educational sessions focusing on prevention, with universal delivery to students via an interactive workshop, and prevention assemblies. Training is delivered within the schools to pupils and teachers. We then equip teachers with the skills, knowledge and materials to continue providing evidence-based information relatable to the age of the year group. By supporting staff to self-deliver, we can then move onto new schools to continue the work in a sustainable way.

Results

Between May 2022 and May 2023, we have had participation from 1520 primary pupils and 15,462 secondary pupils. From the data assimilated between September '22 – May '23, 966 pupils said "No" to smoking at the beginning of the session, compared with 1003 by the end. Likewise, 772 pupils said "No" to vaping at the beginning of the session compared with 851 at the end. Indicating a promising reversal in perception.

Conclusions

The Catch Your Breath programme has received interest from over 50 schools outside this area and over 35 requests from local authorities proving a need for wider spread vaping education and support.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Implementing a tobacco dependency inpatient programme in Staffordshire's Hospitals (England, UK)

Caroline Kenny[1], Elizabeth Gilbert[1]
[1]Everyone Health Limited, England, United Kingdom

Background

The NHS is under pressure regarding hospital admissions and treatment of smoking related illnesses. The NHS Long Term Plan includes mandating identification and an opt-out community referral process upon discharge for smoking cessation.

Objectives

Staffordshire Hospitals commissioned Everyone Health as the local community provider to implement an inpatient identification and support service in 2022, which is now fully embedded.

Methods

Smokers are identified by medical staff and referred to Everyone Health Stop Smoking Practitioners to visit whilst they are an inpatient. Whilst an inpatient, they are given the opportunity to have NRT to support them while they are unwell and unable to smoke. They are discharged with a two week supply of NRT and a referral is made to community services upon discharge, where their care, and treatment is continued for 12 weeks.

Results

An increase has been seen in referrals to community smoking clinics. On average 61% of clients accept the offer of inpatient treatment and community referrals post discharge to maintain their abstinence. 68% of this population go on to achieving a smoke free status 28 days post discharge. We hope to see the impact on hospital admissions due to smoking related illnesses in the future.

Conclusions

The approach has been effective and well-received by the local community, patients and the NHS.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Disposable e-cigarette use and associated factors among US middle and high school students in 2021 and 2022

Daniel Chen[1], Filippos Filippidis[2]
[1]University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom, [2]Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Background

Disposable e-cigarettes have emerged in the market and gained significant popularity, especially among adolescents. This has raised concerns about the potential addiction to nicotine and the associated health effects among this age group.

Objectives

This study aims to investigate the prevalence of disposable e-cigarette use among middle and high school children in the United Stated, and to identify potential factors associated with usage and increased frequency of use in order to identify potential regulatory interventions.

Methods

Data from 48,704 U.S. middle and high school students in the 2021 and 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) were pooled to estimate disposable e-cigarette use. Multivariable logistic and ordinal regression models were used to assess demographic and psychosocial factors related to disposable e-cigarette use and frequency of use (low, medium, and high). All analyses were weighted to represent the national student sample.

Results

The prevalence of current disposable e-cigarettes increased from 3.9% (n=744) in 2021 to 5.1% (n=1,443) in 2022 and were the most common type of e-cigarette used in both years. The modelling results indicated that, among all respondents, girls were 1.57 (95% CI:1.29-1.91) times more likely to be disposable e-cigarette users than boys, and high school students had 5.14 (95% CI: 3.96-6.67) times higher odds of being users than middle school students. Students of Hispanic, Black, Asian, and other ethnicities were less likely to use disposable e-cigarettes compared to White students (OR between 0.42 to 0.61). Among current disposable e-cigarette users, higher frequency of use was associated with self-identifying as LGBTQ+ (OR 1.41; 95% CI: 1.00-2.00 in comparison to straight), higher family affluence (OR 1.77; 95% CI: 1.16-2.71 in comparison to low), lower academic performance (OR 2.16; 95% CI: 1.15-4.07; self-reported grades of D's in comparison to A's), and experiencing severe psychological distress (OR 1.49; 95% CI: 1.05-2.11 in comparison to non-distress).

Conclusions

These findings underscore the need for enhanced and targeted prevention and regulatory measures to address the rising prevalence of disposable e-cigarette use among youth and curb nicotine addiction.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco industry interference index Poland 2023

Paulina Dera[1], Julia Opania[2], Maria Banach[2], Jakub Majchrzak[2], Łukasz Balwicki[3]
[1]First Doctoral School, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland, [2]Faculty of Medicine, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland, [3]Department of Public Health and Social Medicine, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland

Background
Interference of tobacco industry is noticeable in many countries. Monitoring of such activities in order to strengthen the protective actions of governments is important.
Objectives
To assess the influence of tobacco industry companies on the government's public health policies in Poland.
Methods
This study makes an assessment of the intensity, frequency, and severity of incidents of tobacco industry interference reported in Poland between I January 2020 and 31 March 2023 and the government's response to these incidents. The research is based on a questionnaire developed by SEATCA for its Tobacco Industry Interference Index (TIII) and scoring guidelines. To complete TIII of 20 indicators under seven key themes for Poland, five reviewers separately searched for evidence. This report was written by a scoping review of i.a.: the legal basis, Polish media websites, the Polish government and local government websites, and also social media of tobacco industry companies.
Results
The government and individual governmental entities accept cooperation and sign agreements with representatives of tobacco companies in the fight against tobacco smuggling. In addition, government initiates a space for discussion - the Excise Forum, where consultation and recommendations are held regarding, among others, excise duty policy. Tobacco industry supports several public schools in terms of workshops, offering internships and demonstrating the production processes. Moreover, one of the former Director of Gambling's Regulation Department in the Ministry of Finance now is working in Philip Morris Distribution Polska.
Conclusions
The results of the study suggest that tobacco companies have a considerable impact on public health policies. The government should take a more careful approach to its relations with the tobacco industry. All invitations to meetings could be more filtered for possible connections. Independence is recommended in several important matters related to the fight against illegal cigarette smuggling. In addition, it is important to prepare documents that would present appropriate regulations in connection with data transfer procedures, meetings or other interactions.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Best practices for second-hand smoke and second-hand aerosol protection and evidence supporting the expansion of smoke and aerosol-free environments: a position paper from the Joint Action on Tobacco Control 2

Dolors Carnicer-Pont[1,2,3], Irene Possenti[4], Silvano Gallus[4], Alessandra Lugo[4], Anna Mar López-Luque[1,2], Esteve Fernandez-Muñoz[1,2,3,5,6]
[1]Tobacco Control Unit and WHO Collaborating Center for Tobacco Control, Catalan Institute of Oncology, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Spain, [2]Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL), L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Spain, [3]Consortium for Biomedical Research in Respiratory Diseases (CIBERES), Madrid, Spain, [4]Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri IRCCS, Milan, Italy, [5]School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, [6]JATC2-WP8 working group

Objective
To assess and create the framework for the expansion of smoke- and aerosol-free environments (SAFE) in Europe, including outdoor areas and some private settings.
Background
Comprehensiveness and enforcement of smoke-free legislation vary among European Union (EU) member states (MS). Moreover, emerging products like electronic cigarettes (e-cig) and heated tobacco products (HTP) lack adequate regulation.
Methods
Within the frame of Joint Action on Tobacco Control 2 (JATC-2) a consultation was conducted on best practices for SAFE implementation. Based on its results and the evidence from the scientific literature, we present this position paper.
Results
The main barriers against the expansion and enforcement of SAFE include tobacco industry interference, government reluctance, resistance from specific settings and public misinformation. Opportunities include extending policies to outdoor places, improving attitudes, conducting campaigns, promoting transparency and funding, and aligning legislation.
Recommendations
Ensuring healthier environments and protecting individuals from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke requires a comprehensive approach. To achieve this, the following recommendations are crucial for EU MS:

- Implement and enforce complete smoke-free legislation for indoor and outdoor
  - public and private workplaces,
  - hospitality venues,
  - public transport,
  - cars,
  - settings frequented by minors,
  - sports settings,
  - healthcare facilities,
  - parks, forests, and beaches;
- Promote voluntary smoke-free homes;
- Equalize regulations for emerging tobacco products, such as e-cigs and HTPs, to that of conventional cigarettes.

Conclusions
Comprehensive smoke-free regulations covering indoor and outdoor settings, along with advocating for voluntary smoke-

free homes, are essential steps. Additionally, equalizing legislation for emerging tobacco products with conventional cigarettes is crucial for public health protection. By addressing barriers and capitalizing on opportunities, collaborative efforts can create healthier environments.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Remote vs in-person group-based smoking cessation interventions: smokers characteristics and intervention outcomes

Carmela Martínez Vispo[1], Ana López-Durán[1], Daniel Suárez-Castro[1], María Barroso-Hurtado[1], María Ramos-Carro[1], Elizabeth Moss-Alonso[1], Elisardo Becoña[1]
[1]University of Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña, Spain

Background

During the last decade Telemedicine has experienced a prominent growth, providing new opportunities to address physical and mental health problems, including smoking cessation. Using technology such as interactive videoconferencing, to provide smoking cessation treatments could increase the probability that smokers who are reluctant or experience barriers to seeking in-person smoking cessation treatments can access effective interventions.

Objectives

The aim of this study is twofold: 1) to examine the differences in the characteristics of smokers seeking in-person vs. remote interventions; and 2) to compare abstinence rates between both groups.

Methods

The sample consisted of 641 daily smokers who sought psychological treatment to quit smoking at the Smoking and Addictive Disorders Unit of the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) from 2015 to 2022. Of the total sample, 43.4% received an in-person cognitive-behavioral intervention to quit, while 56.6% received the same intervention remotely through videoconference.

Results

Smokers assisting to the remote intervention had university studies (54.3% vs 39.9%; $p < 0.001$) and were actively working (67.5% vs 57%; $p = 0.007$) in a higher proportion, compared to those receiving the in-person format. Regarding mental health, a significantly higher proportion of smokers receiving the remote intervention reported depression treatment history (53.2% vs 42.8%; $p = 0.009$).

Concerning smoking cessation outcomes, no significant differences were found in abstinence percentages between the in-person vs remote intervention at the end of treatment (59.7% vs. 65.3%, respectively; $p = 0.148$); and at 3-month follow-up (34.2% vs. 39.4%, respectively, $p = 0.311$).

Conclusions

Using videoconference systems shows promising results, as abstinence outcomes were similar to the conventional delivery format for smoking cessation interventions. Findings suggest that remote interventions could reduce access barriers as travel costs or time availability of potential users. Further research is warranted.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Smoking behaviors and barriers to quit in Spanish young adults: Implications for the design of smoking cessation digital health interventions

Carmela Martínez Vispo[1], Andrea Perez Rivas[1]
[1]University of Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña, Spain

Background

Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death worldwide. Effective smoking cessation treatments are currently available, and increasing literature suggests that digital interventions offer promising results. A high percentage of young adults smoke, a population group that underuse evidence-based interventions to quit. Young adults suppose a relevant public health target as early cessation can reduce the long-term harms of smoking.

Objectives

This study aims to describe the smoking characteristics of young adult smokers, including perceived barriers to quitting, and examine their opinion on digital interventions for smoking cessation.

Methods

An ad hoc questionnaire was used to collect sociodemographic and smoking-related variables, including tobacco products used (i.e., rolled tobacco), tobacco dependence, past quit attempts, barriers to quitting and seeking specialized support, and opinions and perceived barriers towards digital interventions to quit. The survey was conducted in a sample of 94 daily smokers aged 18-25 years (61.7% female).

Results

Results showed that most participants used rolled tobacco (73.4%), conventional cigarettes (58.5%), or a combination of both (29.8%). In addition, participants had a low tobacco dependence level and smoked an average of nine cigarettes per day. The most commonly mentioned barriers to quitting included struggling with cravings, losing a strategy to cope with anxiety and having friends that smoke. The most relevant barriers to seeking professional support to quit were admitting they needed help, lack of time and having to go to the quitting service. Only 4.6% of the sample had used digital tools to quit smoking, citing perceived utility and the absence of professional guidance as the main barriers.

Conclusions

Findings have clinical implications, highlighting the need to develop digital smoking cessation interventions tailored specifically to young smokers. This could increase the likelihood of early smoking cessation, thereby preventing the persistence of smoking in later adulthood and the subsequent health consequences.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Conflict of interest in research on heated tobacco products: a systematic review

Silvano Gallus[1], Chiara Stival[1], Marco Scala[1], Carlotta Micaela

Jarach[1], Alessandra Lugo[1]
[1]Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri IRCCS, Milan, Italy

Background
Tobacco companies are investing massive amounts of money to support research on heated tobacco products (HTP) and tobacco harm reduction (THR).
Objective
To quantify the proportion of research on HTP funded by the tobacco industry and to assess any association between the funding by the tobacco industry -and the corresponding presence of conflicts of interest (COI)- and how the authors interpreted findings of their studies.
Methods
We conducted a systematic review of the literature through 23rd February 2022 in Pubmed/Medline, Embase and the Cochrane Library to identify all publications focusing on HTPs (PROSPERO 2020: CRD42020137394). For each study, reported tobacco industry related COI was identified based on authors' affiliations, acknowledgements, funding, and COI disclosure. Two trained reviewers, blinded to information on authors, independently evaluated the conclusions of the abstracts to categorize them as anti-HTPs/THR (providing conclusions against or strongly against HTPs or THR); neutral; or pro-HTPs/THR (providing conclusions in favour or strongly in favour to HTPs or THR).
Results
Out of 498 included eligible studies, 192 (38.6%) had tobacco-related COIs. Five studies with a declared COI were among the 194 studies assessed as anti-HTPs/THR (2.6%), 20 studies with COI were among 94 neutral studies (21.3%), and 167 were among the 210 studies evaluated as pro-HTPs/THR (79.5%). The adjusted odds ratio of being pro-HTPs/THR was 23.3 (95% confidence interval: 11.6 to 46.7) for studies with a COI.
Conclusions
The existing body of published research on HTPs is dominated by studies conducted or supported by the tobacco industry, with evidence of bias in their conclusions. The large majority of COI-free studies oppose HTPs. There is an urgent need to fund and sustain independent research on novel tobacco products.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Trends in tobacco and nicotine use among Serbian adolescents

Biljana Kilibarda[1], Jelena Gudelj Rakic[1], Verica Jovanovic[1], Mirjana Tosic[1], Milena Vasic[1,2]
[1]Institute of Public Health of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia, [2]Faculty of Dentistry, Pancevo, Serbia

Background
In the past decade, the presence of various nicotine-containing products increased in many countries leading to the change in prevalence and patterns of nicotine use among youth. The aim of this analysis was to explore changes in prevalence of tobacco use among Serbian adolescents between 2018-2022.
Methods
The data used for this analysis were obtained through Health Behavior in School-aged Children Survey (HBSC) implemented in Serbia by the Institute of Public Health of Serbia among school children. The surveys were conducted at the nationally representative samples of students 11,13 and 15 years old (4028 students in 2018 and 3962 in 2022). Trend and/or prevalence of cigarette, e-cigarette, waterpipe and snus was analyzed to determine potential changes and determine emerging issues for interventions.
Results
Data show no statistically significant change in prevalence of cigarette smoking between 2018 and 2022 (9.5% and 10.2% respectively) among 11,13- and 15-years old students and significant decrease in waterpipe smoking (16.6% in 2018 and 7,1% in 2022) among students 15 years old. In 2022, questions on e-cigarette, heated tobacco products and snus use were included in the survey and results show high popularity of these products. Among 15- year old students, 19.9% were current e-cigarette users, 4.9 % currently used snus and 6.4% heated tobacco products. The prevalence of experimentation with these products was higher, especially for e-cigarettes, that were used by 30.1% of 15-year-old students at least once in the lifetime.
Conclusions
Results show high popularity of emerging nicotine and tobacco products among youth in Serbia and steady prevalence of cigarette use. High prevalence of e-cigarette use, snus and heated tobacco products stress the importance of urgent measures that would limit exposure to the marketing, promotion and availability of these products to the youth.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Project TnT (Transparency and Truth): a moment of truth for Switzerland?

Pascal Diethelm[1], Cédric Gumy[2]
[1]OxySuisse, Geneva, Switzerland, [2]Swiss Tobacco Control Fund, Bern, Switzerland

Background
Despite substantial financial possibilities, Swiss tobacco control is weak and ranks second to last on both the Tobacco Control Scale Europe 2021 and on the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2021. Switzerland has not ratified the WHO/FCTC. Two major tobacco companies use Switzerland as their global sanctuary. The tobacco industry has transformed the country's main economic trade organizations into unconditional allies and secured strong support from politicians.
Objectives
In 2018, the Swiss Tobacco Control Fund organized a workshop bringing together teenagers and tobacco control experts, asking them to propose innovative tobacco control measures. The Transparency and Truth (TnT) project was one of their most consensual - quasi unanimous - proposals: It is a measure aimed at exposing the actions and tactics of the tobacco and nicotine lobby to defend its commercial interests and influence public health policy. The project aligns itself on the CDoH (commercial determinants of health) approach and on the FCTC Guidelines for Implementation of Article 12.

Methods
TnT is currently developed by two institutions and a task force of experts selected and managed by OxySuisse, a Swiss tobacco control NGO. Its main approach consists in the development of thematic modules "describing the facts and setting the record straight on various issues where the tobacco industry does not act transparently and truthfully." Multi-thematic integration is encouraged, as messages can be mutually reinforced by connecting them with other topics (global warming, alcohol, sugar). The themes to be developed are discussed, chosen by the task force and then developed by partners. The approach is essentially fact-based.
Results
Currently developed or in progress themes include "Greenwashing", "New tobacco and nicotine products", "New marketing methods", "Human rights", "How the industry targets adolescents", "Voluntary and preemptive measures", "Corruption of science and scientific research", "PMI's FSFW: Yet another smokescreen?", "The real economic cost of tobacco", "The rhetoric of the tobacco industry", etc. The development of the modules is accompanied by a multi-faceted communication strategy.
Conclusions
Effective tobacco control will only be possible in Switzerland when the influence of the tobacco industry on political decisions is stopped. The first step is to fully and factually expose its practices and tactics. TnT is the first governmental project ever aimed at doing exactly that, in the spirit of article 5.3 of the FCTC and its implementation guidelines. This is an important paradigm shift for Switzerland.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Development of a youth adapted Brief Tobacco Intervention plus automated text messaging for high school students

Melissa Little[1], Kara Wiseman[1], Indika Mallawaarachchi[1]
[1]University of Virginia, Virginia, United States

Background
While substantial evidence demonstrates long-term effectiveness of youth cigarette smoking prevention and cessation programs, the evidence for non-cigarette youth tobacco prevention and cessation programs is limited.
Objectives
The current study reports on the development of a theory-based universal group delivered Youth Brief Tobacco Intervention (Y-BTI) plus automated text messaging to prevent tobacco initiation and promote cessation among high school youth.
Methods
This study used a sequential, multi-method research design to develop the interventions. In Phase 1, 347 students completed a survey and discussion activity. A facilitator asked 6 open-ended questions about perceptions of tobacco use. Students then wrote their responses and placed them on a board. The responses were summarized, and the facilitator elicited discussion. Class discussions were coded for themes. Students also provided preferences for timing and frequency of receiving text messages. In Phase 2, 336 students watched video content for the Y-BTI and ranked each video (e.g., relevance, believability, concern and impact). They also completed pretest and posttest surveys that assessed changes in harm perceptions, addictiveness, and willingness to use tobacco.
Results
In Phase 1, students' discussions mapped to the constructs of the Health Belief Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior. Thus, in Phase 2, anti-tobacco videos were selected that aligned with these theoretical constructs. The video messages appeared to be effective. Willingness to use tobacco decreased across all tobacco products from pretest to posttest (p's<0.001). Additionally, the percentage of students who reported 'Don't know' to questions about tobacco harm and addictiveness decreased across all tobacco products from pretest (11.9%) to posttest (6.9%).
Conclusion
Results from this study will be used to develop a universal tobacco control program for high school youth addressing all forms of tobacco, which is significant given the changing tobacco landscape and the increased benefits of cessation at a younger age.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Cigarette price differentials and their association with infant and neonatal mortality in 140 countries: a longitudinal ecological study

Olivia Bannon[1], Márta Radó[1], Filippos Filippidis[2]
[1]Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, [2]Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Background
Exposure to cigarette smoke is a serious global public health concern that leads to tens of thousands of preventable infant and neonatal deaths globally each year, most of which occur in low- and middle-income countries. Raising tobacco taxes to increase cigarette prices is an effective measure to reduce smoking but is undermined by tobacco companies' differential pricing strategies that maintain budget cigarette prices. Larger price differentials between premium and budget cigarettes are associated with increased infant mortality in the European Union, but this association is not understood globally.
Objectives
To increase understanding of the association between cigarette price differentials and infant and neonatal mortality globally.
Methods
Fixed-effect panel regression models were used to assess the association between cigarette price differentials and infant and neonatal mortality globally and by country-level income group using country-level aggregated data on 140 (41 high income and 99 low- and middle-income) countries between 2014 and 2020.
Results
A 10% cigarette price differential increase was associated

with 0.76% increased infant mortality (95% CI: 0.2%-1.3%) and 0.78% increased neonatal mortality (95% CI: 0.2%-1.4%) globally. Decreasing price differentials by 10% was associated with 29,373 averted infant deaths (95% CI: 7,729-50,244), including 18,454 averted neonatal deaths (95% CI: 4,732-33,122), globally in 2020, 98.4% of which in low-and middle-income countries.

Conclusion

Higher cigarette price differentials are associated with increased infant and neonatal mortality globally. Associations by income group were not detected.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Predictors of the past 30-days e-cigarette use among adolescents in Armenia

Zhanna Sargsyan[1], Zaruhi Grigoryan[1], Varduhi Hayrumyan[1], Tsovinar Harutyunyan[1], Varduhi Petrosyan[1]
[1]Turpanjian College of Health Sciences, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia

Introduction

We explored the predictors for past 30-days e-cigarette use among adolescents in Armenia, with the goal of informing evidence-based interventions and regulatory measures to address the emerging public health concern of youth e-cigarette use.

Methods

We conducted a survey in the capital Yerevan and an adjacent region in February 2023. Study participants were 15-17 years old students of private and public high schools. The instrument contained items on adolescents' socio-demographics, ever and past 30-days e-cigarette use, and main reasons for ever using e-cigarettes. Multivariable regression explored the association between past 30-days e-cigarette use (categorized as used/not used) and the most common three reasons for ever using, while adjusting for gender, parental employment, school type, and residency area.

Results

Overall, 366 adolescents completed the survey. The majority were females (64.4%), living in Yerevan (71.3%), and studying in public schools (77.0%). About 96.5% had employed fathers, while only 76.2% had employed mothers. Ever e-cigarette users (41.7%) reported the main reasons for using as flavors (37.7%), curiosity (33.1%), and friends' use (18.5%). Majority of ever users (53.7%) used e-cigarettes for at least one day in the past 30 days. In the multivariable logistic regression, those who reported flavors as the main reason for ever using e-cigarettes had higher odds of using them in the past 30-days than those who did not (OR=3.97, p=0.008). Being male vs female (OR=4.21, p=0.004) and attending public vs private school (OR=3.67, p=0.038) were also significantly associated with past 30-days e-cigarette use in the adjusted analysis.

Conclusions

Our study links past 30-days e-cigarette use in Armenian adolescents to being male, attending public schools, and reporting flavors as the main reason for ever using. To address the escalating youth e-cigarette use in the country, targeted interventions should prioritize male students in public schools and consider banning flavored e-cigarette products.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Think different, think big: Final solution to nicotine challenge

David Chalom[1]
[1]Doctors Against Tobacco Sweden, Sweden

Introduction

The tobacco industry continuously launches new nicotine delivery methods. These products are marketed with hundreds of tastes and attractive packaging, leading children to believe are safe to consume but contain strongly addictive nicotine increasing young nicotine addiction alarmingly.

Nicotine, a psychotropic substance and highly addictive drug is detrimental to health and fulfills WHO's criteria for being classified as a narcotic drug.

It should be because:

-Research shows harmful effects on fetuses, teenage brain, cardiovascular system,

-Nicotine affects blood vessels causing tissues to degenerate faster,

-Nicotine addiction drives cigarette use. One billion people smoke worldwide causing six million deaths/year,

-New nicotine products create addiction at much higher extent. The industry's looking for ways to introduce into more countries, and

-Nicotine opens for other addictive drugs' abuse.

Objective

Solve the nicotine challenge in order to eliminate its threat to the health of coming generations.

Material and Methods

Focusing on eliminating the source of the problem, investigate how to best solving it: by studying the process for the classification of narcotic drugs and their control.

Results

Based on set criteria, the WHO's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence assesses narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and may then advise the UN's Commission on Narcotic Drugs to schedule them for international control. This process is initiated by:

-Notification to the Secretary General of the UN from a country/party to the UN conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, or by

-Information brought to WHO's attention that a substance is a serious threat to public health.

Conclusions

The tobacco prevention community can help policymakers/governments focus on the heart of the problem in order to finally solve the tobacco/nicotine challenge and notify the UN's Secretary General or the WHO on the necessity of assessing nicotine to protect our children.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

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Civil society as a catalyst for the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products – an example from Bosnia and Herzegovina

Samir Ibisevic[1]
[1]Association PROI, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction
The illicit trade in tobacco products poses significant public health and economic challenges globally. Bosnia and Herzegovina facing a complex political landscape, which exacerbates such challenges. Recognizing the importance of addressing this issue in line with the EU acquis, PROI works on creating a sustainable partnership between government and civil society organizations (CSOs) and enhancing social and economic reforms particularly those related to the Protocol.

Objectives
This presentation intends to highlight the unprecedented and unique role played by NGO PROI, which stands as a unique case in the Balkans region. The aim is to illustrate PROI's significant collaborative initiatives with the government and international bodies, specifically targeted at combating the illicit trade in tobacco products. Additionally, this presentation seeks to provide an in-depth overview of the level of initiatives undertaken to combat illicit trade in Bosnia and Herzegovina, setting an example for the broader region.

Material and Methods
In preparation for this presentation, a qualitative analysis was conducted, involving policy documents, media reports, and non-structured interviews with key stakeholders from the government, CSOs, and international partners engaged in tobacco control. Strategic approaches and advocacy efforts employed by civil society to drive the process of ratification and implementation are also investigated.

Results
Civil society played a pivotal role in facilitating the ratification of the Protocol. Their advocacy, public awareness campaigns, and strategic engagement with policymakers and the public resulted in increased support for the protocol's implementation. Evidence suggests that civil society influence was a key driver in the successful enactment of comprehensive tobacco control measures.

Conclusions
The successful work of the Association PROI underscores the influential role of CSOs in advancing tobacco control policy in Bosnia, but also in the Balkans region. The recent project demonstrates how cooperation between government, CSOs, and international bodies can contribute to the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. It also exemplifies the potential for civil society to drive reform, improve accountability and transparency, and enhance the rule of law, even in complex political environments.

Conflicts of interest
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Nurses care for nurses

Yvonne Bergmark Bröske[1], Sofia Shakibi[1]
[1]Swedish Nurses Against Tobacco, Stockholm, Sweden

Introduction
Tobacco control and cessation is one of the most cost-effective healthcare interventions in which nurses and midwives hold a key position. The NGO "Swedish Nurses Against Tobacco" (SNAT) was established in 1992. The aim was to build a national network of nurses and midwives and enhance their role in tobacco control and cessation. In 2000, SNAT took the initiative to build an international network "European Nurses and Midwives against Tobacco".

Objectives
SNAT aims is to build a strong network to increase nurses' and midwives' roles in tobacco control and cessation and also by a special counceling method help heavy tobacco using nurses and midwives to be tobacco free.

Material and Methods
SNAT has trained nurses in counseling tobacco prevention and cessation methods since 1996. SNAT has since 2007 helped heavy tobacco using nurses and midwives to be tobacco-free. This has been a win-win situation. In cooperation with other health professionals, SNAT has been active in the global Tobacco Endgame project. In 8th European Conference on Tobacco or Health (ECToH) in Germany 2020, interest in the international network was reawakened and "The Coalition of Nurses and Health Professionals Against Tobacco and Nicotine" took shape. In November 2020, SNAT participated in the virtual18th German Conference on Tobacco Control and presented "Good Practice from Sweden". During the 9th European Conference on Tobacco or Health (ECToH) in Spain 2023, the coalition met again. One of the subjects discussed at the meeting was finding initiatives for decreasing not just the consumption of tobacco but also other nicotine products which has become popular between children and young adults.

Results and Conclusions
With a large network of nurses and midwives who work with tobacco control, there will be a big chance to reach bigger populations such as parents, children, and young people. It is not time to give up the focus off European Cancerplan to reach a "Tobacco/Nicotine-Free Generation" in Europe, where less than 5% of the population uses tobacco.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco packaging and labeling in the Americas: progress and gaps

Ernesto Marcelo Sabrie[1], Eric Crosbie[2], Olufemi Erinoso[2], Sara Perez[2]
[1]Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Washington, United States, [2]University of Nevada Reno, Reno, United States

Introduction
The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 11 recommends provisions on packaging and labeling for tobacco products, including health warning labels (HWLs), constituents and emissions information, removal of misleading information, and plain packaging to reduce tobacco consumption.

Objective
The objective of this study was to assess the adoption of

tobacco products packaging and labeling policies based on the FCTC's Article 11 guidelines in the WHO Region of the Americas (AMRO).

Material and Methods

We reviewed data on the regulatory environment of tobacco packaging and labeling in AMRO. Data was extracted from Tobacco Control Laws (www.tobaccocontrollaws.org), a database developed and maintained by legal advisors at the International Legal Consortium from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids in collaboration with in-country lawyers. We analyzed four sub-policy areas for smoked and smokeless tobacco products: 1) HWLs (e.g., size), 2) constituents and emissions (e.g., message content), 3) misleading information (e.g., brand descriptors), and 4) other requirements (e.g., standardized/plain packaging).

Results

Of 35 countries in AMRO, 31 have tobacco packaging and labeling laws. Twenty-six countries require pictorial HWLs, 24 require warnings printed on at least 50% of the front and back of the packs, and 24 rotate a single or multiple (from 2 to 16) warnings within a specified period (from 5 up to 24 months). Only 21 countries require descriptive messages on toxic constituents and emissions information. Twenty-seven countries ban brand descriptors with references to implied harm reduction (e.g., "light"), 24 ban figures, colors, and other signs, but only 13 prohibit emission yields printed on the packs. Only Canada and Uruguay have adopted standardized tobacco packaging while Uruguay also requires a single presentation (one brand variant) per brand family.

Conclusions

Many countries in AMRO have made good progress in adopting multiple, rotating, large pictorial HWLs and banning misleading brand descriptors. However, there needs to be greater attention on other tobacco packaging and labeling provisions with a focus on implementing standardized tobacco packaging.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) regulation in Pakistan: A case study of tobacco industry's footprints in the policy formulation

Waseem Iftikhar Janjua[1]
[1]Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

The tobacco industry (TI) seeks to undermine the public health ministry/department's leadership role in tobacco control by engaging in lobbying activities, either defeating or diluting policies, and by its presence on the policymaking table. TI (PMI) has also been pushing for the promotion and sale of Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs). Besides, significant, and growing evidence suggests that TI fiercely resists tobacco control measures, causing delays in implementation, especially in Low-and-Middle-Income-Countries (LMICs).

One of the top recommendations of the WHO was to outright ban electronic nicotine products, ensuring the regulation of HTPs as any other tobacco product.

Unregulated electronic tobacco devices and nicotine pouches permeated the Pakistani market in 2019 and rapidly spread across the country. In December 2022, the Ministry of Health issued a Statutory Regulatory Ordinance SRO 2304(I)/2022, also called "HTPs (Heat-not-burn, Printing of Warning) Rules, 2022". An exclusion of tobacco control stakeholders, and civil society organizations from the preparation/promulgation processes raised concerns regarding the intent and efficacy of this SRO.

Foregoing in view, this research critically examines this SRO and finds evidence of TII in promulgation discourse. This analysis further signposts the text-book tactics adopted by TI to dilute the regulatory intensity of this regulation, leaving gaps in taxation, and warnings, besides other MPOWER measures.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Misleading information created by tobacco industry

Dilek Aslan[1,2], Elif Dagli[2], Tanzer Gezer[2]
[1]Department of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, [2]Health Institute Association, Turkey

Introduction

Infodemic defined as too much information including false or misleading information in digital and/or physical environments, is a global public health threat as it causes confusion, risk taking behaviors, etc. Fortunately, awareness on infodemic management increased among global scientific community since the COVID-19 pandemic. Misleading information is also a tactic used by transnational tobacco companies (TTCs) for market expansion. This study aims to investigate the infodemic content which TTCs use in public communication.

Material and Methods

Top seven TTCs by net sales (in 2021) have been searched. Seven TTCs were determined through the statista.com website list. Search was limited to the websites and the social media channels of the companies. Missions, visions, news, announcements, future directions of the companies, content of the social media channels were investigated.

Results

TTCs websites and social media channels included misleading information. Major tactics used by TTCs in communication with public were as follows:

a) Release of false positive messages and promises like "smoke free", "better", "better future", "better tomorrow"
b) Websites designs were to attract young generations.
c) Majority of the websites had information misleading the public.
d) Misinformation on potential health the risks influence the public.
e) Use of scientific innovation and transformation concepts create to instill trust.
f) Use of social media channels to reach large audiences.

Conclusions

TTCs use different well-known tactics to deceive public which the tobacco control advocates have been aware for many years. This paper gives us remarkable clues on how the TTCs use misleading information to promote the use of tobacco. Social media is used to deliver mis/disinformation to large audience and speedy communication increases almost all the risks. In this regard, tobacco control advocates should adopt infodemic management strategies in their tobacco control efforts to repel TTCs intrigue.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Perceived content, relationship with tobacco and self-reported reasons for e-cigarette use among adolescents in Europe - findings from ESPAD 2019

Biljana Kilibarda[1], Sonia Cerrai[2,3], Elisa Benedetti[2], Jelena Gudelj Rakic[1], Verica Jovanovic[1], Mirjana Tosic[1]

[1]Institute of Public Health of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia, [2]National Research Council, Institute Of Clinical Physiology, Pisa, Italy, [3]Department Of Epidemiology, Care And Public Health Research Institute (Caphri), Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands

Introduction

A substantial number of e-cigarette users worldwide are adolescents and for many of them e-cigarette is the first contact with nicotine, often because their attractiveness. The objective of this analysis is to explore the reasons for trying, perceived content of e-cigarette and the relationship with tobacco at the onset of use among adolescents in Europe.

Material and Methods

Data were obtained from European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) conducted in 2019 in 35 European countries on a total sample of 102,484 students born in 2003.

Results

In 2019, almost every fourth (23%) 16 years old student in ESPAD countries never used tobacco but tried e-cigarettes. This indicator shows high variations across countries with the highest prevalence in Cyprus and Monaco (39%) and Spain and Lithuania (35%) and the lowest in Norway (11%) and North Macedonia and Montenegro (12%), Serbia (13%) and Croatia (14%). Significantly lower percentage (4.2%) of students regularly used tobacco when they first tried e-cigarette. Curiosity was the reason for trying e-cigarette for 30% of the total sample of students, and for 1.7% it was to stop smoking. Almost every third student (33%) in the total sample of students from 13 ESPAD countries that included this question in the survey, thought that the e-cigarette they used contained nicotine. The risk perception of e-cigarettes is low, with 6% of students perceiving trying e-cigarettes once or twice as a great risk.

Conclusions

The results indicate that e-cigarettes are rarely used by adolescents to reduce harm and stop smoking and at the same time point out low risk perception and knowledge on e-cigarette content. Results call for interventions that would reduce attractiveness, raise awareness on the evidence-based findings about these products and at minimum restrict marketing and promotion of e-cigarette to ensure it is aimed at adults.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Evidence supporting the expansion of smoke-free (indoor, outdoor, public and private) environments: a literature review

Sotiria Schoretsaniti[1], Angeliki Lambrou[1], Efstathios Papachristou[1], Anna Mar López[2,3], Dolors Carnicer-Pont[2,3,4], Esteve Fernandez[2,3,4,5]

[1]Directorate of Epidemiology and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases and Injuries, National Public Health Organization, Athens, Greece, [2]Tobacco Control Unit and WHO Collaborating Center for Tobacco Control, Catalan Institute of Oncology, L'Hospital et de Llobregat, Spain, [3]Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBELL), L'Hospital et de Llobregat, Spain, [4]Center for Biomedical Research in Respiratory Diseases (CIBERES), Madrid, Spain, [5]School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Introduction

Even though there has been great progress in the implementation of Article 8 of WHO FCTC to protect citizens from secondhand smoke (SHS) and aerosols (SHA) from tobacco/nicotine products, still most of the world population remains exposed.

Objective

To assess and create the framework for the expansion of Smoke- and Aerosol-Free Exposure legislation in Europe, within the workpackage 8 of the JATC2.

Material and Methods

Review published papers in peer-reviewed journals. The search was conducted in PubMed and Science Direct databases (2010 to 2022).

Results

After screening, 83 papers were included. These papers indicate a high SHS-SHA exposure at public and private, indoor and outdoor settings and at indoor locations adjacent to outdoor smoking areas. Social inequalities in SHS-SHA exposure clearly exists across the EU, between and within countries. Indoors SHS-SHA exposure in hospitality venues dramatically decreased after the implementation of national smoke-free legislation while smoking outdoors at cafes/pubs/bars increased indicating allocation of smoking to outdoor spaces. High SHS levels at some outdoor smoking areas and at adjacent smoke-free indoor areas were also registered. There is compelling evidence of SHS exposure at university and hospital campuses, school outdoor entrances, children's playgrounds, parks and beaches, and that SHS from outdoors settings of building entrances drifts to adjacent places indoors. SHS-SHA exposure remains a public health problem in major airports across Europe specifically related to the presence of smoking rooms. Furthermore, ban on smoking in public places, prompted more homes to become smoke-free, though exposure to SHS and SHA at home is high for non-smokers cohabiting with smokers. Almost 2/3 of smokers

across Europe have a voluntary smoking ban for cars in the presence of children.

Conclusions

Implementing comprehensive smoke-free legislation, including private vehicles, and ensuring its strict enforcement should be the way forward for EU MS and beyond. Expanding interventions to prompt smoke-free homes is also needed.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Lung cancer screening, smoking cessation and health behaviors: preliminary results of an Italian pilot study

Jasmine Giovannoli[1], Serena Checcacci[1], Giuseppe Cavallo[1], Enrica Stancanelli[2], Margherita Zeduri[3], Anna Odone[3], Giuseppe Gorini[1]

[1]Oncologic Network, Prevention and Research Institute, Florence, Italy, [2]Medical Specialization School of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, University of Florence, Florence, Italy, [3]Department of Public Health, Experimental and Forensic Medicine, University of Pavia, Pavia, Italy

Introduction

Participation in lung cancer screening (LCS) is a favorable 'teachable moment' to promote smoking cessation (SC). This Italian pilot study provides low-dose computed tomography in combination with brief advice, followed by referral to SC center (SCC).

Objective

The aim was to assess participants' psychological characteristics related to SC and health behaviors.

Material and Methods

LCS participants completed two questionnaires to assess the stage of change according to the transtheoretical model, and time perspective, a predictor of individual behavior.

Results

Out of 290 participants in the Florence area, 263 (90.7%) were smokers (52.1% females; mean age: 63.4 years; 46.8 pack-years) and 27 (9.3%) were ex-smokers (33.3% females; mean age: 63.8 years; 50.9 pack-years). 143 (54.4%) smokers were referred to the SCC. 140 smokers completed the questionnaires and 7.9% were in precontemplation, 34.3% in contemplation, 12.1% in preparation, and 2.1% in the action stage of change. 6.4% of the smokers were simultaneously in precontemplation and contemplation while 5.7% were simultaneously in precontemplation and preparation. Moreover, smokers compared to the Italian population, tend to be less fatalistic (mean score: 15.0; range: 15.6-22.9) and nearly more hedonistic (mean score: 21.7; range: 14.5-22.7). Future orientation was consistent with the Italian population (mean score: 31.7; range: 25.9-35.7).

Conclusions

These preliminary results confirm that LCS can be a teachable moment to think about SC and that a negative correlation exists between a fatalistic attitude and health behaviors. Indeed, all smokers who completed the questionnaires joined the LCS program, about 50% were considering changing their smoking status and more than 50% were referred to SCC. Furthermore, a hedonistic attitude at the upper limits of the norm emerges, indicative of a tendency to be self-indulgent pleasure-seekers.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Does tobacco consumption impact the risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma in patients with hepatitis B? – A systematic review

Jerina Jaho[1]

[1]Scientific Research Center for Public Health, Ismail Qemali University of Vlore, Vlore, Albania,

Does tobacco consumption impact the risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma in patients with hepatitis B? – A systematic review

Hepatitis B is a major global public health concern. The disease has a huge impact on healthcare systems as its chronicity in liver cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma. Globally, World Health Organization estimates that 296 million people were living with chronic hepatitis B infection in 2019. The aim of this study was to identify if cigarette smoking is a potential risk factor for hepatocellular carcinoma initiation, partially through interaction with hepatitis B virus. The Systematic electronic search for articles published without a time limit included online articles of PubMed, Google Scholar, Medline with Full Text and Medscape, discussing the study aim. A total of 12 studies were identified using key word as Hepatitis B infection, liver cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma, smoking, cigarette, tobacco consumption. The categorization was done for the first author and year of article publishing, methodology and results. Based on the results of studies mediation modeling further indicated that viremia levels, may play a key mediating role in the path between smoking and HCC, in patients with hepatitis B infection. One of the studies included in the review, analyzed various dimensions of cigarette smoking, and the results all support the hypothesis that chronic smoking increases viremia/ALT levels. The finding that both former and current smokers were more likely than nonsmokers to have higher viral load suggests that smoking-induced immune changes can persist even after smoking cessation. In summary, tobacco consumption is an important cause of some diseases. Specifically, our study highlights the effect of smoking on the risk of Hepatitis B Virus related Hepatocellular carcinoma. We strongly suggest that healthcare practitioners should educate and train patient with chronic hepatitis B to quit smoking, in order to avoid the onset of liver cancer.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Exposure to secondhand smoke and intention to use e-cigarettes among adolescents: findings from a cross-sectional survey

Varduhi Hayrumyan[1], Zhanna Sargsyan[1], Zaruhi Grigoryan[1], Tsovinar Harutyunyan[1], Varduhi Petrosyan[1]

[1]Turpanjian College of Health Sciences, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period, and the initiation of e-cigarette use during this phase can seriously impact future tobacco-related behavior. Secondhand smoke exposure (SHSe) has been linked to increased e-cigarette initiation among adolescents. This study aims to investigate the relationship between SHSe and e-cigarette use intention in adolescents in Armenia, adjusting for socio-demographic factors.

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 15-17-year-old adolescents attending private (n=1) and public (n=3) high schools in Yerevan (the capital) and one randomly selected province in Armenia in February 2023. The survey assessed socio-demographics, past 30-days SHSe, as well as intention to use and actual use of e-cigarettes. E-cigarette use intention was scored from 0 (definitely not) to 3 (definitely yes). Multivariable regression explored the association between e-cigarette use intention and SHSe while adjusting for gender, school type, parental employment, and living in the capital vs. region.

Results

A total of 366 adolescents participated in the survey, with 64.4% of them being females, 71.3% residing in Yerevan, and 77.0% attending public schools. About 96.5% of adolescents had employed fathers, while only 76.2% had employed mothers. Among those who never used e-cigarettes (59.3%), the average intention score was 0.84 out of possible 3. Majority of adolescents (68.3%) were exposed to SHS from any source for at least one day within the past 30 days. The primary sources of SHSe were friends (44.6%), fathers (37.2%), and other relatives (29.7%). In the multivariable regression analysis, the intention score was positively associated with SHSe, after adjusting for socio-demographic characteristics (ß=0.33, p=0.014).

Conclusions

This study highlights a significant association between the intention to use e-cigarettes and SHSe among adolescents in Armenia. Given the high prevalence of SHSe in Armenia, further exploration of this relationship is essential to inform public health policies and interventions targeting adolescents.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Health promotion in universities: the national university smoke-free network

Laura Campo[1], Michele Riva[2], Franca Barbic[3], Francesco Donato[4], Andrea Moriondo[5], Simona Villani[6], Anna Lisa Cristini[7], Maria Sofia Cattaruzza[8], Massimo Corradi[9], Filippo Merusi[10], Antonio Paoli[11], Maria Paola Monaco[12], Laura Chiarantini[13], Elena Barbieri[14], Lory Santarelli[14], Lucia Paoloni[15], Ada Maria Florena[16], Silvia Fustinoni[17,1]

[1]Dipartimento Scienze Cliniche e di Comunità, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milano, Italy, [2]Dipartimento di Medicina e Chirurgia, Università di Milano Bicocca, Milano, Italy, [3]Dipartimento di Scienze Biomediche, Humanitas University, Pieve Emanuele, Italy, [4]Dipartimento di Specialità Medico-Chirurgiche, Scienze Radiologiche e Sanità Pubblica dell'Università degli Studi di Brescia, Italy, [5]Dipartimento di Medicina e Chirurgia, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria, Italy, [6]Dipartimento di Sanità Pubblica, Medicina Sperimentale e forense, Università di Pavia, Italy, [7]Dipartimento di Scienze Economiche, Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italy, [8]Dipartimento di Sanità Pubblica e Malattie Infettive, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy, [9]Dipartimento di Medicina e Chirurgia, Università degli Studi di Parma, Italy, [10]U.O. Ambiente, Sostenibilità e Sicurezza (Prevenzione e Protezione), Università degli Studi di Parma, Italy, [11]Dipartimento di Scienze Biomediche, Università degli Studi di Padova, Italy, [12]Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italy, [13]Dipartimento di Scienze Biomolecolari, Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy, [14]Dipartimento di Scienze Cliniche e Molecolari, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy, [15]Ente Regionale Per Il Diritto Allo Studio, Ancona, Italy, [16]Dipartimento Promozione della Salute, Materno-Infantile, di Medicina Interna e Specialistica di Eccellenza G. D'Alessandro, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Italy, [17]Medicina del Lavoro, Clinica del Lavoro, Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milano, Italy

Introduction

With the aim of implementing common policies of health promotion to counter the use of tobacco cigarettes and new products and e-cig at university, the UNIVERSITY SMOKE-FREE network was set up in Italy.

Objective

The main objectives of the network are: to update and uniform the university regulations; to investigate exposure of students and staff to active and passive smoking by means of a multicentre survey; to implement initiatives for helping students to stop smoking; to produce information and teaching materials.

Material and Methods

With the involvement of the university governments, a network was set up comprising 14 universities: Milan La Statale (UNIMI), Milan-Bicocca, Milan-Humanitas, Brescia, Insubria, Pavia, Bergamo, Rome Sapienza, Parma, Padua, Florence, Urbino, the Polytechnic University of Marche, and Palermo. In order to carry out the survey, a questionnaire was developed and validated1, investigating active cigarette smoking, use of new products, exposure to passive smoking, knowledge of the health effects of smoking, and knowledge of, and agreement on regulations.

Results

All network universities have started to review and update their smoke-free regulations. The survey protocol, developed at UNIMI, was shared among the universities for approval by their respective Ethics Committees.

The survey was completed in 2021 by the University of Milan La Statale, and in May-July 2023 by the Universities of Brescia and Urbino, while it will be conducted in the other universities in 2024. To date, more than 10000 students participated in the survey (11-25% of students). First results show differences among universities and scientific and humanistic faculties, in terms of active and passive smoking, and awareness of risks of smoking2.

Conclusions
The establishment of the UNIVERSITY SMOKE-FREE network is an important step to counter smoking at university. Conducting a multicentre survey may be useful to develop information material and implement common policies.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Higher smoking and e-cigarette use among young adults with mental health problems: An analysis of wave 4 of growing up in Ireland, the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland

Joan Hanafin[1], Salome Sunday[1], Luke Clancy[1]
[1]TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland, Technological University Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Introduction
Worsening youth mental health has been an increasing public health concern particularly during Covid-19. Associations between mental health problems (MHP) and tobacco use are well-established and linked with inequalities but whether similar patterns exist for e-cigarette use is less clear.
Objective
We examine smoking and e-cigarette use in Irish 20 years olds with doctor-diagnosed MHP.
Material and Methods
We use data from 5,190, 20 year-olds from Wave 4 of Growing Up in Ireland Child Cohort, the national longitudinal study of children and young people. MHP were assessed using 20-year-olds' self-reports who had been diagnosed by a doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Young adults also self-reported their ever and current smoking, and ever and current use of e-cigarettes. Frequencies and cross-tabulations analyses were performed using STATA version 16.1.
Results
Among Irish 20-year-olds, 19.4% (n=1,008) reported having been diagnosed with a MHP. The majority of these (n=949) reported depression or anxiety. Young adults with MHPs reported higher prevalence for all measures of smoking and e-cigarette use than did those without MHP, and findings were statistically significant for all 4 measures. Almost half of those with MHP were current smokers (47%; n=474 vs. 35.2%; n=1472 without MHP). Almost four out of five were ever-smokers (78.3%; n=789 vs. 72.8%; n=3018). E-cigarette ever-use was 56.9% (n=574) compared with 45.5% (n=1886) in those without MHP and e-cigarette current use was 16.6% (n=168) compared with 12.5% (n=522).
Conclusions
Among young adults, similar associations with MHP exist for e-cigarette use as have been shown to exist for smoking. Our data do not include other mental health problems not reported or not doctor-diagnosed. However, for 20 year-olds with depression and anxiety, a need exists for education and cessation interventions to address their significantly higher rates of smoking and e-cigarette use which likely exacerbate further the health inequalities among this vulnerable group.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Young adult smoking in Ireland – Initiation, prevalence, cessation, and intervention points

Joan Hanafin[1], Salome Sunday[1], Luke Clancy[1]
[1]TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland, Technological University Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Introduction
Young adult smoking initiation and subsequent smoking patterns receive less attention than teenage initiation and patterns, being perceived to be less problematic despite 20-34 year-olds having the highest smoking prevalence of any age group.
Objective
We set out to establish prevalence of ever-smoking, former, current and daily smoking in 20-year-olds in Ireland, and most common ages of initiation into smoking, and examine motivations for smoking, and reported difficulty with cessation.
Material and Methods
We use data from 5,190, 20 year-olds from Wave 4 of Cohort '98 (Child Cohort) of Growing Up in Ireland, a nationally representative longitudinal study of children and young people. All analyses were performed using STATA version 16.1.
Results
Ever-smoking among 20 year-olds was 74% (n=3,807) and current smoking was 37.5% (n=1,946). Among ever-smoked, 35.5% (n=1,347) were occasional smokers and 15.5% (n=592) were daily smokers. Reported reasons for smoking were "because friends smoke" (29.7%, n=1,082); "enjoy it" (20.9%, n=762); and "helps cope with stress" (15%, n=547). Only 2% (n=74) reported smoking because they "can't give it up". However, 12.8% (n=488) said that they had tried to give up cigarettes but found that they couldn't. More than half of ever-smokers had started smoking between the ages of 17 and 19 (age 17 – 16.4%, n=669; age 18 – 23.1%, n=885; age 19 – 13.6%, n=520).
Conclusions
Smoking rates are high among 20 year olds with three-quarters of respondents reporting that they had ever-smoked. More than 1 in 8 had tried to stop smoking but were unable to. The ages between 17 and 19 were vulnerable ones for smoking initiation, perhaps indicative of young adults leaving school, starting higher education and jobs, and moving away from home. Of all initiation ages analysed (11-20 years), age 18 was the most frequently reported age suggesting needs for prevention and cessation for older teens and young adults.
Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Analysis of the attitude of Ukrainians to smoking during Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine

Otto Stoyka[1]
[1]Kyiv City Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction
The outbreak of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, triggered a national humanitarian crisis, with millions of people falling victim. This led to the impact of severe stress on the entire population of Ukraine.
Objective
Assess the attitude of Ukrainians to smoking during the War.
Material and Methods
The analysis was based on the data of the All-Ukrainian survey ""Tobacco use practices among the population of Ukraine and attitudes towards anti-tobacco measures"" (the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in May 2022) by interviews among a national sample aged 18+.
Results
Data analysis shows how the war is changing the attitude of the Ukrainian population toward smoking. Thus, the consumption of any tobacco and nicotine products amounted to 27.4% (44.0% of men and 13.7% of women). Which corresponds to the level of smoking before the War. The structure of consumption of tobacco and nicotine products also did not change: 22.2% used cigarettes, 3.3% (4.2% of men and 2.5% of women) – e-cigarettes, 3.0% (3.4% of men and 2.7% of women) – HTPs, 2.6% – hookah with tobacco. 42.3% of smokers answered that the beginning of a full-scale war in Ukraine did not affect the intensity of their consumption of tobacco or nicotine. 40.2% indicated that they began to use slightly more or significantly more tobacco or nicotine and 12.6% reported that they began to consume less or significantly less.
Conclusions
The results show that, in general, the population did not change their habits of smoking tobacco and nicotine and did not start smoking anymore due to significant socio-economic and political changes. The study also demonstrates that among the smokers themselves, the consumption structure of various products has not changed. Among smokers, less than half began to use tobacco and nicotine more, which also indicates the constancy of dependence, which even with increasing stress does not change significantly.
Conflicts of interest
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Coalition of healthcare professionals for a tobacco and nicotine future

Christa Rustler[1], Yvonne Bergmark Broske[2]
[1]German Network for Tobacco-free Healthcare Services, Germany, [2]Swedish Nurses Against Tobacco, Sweden

Introduction
At the European Conference on Tobacco or Health, ECToH 2020 in Berlin, there was a great interest among the session speakers and participants about the role of nurses especially in tobacco initiatives such as quit lines, cessation support in healthcare settings and taking an advocacy role in the reduction of tobacco, e-cigarette and snus use, community health promotion and cancer prevention.
Objective
The key outcome of the session was a proposal to establish a European-wide network of healthcare professionals against tobacco and nicotine products use. It was led by European Oncological Nurses Society EONS until 2022.
Material and Methods
In collaboration with the key members of the Coalition, a concept paper was developed in 2020 with following objectives: To support Healthcare Professionals to become smoke free and to support population approaches of tobacco control by sharing information and benchmarking best practice across Europe, that involve healthcare professionals. The Coalition presented the concept paper and objectives in a symposium at the German Conference on Tobacco Control in 2020. Coalition members from Ireland, Swedish Nurses against Tobacco, Eastern Europe Centre of Excellence in Tobacco Control (EE-COE), the National Korányi Institue of Pulmonology and from Germany presented "good practice" of national and regional experiences. In the next meeting at ECToH 2023 in Madrid, future structure and activities were discussed.
Results
The participants confirmed the existing concept paper in Madrid 2023 and after a fruitful exchange, the future collaboration with ENSP, as interprofessional and european-wide active organization, was decided. The Coalition will hold a workshop in the European Conference on Tobacco Control ECTC 2023 to present the concept paper with future activities and practice examples from members.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Nurses role in tobacco control – workplace health promotion and education

Christa Rustler[1]
[1]German Network for Tobacco-free Healthcare Services, Germany

Introduction
Nursing counseling is effective in tobacco cessation (Rice, Stead, 2013). Unfortunately, up to 50 % nursing students in Germany smoke. Any intervention to reduce tobacco use in nursing helps to improve individual health and to strengthen the role of nurses in tobacco cessation. Nurses also have an important role to support the strategy for a tobacco-free Germany 2040, according to which less than five percent of adults and less than two percent of adolescents should use tobacco products or e-cigarettes (dkfz 2021).
Objective / Methods
To reduce tobacco consumption, a nursing education program was developed that includes workplace health promotion, healthy lifestyle, stress prevention, and tobacco cessation. The implementation is funded by the sickness insurance DAK-Gesundheit. Funding is based on implementation research

findings and schools must follow program quality criteria when applying for it. An implementation team is set up and the program will be integrated in the school curriculum. Teachers are trained and supported in a systematic implementation process over several months. Quality and effects of the program are evaluated via surveys and workshops.

Results

The intervention can successfully be implemented in nursing schools and was rewarded with the WHO World No Tobacco Day Award 2021. Program evaluation show 50 % of students participate in cessation courses. Results are a significant decrease in smoking prevalence (51 % to 46 %) and increase in motivation to quit (28 % to 36 %). Interesting is also that quitters use more healthy stress management strategies compared to continued smokers (Bühler et al.). The results provide arguments for a norm shaping campaign within the nursing profession in Germany towards tobacco free care and to develop health protecting work conditions. To support this improvement, participation, exchange and development of good practice in regional networks as well as interprofessional and international networks will be established.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Expert consensus statement on tobacco control sustainability in Poland

Marta Miller[1], Łukasz Balwicki[2], Magdalena Cedzyńska[3], Irena Przepiórka[3], Jarosław Pinkas[4], Wioleta Tomczak[2], Tomasz Zdrojewski[5]
[1]Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland, [2]Department of Public Health and Social Medicine, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland, [3]Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [4]Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education in Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland, [5]Department of Hypertension and Diabetology, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland

Introduction

Tobacco use poses a significant public health threat in Poland, with high rates of consumption and detrimental effects on individuals. Tobacco is responsible for one-third of all cancer deaths in Poland. This study aimed to develop an expert consensus statement on tobacco control sustainability in Poland.

Material and Methods

An expert consensus hybrid meeting was conducted, gathering national tobacco control experts from various fields. The meeting utilized the Index of Tobacco Control Sustainability (ITCS) to identify critical indicators for a sustainable national tobacco control program.

Results

Key recommendations include developing a comprehensive tobacco control strategy and program, establishing inter-governmental coordination, strengthening civil society involvement, creating a dedicated Tobacco Control Unit, allocating government annual funding for tobacco control operations, and strengthening organizational resistance to tobacco industry interference.

Conclusions

Poland needs to build the institutional capacity and address sustainable financial resources on an annual basis to effectively organize sustainable tobacco control.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Factors associated with current e-cigarette use in an Irish university and attitudes to proposed legislative change

Catherine Hayes[1], Niamh Kennedy[1], Darin Poon[1], John Frain[1], Anderson Lee[1], Chi Lee[1], Martina Mullin[1]
[1]Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Introduction

In 2022, 11% of Irish adults <25 years reported current use of e-cigarettes. Of particular concern is the increase in under 18s from 10-18% between 2015-19. A government bill to ban the sale of nicotine inhaling products to under 18s was approved in May 2023. We examined the prevalence of e-cigarette use among university students and staff, socio-demographic factors associated with current vaping, and attitudes to the proposed ban.

Material and Methods

A cross-sectional study anonymous online survey was sent to 18,871 students over 18 years and 3,491 staff at Trinity College Dublin in March 2023. Primary outcome was the current use (in the past 30 days) of e-cigarettes. Attitudes to restricting outdoor vaping on campus and to the forthcoming ban were sought.

Results

2,683 (14.2%) answered the questionnaire. Complete data were ascertained for 2359 (87.9%); (1676 undergraduates (71.1%), 357 postgraduates (15.1%), staff 318 (13.5%) and 4 other (0.3%). 838/1506 (55.6%) reported vaping in the previous 30 days (640 undergraduates (83%) 86 postgraduates (11.2%) and 42 staff (5.5%), (Chi2 =10.8, d.f. 2, p=0.005). Current vaping was strongly associated with increasing agegroup (18-23, 24-28, 39-77 years, (Chi2 =15.7, d.f. 2, p<0.001 and was much higher in females (61.9%) than males (33.9%) or those who preferred not to declare a gender (4.2%). (Chi2 =7.23, d.f. 2, p=027). 320/768 (41.7%) of current vapers had also smoked cigarettes in the previous seven days (Chi2 =95.8, d.f. 1, p<0.001). 1369/2385 (51%) supported restricting e-cigarettes on campus to a small number of designated outdoorareas. 40% supported a government ban on disposable vapes for all adults and a further 35% for under 18s only.

Conclusions

Vaping prevalence is extremely high among undergraduate and female students. Dual e-cigarette and cigarette use is common. Positive support for action on vaping locally and at national policy level needs to be undertaken.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Smoking and the new trends in young women

Marise Sabato[1], Maria Assunta Donato[1], Teresa Bonarrio[1],

Francesco Rosiello[1], Martina Antinozzi[1], Maria Sofia Cattaruzza[1]
[1]Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy

Introduction
Smoking and use of new products among young people is increasing in Europe. The Tobaccology Unit of Sapienza University of Rome (Italy) organises a yearly survey on Women's day (the 8th of March) to gain a deeper knowledge into the habits and attitudes of young women towards smoking in order to devise new prevention methods to help young people stop or avoid smoking.

Material and Methods
Since 2021, UNITAB has conducted three anonymous cross-sectional surveys on Google Forms administered to young people present at the time of social events organised on the University campus. Each survey consisted of 2 different sections aimed at collecting socio demographic data and studying people's use and opinions on new tobacco products (especially Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs).

Results
These surveys were completed by 663 young women with mean age 22.5 years. Preliminary findings showed that respectively in 2021, 2022, 2023, the percentage of smoking and/or using new products was quite stable (33.8%, 35.0% and 34.2%), while the percentage of women who reported to have tried HTPs increased from 18.4% in 2021, to 24.9% in 2022 and to 62.7% in 2023. The main reason to try these products was reported to be curiosity (24.2%, 36.1% 59.0% respectively in 2021,2022, 2023). Also, young women seem to use a great variety of products: traditional cigarettes, roll your own cigarette, electronic cigarette, and HTPs altogether. Interestingly, in 2023 puff bars were specifically reported among products used.

Conclusions
The use of new products is spreading, especially among young people. From a Public Health perspective, it is important to monitor trends and reasons for their use since the health impact is still to be assessed.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Volunteering and health promotion: High school students for a tobacco free generation

Darius Lotrean[1], Natalia Rednic[2], George Coșbuc[2]
[1]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention Youth Group, Brussels, Belgium, [2]National College, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Introduction
Volunteering includes a wide range of activities which contribute to the achievement of a shared goal in Tobacco Control, a Tobacco Free Generation by 2040. Voluntary Youth Engagement is crucial for reaching that goal.

Objective
This study aims to evaluate the opinion of students, professors and parents on volunteering and activities to promote health, presenting an activity to promote health organized by high school students and analyzing trends in the romanian population.

Material and Methods
7 high school students from George Coșbuc National College chose to support the European Citizen Initiative: CALL TO ACHIEVE A TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FIRST EUROPEAN TOBACCO-FREE GENERATION BY 2030 by filming a presentation video. The activity was presented at school days. A multiple-choice question form has been disseminated among parents, teachers and students to assess their opinion on volunteering, activities to promote health and the factors that influence the choice to partake. Frequency tables and bivariate correlations (significance considered at $p<0.05$) in JASP were used. Google Trends has been used to assess topics of interest in the romanian population (2016-2023). RSV (Relative Search Volume) is the measure that indicates the popularity of a topic (1-lowest- to 100 -highest).

Results
Out of 44 participants (27 Students, 7 Teachers and 10 Parents) the vast majority (88.63%) agreed totally that volunteering is important for self-development. Both parents and teachers were more likely to consider the influence of Parents on their children/students higher than the students themselves. Data from Google Trends showed that Nature and Health are more popular topics than Smoking and Electronic cigarettes, while volunteering had the lowest RSV compared to those topics.

Conclusions
Volunteering is considered beneficial and topics such as Health and Nature are popular in Romania. To consider students' interests, popular topics and trends is important for youth mobilization.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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Impact of tobacco taxation on poverty and inequality in Serbia

Aleksandar Zdravkovic[1], Jovan Zubovic[1], Boban Nedeljkovic[1]
[1]Institute of Economic Sciences Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

Introduction
While tobacco taxation has proven to be the most effective measures to reduce the demand for tobacco, it might affect well-being of the poor population. Therefore, consideration of any change in taxation policy requires comprehensive insight of the effects that policy measures have on the change in poverty and inequality.

Objective
The main research objective is to assess how an increase in tobacco taxation affects poverty and inequality in Serbia. More specifically, the study estimates change in basic FGT poverty indices (headcount ratio, poverty gap and poverty severity) and change in progressivity of income redistribution following the increase in cigarette prices.

Material and Methods
The methodological framework consists of two building blocks: i) scenario analysis to simulate the effects of tobacco taxation on poverty; ii) scenario analysis to simulate the effects of tobacco taxation on inequality in Serbia. The consumption dominance curve approach is used to estimate changes in the

poverty indicators. The concentration curve and the Kakwani progressivity index are used as indicators of tobacco taxation progressivity.

Results

The same two scenarios of increase in tobacco taxation are applied to both poverty and inequality analysis: i) an increase in specific tax for 25%, and ii) an increase in specific tax for 50 %. In both scenarios, increase in tobacco taxation leads to increase in poverty across all three FGT indices. Regarding inequality, tobacco expenditures are regressive relative to the income, but increase in tobacco taxation is progressive, which is confirmed by the Kakwani progressivity index.

Conclusions

Increase in tobacco taxation in Serbia is progressive but poverty-enhancing. Therefore, it is necessary to redistribute additional government revenues into subsidizing goods and services which have higher price elasticity than tobacco products and at the same time improves well-being of poor population (such as out-of-pocket health costs).

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Stepped-care approach implementation for dealing with smoking-related problems using Contextual Behavior Science

Maria Karekla[1]
[1]University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

Stepped care is a structured approach to healthcare service delivery, wherein interventions are arranged in a hierarchical manner based on their level of intensity, invasiveness, and expense. The selection of intervention intensity is determined by considering factors such as practicality, cost, the seriousness of the case, and the preferences of both the individual in need and the professional. This presentation will illustrate how the use of digital technologies can be harnessed to achieve such a stepped care approach. Examples from our ACThealthy laboratory projects will demonstrate how this can be applied in action.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

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Too little too late - a critical view of Bulgaria's increased excise tax regime

Pavel Antonov[1], Vladislav Velichkov[1]
[1]BlueLink Foundation, Sofia, Bulgaria

In December 2023 Bulgaria's Parliament approved a higher excise tax on tobacco products.The move followed a long lasting battle by Bulgaria's tobacco control movement represented by the Bulgarian Coalition for Smokefree Life (BCSL), and a heated public debate.

The Parliament's decision envisages a gradual increase in excise duty from March 1, 2023 to January 1, 2026. As a result over the next 4 years the prices of cheap cigarettes are expected to rise more than those of expensive cigarettes - about 20-30 cents per pack per year for mass cigarettes and 13-14 cents for the more expensive ones. The biggest increase will be for smokeless products, which should increase in price by 40 cents per year. The price of a package of smoking tobacco, which currently sells for about BGN 10, will rise by 70-80 cents a year.

How did the policy change of tobacco taxation meet BCSL's demands? How does the new tobacco taxation regime contribute to FCTC's goals? The proposed paper will try to respond analytically to these questions and provide a critical assessment of Bulgaria's new tobacco taxation policy from the perspective of the tobacco control movement.

For this purpose the authors will trace the policy demands, arguments and demands that shaped the public and political debate in Bulgaria during 2022. It will outline the efforts taken by the BCSL and examine their effects, in the Bulgarian context.

Using comparative analysis of scientific and political arguments exchanged as well as semi-structured interviews and other action research methods, the authors conclude that in spite of their positive direction, the new policy measure are more likely a compromise in favour of tobacco industry's interest, rather than a victory for public health.

Conflicts of interest

The presenting author is a Board Member of the Coalition for Smoke-free Life in Bulgaria.

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Gender differences in smoking-attributable mortality (SAM) by region in Portugal

Sofia Ravara[1,2,3], Julia Rey-Brandariz[4], Esther López-Vizcaíno[5], María Isolina Santiago-Pérez[6], Alberto Ruano-Raviña[4], Cristina Candal[4], Leonor Varela[4], Nerea Mourino[4], Pedro Aguiar[3], Mónica Pérez-Ríos[4]
[1]Health Science Research Centre CICS-UBI, University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal, [2]Centro Hospitalar Universitário da Cova da Beira, Covilhã, Portugal, [3]Public Health Research Centre CISP, National School of Public Health, Nova University Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal, [4]Preventive Medicine and Public Health, University of Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, [5]Galician Statistics Institute, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, [6]Epidemiology Department, Directorate-General of Public Health, Galician Regional Health Authority, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Background/Objectives

Although smoking-associated mortality (SAM) is a crucial health indicator, research is limited in Portugal. We sought to estimate SAM by region in 2019 in the Portuguese population ≥35 years, highlighting gender differences.

Material and Methods

A SAM independent-prevalence method was used. Observed mortality was obtained from Portugal Statistics; lung cancer mortality rates in smokers/never-smokers from the Cancer Prevention Study I-II; relative risks from five US cohorts. SAM was estimated for each region by sex, age, and cause of death.

Results

In 2019, tobacco use caused 12.3% of all deaths in Portuguese adults ≥35 years (men: 17.6%; women: 7.1%). Data broken down by NUTS-II regions show that SAM varies widely by region and gender. Azores depicts the highest SAM, both in males (52.7%) and females (26.8%); the lowest was observed in the

Centre among males (24.1%) and in Alentejo among females (9.6%). Regardless of the cause of death and age-group, the highest men-to-women ratios (3-1) were observed in Madeira and Alentejo. SAM specific rates increase with age among males in all regions, whereas among females this pattern is also observed, except in Madeira. According to sex, cancers were the leading cause of death among men in all regions, especially in the North (51.0%); while cardiovascular diseases ranked first among women in all regions, particularly in the Azores (50.7%). Lung cancer was the main specific-cause of death in men, and also among women in Lisbon and Algarve regions. Respiratory diseases caused more deaths among females in the other regions.

Conclusions

SAM is high and greatly varies by region, gender and age. SAM by gender shows a specific pattern in all regions, although with regional differences among women, suggesting different tobacco epidemic stages by region. There is a need for engendering tobacco control policy-making while monitoring and implementing policies, at national and local level.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Breaking barriers: The power of chisquares in seamless web-paper surveys

Israel Agaku[1], Lungile Nkosi[1]
[1]Chisquares, South Africa

Introduction

Conducting effective web surveys while ensuring representation of diverse demographics has become increasingly challenging. Traditional web survey platforms may not fully capture certain populations, such as those without internet access or the elderly. To address this, a hybrid approach, using both web and paper surveys, has emerged as a promising solution. However, the manual processes involved in merging paper and web data can be time-consuming and tedious. We aim to showcase how advanced AI technologies on the Chisquares scientific platform have revolutionized the integration of paper and web surveys, drastically reducing the time and effort required.

Material and Methods

The Chisquares platform uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology to extract data from scanned paper questionnaires. The extracted data is then seamlessly combined with web-collected data from the same survey. Sequential numbering is employed to accurately match the paper and web versions of the questionnaires. This ensures precise data extraction and tracking of printed survey copies. The Chisquares platform offers automatic and project-specific assignment of serial numbers to avoid repetition within a project.

Results

The Chisquares platform offers two key functionalities for web surveys: (1) Directly uploading a word document-based questionnaire to the survey environment, saving time and effort. (2) Allowing participants to complete a paper-based questionnaire that can be automatically extracted using OCR technology.

Conclusions

Chisquares utilizes innovative AI technologies to streamline the process of conducting hybrid web-paper surveys, making data collection easier and more reliable. The platform holds great promise for researchers and public health practitioners, showcasing the potential of cutting-edge technologies in enhancing survey methodologies and making a meaningful impact.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Marketing of heated tobacco products and tobacco - a case study of 5 nightclubs in a major city in Poland

Julia Nowicka[1], Łukasz Balwicki[1]
[1]Department of Public Health and Social Medicine, Medical University of Gdansk, Gdansk, Poland

Introduction

The tobacco industry is constantly launching new generation products to attract new customers. In particular, heated tobacco products are aimed at young people due to their simple design and association with electronics. These products are advertised in social gathering places, such as nightclubs, where young adults socialize.

Objectives

To conduct a case study of tobacco marketing in 5 nightclubs in the city of Gdansk, a major city in Poland.

Material and Methods

Observation of tobacco marketing was carried out at 5 nightclubs in the city of Gdansk during the 2022 summer vacation. Two independent observers collected data on tobacco advertising and promotion according to a developed observation form. They made photographs of visible forms of marketing such as points of sale, tobacco brand logo signs, branded accessories, free samples and gadgets.

Results

The case study found that tobacco marketing was intensive and consisted of various forms of promotion. Large point-of-sale displays, illuminated tobacco brand logo signs and numerous types of brand logo accessories were present. Heated tobacco products were more frequently advertised and promoted in the investigated establishments than cigarettes. Representatives of tobacco brands were observed encouraging people to try and purchase a tobacco product.

Conclusions

Tobacco marketing is aggressively carried out in nightclubs, which are places where young people gather. In addition, advertisements for heated tobacco products that target young people are also dominant. These types of settings should be controlled by relevant authorities and tobacco marketing that reaches vulnerable groups should be monitored and restricted.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Implementation of the new smoke free

policy in the Kyrgyz Republic

Chinara Bekbasarova[1], Olga Knorre[2]
[1]Republican Center for Health Promotion and Communication with Media, Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, [2]Campaign for Tobacco free kids, Washington, United States

Introduction
The 1st National Tobacco Control Law (Old TCLaw) was adopted on 21.08.2006, however, it didn't regulate indoor tobacco smoking in public and working places through water pipes and heated tobacco (HT), use of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

Objectives
To implement of measures for ensuring the protection of health and the rights of citizens to clean air, free from ambient tobacco smoke and aerosol.

Material and Methods
To develop and promote to adoption and implementation of the WHO FCTC smoke free policy in the legislation of the KR in the field of protecting the health of citizens from the consequences of tobacco, nicotine consumption, and effects of ambient tobacco smoke and aerosol.

Results
The Law of the KR "On protection of the health of citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic from the consequences of tobacco, nicotine consumption and impact of ambient tobacco smoke and aerosol" (NewTCL) was adopted by September 15, 2021. According to Article 13 of the Law, it is prohibited to smoke tobacco and nicotine, including using water pipes (hookah), systems for heating tobacco and other smoking accessories, as well as the use of ENDS inside of the buildings and premises in all public and workplaces, also at outdoor child playgrounds, at public transport stops and in open areas during the period of mass cultural, sports events, meetings, actions, within the boundaries of the territories of beaches, with the exception of places specially designated for smoking. The requirement and procedure for placing new ""No smoking sign"" were developed and adopted for enforcement of tobacco and nicotine smoking ban in buildings and objects.

Conclusions
According new TCL, smoking all tobacco products, including HT, through water pipes, HT and ENDS in buildings and premises of the working and public places were banned.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Urologists' perceptions and behaviors related to tobacco use

Richard Matulewicz[1]
[1]Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, United States

Introduction
Tobacco use is a causative or exacerbating risk factor for benign and malignant urologic disease. However, urologists have not traditionally been active as frontline clinicians in the treatment of tobacco use. Understanding urologists' contemporary perceptions and behaviors can allow for intervention design to overcome barriers to optimal care.

Objectives/Methods
We seek to review the extent literature related to urologists' perceptions, behaviors, and norms related to tobacco use assessment and treatment. A literature search was performed alongside relevant published works by the presenting author.

Results/Conclusions
Most urologists recognize the importance of tobacco use assessment and treatment as well as the relationship between tobacco use and urologic disease. However, few urologists report delivery of guideline concordant care, which includes routine screening for use and evidence-based treatment (pharmacologic and behavioral counseling), in the outpatient setting. Reported barriers to screening and treatment in the urology clinic include a lack of time, training, and comfort with recommended processes. Differences among training and country/region exist. Overcoming these barriers with multi-level implementation efforts can improve tobacco screening and treatment in the urology setting which will translate into better patient outcomes.

Conflicts of interest
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Newspaper front pages following the announcement of the new Portuguese tobacco bill: what do they say?

Sofia Ravara[1,2,3], Francisca Pulido Valente[4], Sara Travassos[5], Inês Subtil[6], Hilson Cunha-Filho[1], Paulo Corrêa[7]
[1]University of Beira Interior, Covilhã, Portugal, [2]Centro Hospitalar Universitário da Cova da Beira, Covilhã, Portugal, [3]Public Health Research Centre, National School of Public Health, NOVA University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal, [4]Public Health Unit of Amadora, Amadora, Portugal, [5]Public health Unit of Santa Maria da Feira, Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal, [6]Public Health Unit of the Community Health Center Group of Loures-Odivelas, Lisbon, Portugal, [7]Federal University of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Background/Objectives
On May 2023, the Ministry of Health of Portugal announces to the official Portuguese news agency that the "Government proposes a law to transpose the European Directive and strengthen the protection of people from exposure to tobacco smoke" aiming to achieve a "Tobacco-free Generation by 2040." This new tobacco bill included a robust package of measures: 1) extending the smoking/vaping ban to outdoor places such as splanades, terraces, bus stops, university and healthcare services campus, etc; 2) comprehensive restriction of tobacco point of sales (POS) and vending machines. 3) reinforcement of TAPS ban and prohibition of POS at musical and youth festivals 4) transposition of the EU Directive on heated tobacco. This announcement created a strong media debate. We aimed to analyse the press contents focusing on the newspaper front pages.

Material and Methods
Description and thematic analysis of the titles and contents of the front pages depicted in the main Portuguese newspapers.

Results
Newspapers highlight the opposition, instead of promoting health education and public acceptance, elucidating about the

public health evidence supporting the policies: adjectivated speech such as "Undesirable... Government's persecution of smokers"; warnings about economic losses (hospitality industry and tobacco retailers associations); individual freedom and smokers' rights discourse; several policy-makers speaking out against the tobacco supply restriction and the outdoor smoking ban, considering these "abusive and intrusive" or "too restrictive"; violating "the principle of proportionality". The arguments used, as well as the front groups are identified with the tobacco industry's main tactics and the industry allies trying to weaken tobacco control. After this strong media opposition, the bill was discussed in a whole Government meeting and suffered changes that weakened the initial package, particularly the POS restriction.

Conclusions

The media opposition messages suggest strong tobacco industry interference and may have contributed to the tobacco bill setback. This interference should be exposed.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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E-cigarette use and the potential risk for bladder cancer

Marc Bjurlin[1]
[1]The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States

Introduction

Use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) has rapidly increased despite unclear longitudinal health effects. Once thought to be a safer alternative to tobacco smoke, it is possible that e-cigarettes expose the user to similar carcinogenic byproducts during the vaping process, potentially placing users as risk for bladder cancer.

Objectives

To characterize the institutional data, population weighted studies, as well as translational and basic science findings of e-cigarette use as it relates to the potential risk of bladder cancer.

Methods

Literature review.

Results

Up to 8% of bladder cancer survivors use e-cigarettes. Cancer survivors commonly perceive e-cigarettes to be as much or more harmful than traditional cigarettes. Six carcinogens that have a known strong link to bladder cancer have been identified in the urine of e-cigarette users (pyrene, naphthalene, fluorene, phenanthrene, o-toluidine, and 2-naphthylamine). Untargeted metabolomics of the urine of e-cigarette users have demonstrated the cancer related biomarker Me-Fapy and genotoxic MNPB in the urine of e-cigarettes users at levels higher than non-user controls. Patterns in methylation appears to be altered in vaped mice within tumor suppressor genes (protocadherin gene cluster), potentially leading to gene silencing which may play a fundamental role in precipitating the development of bladder cancer.

Conclusions

Long-term implications of chronic urothelial exposure to urinary carcinogens of e-cigarette users are unknown and will require long-term follow-up. However, the current data and literature provides a useful scientific rationale to consider the carcinogenic-specific aspects of using e-cigarettes. The malignant potential of e-cigarettes for bladder cancer remains unknown and is likely less than that of combustible cigarettes.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Impact of smoking status on Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in cancer survivors

Jose Ignacio Nolazco[1,2], Bernard Rosner[3], Emily Roebuck[4], Cristiane Decat Bergerot[5], Elke Rammant[6], Geetha Iyer[7], Yuzhe Tang[8], Ra'ad Al-Faouri[9], Dejan Filipas[1,10], Michael Leapman[11], Matthew Mossanen[1,12], Steven Lee Chang[1,13]
[1]Division of Urological Surgery, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States, [2]Servicio de Urología, Hospital Universitario Austral, Universidad Austral, Pilar, Argentina, [3]Channing Division of Network Medicine, Department of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States, [4]Wake Forest School of Medicine, Carolinas Medical Center/Atrium Health, Charlotte, United States, [5]Centro de Câncer de Brasília, Instituto Unity de Ensino e Pesquisa, Grupo Oncoclinicas, Brasília, Distrito Federal, Brazil, [6]Department of Human Structure and Repair, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium, [7]Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States, [8]Urology Department, Beijing Tsinghua Changgung Hospital, School of Clinical Medicine, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, [9]Department of Surgery, Division of Urology, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States, [10]Department of Urology, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany, [11]Yale School of Medicine, Department of Urology, New Haven, United States, [12]Department of Radiation Oncology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, United States, [13]Lank Center for Genitourinary Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, United States

Introduction

The Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) often declines among cancer survivors due to many factors. Some cancer patients who smoke before the cancer diagnosis continue this harmful habit, potentially contributing to a more significant decline in their HRQoL. Therefore, this study investigates the association between smoking status and HRQoL in cancer survivors.

Material and Methods

We conducted a cross-sectional study utilizing self-reported cancer history from 39,578 participants of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) database, leveraging 2016 and 2020 year questionnaires. A multidimensional composite outcome was created to assess HRQoL, integrating four distinct dimensions - general health, mental health, physical health, and activity limitations. After accounting for the complex survey design, logistic regression models were used to analyze the association between smoking status and

poor HRQoL, adjusting for demographic, socioeconomic, and health-related confounders.

Results

Our study found that, after adjusting for potential confounders, current smokers exhibited a significantly poorer HRQoL than never smokers (OR 1.65, 95%CI 1.40-1.93). Furthermore, former smokers showed a poorer HRQoL than never smokers; however, this association was not as strong as current smokers (OR 1.22, 95%CI 1.09-1.38).

Conclusions

Our findings highlight the adverse association of smoking with poor HRQoL in cancer survivors, underscoring the importance of healthcare professionals prioritizing smoking cessation and providing tailored interventions to support this goal.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Attitudes and knowledge of Greek midwives on smoking cessation perinatally

Paraskevi Katsaounou[1], Taxiarchoula Delakovia[2], Athina Diamanti[2]
[1]Department of Pulmonary Medicine and Critical Care, Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University, Athens, Greece, [2]Department of Midwifery, University of West Attica, Athens, Greece

Introduction

During the perinatal period, exposure to firsthand, secondhand and thirdhand tobacco smoke is the most significant preventable cause for a number of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes. Midwives who are constantly in contact with women during pregnancy and postpartum period have a direct role in helping them quitting smoking.

Material and Methods

The research was conducted between December 2022 and July 2023. An anonymous questionnaire was filled in by 150 midwives. The midwives that participated were either working in Health Centers and hospitals of 1st and 2nd Health District or working as freelancers.

Results

86,7% of midwives believed that smoking cessation support is an important part of their professional role.

77% of them reported the need for training in smoking cessation.

22% of midwives had partial education about smoking cessation.

Only 24% of the midwives who answered the questionnaire, reported that they know "motivational interviewing" and only 9% know the "5As Model" for smoking cessation.

28% of midwives reported that they are aware of the allowable use of Nicotine Replacement Therapy during pregnancy.

62% of midwives reported that pregnant women were not well informed about the risks of firsthand, secondhand and thirdhand smoking exposure during pregnancy.

65,4% of midwives reported that they feel capable to provide smoking cessation support to pregnant and women in postpartum period but only 8% of them answered correctly all the relevant questions on the effects of smoking during pregnancy.

Conclusions

The results of the survey highlight the importance of training midwives in the techniques and methods of smoking cessation. Although, most of the midwives believe that they can efficiently help pregnant women to quit smoking, actually they lack the necessary knowledge to do so. These findings underline the necessity of having specially trained midwives and the need for maternity hospitals and health centers in Greece to implement smoking cessation programs.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Joint Action on Tobacco Control 2 - Strengthening European tobacco enforcement through a holistic approach

Frances O'Donovan-Sadat[1]
[1]Joint Action on Tobacco Control 2

The Joint action on Tobacco Control 2 (JATC2) takes a Eurocentric approach to supporting Member States with harmonising the implementation of the tobacco products directive. The EU funded project brings together 21 countries, 36 institutions and over 170 tobacco control experts with the aim of strengthening the cooperation on tobacco control between Member States.

JATC2s pooling of resources from multiple Member States enables the national competence authorities reap the benefits of JATC 2 research, policy recommendations and best practice strategies that would otherwise not be available to them. In this way the JATC 2 project acts as an instrument to bring together experts and unique competences with the aim of developing comprehensive research and making that research available to Member States at all levels of government and the EU commission.

Over the course of 3 years JATC2 will work to:

- Increased data sharing and collaborations between EU Member States on tobacco product regulatory practices.
- Enhanced collaborations between EU Member States to develop sustainable policy recommendations for the expansion of smoke-free environments.
- Develop a common approach on handling tobacco regulation across EU Member States, within the context of their national legislative approach and with consideration to structural setup of each Member States.
- Develop comprehensive research on the applicability of Tobacco Advertising Directive.
- Develop sustainable tobacco endgame strategies that are implementable for all Member States, consideration to different tobacco control contexts and capacities.
- To facilitate the exchange of good practices between Member States in order to improve implementation of the Tobacco Products Directive and related implementing and delegated acts.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco use among the 13-15 y.o. students in San Marino. Results of the latest Global Youth Tobacco Surveys

Andrea Gualtieri[1], Angela Ciobanu[2], Elena Sacchini[1]
[1]Health Authority of San Marino, San Marino, [2]World Health Organization

The widespread availability of tobacco products, coupled with aggressive marketing tactics, poses a considerable threat to the youth by encouraging tobacco use initiation. From 2018 to 2022, the prevalence of overall tobacco product use, combustible tobacco product use, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and the use of smokeless tobacco products have increased among 13-15 y.o. students in San Marino. The increase was larger among girls than boys.

To assess the prevalence of nicotine and tobacco use among 13-15 y.o. students in San Marino, data from the latest two national Global Youth Tobacco Surveys (GYTS) were analyzed. In 2022, 13.7% of students (11.5 of boys and 16.2% of girls) used any tobacco product compared with 7.4% of students (7.3% of boys and 7.4% of girls) in 2018. E-cigarettes have become the most popular product among the youth followed by cigarettes. The current use of e-cigarettes has increased from 8.9% (9.9% of boys and 7.6% of girls) in 2018 to 16.1% (14.6% of boys and 17.8% of girls) in 2022. The use of smokeless tobacco products has also increased, especially among boys. In 2022, 1.6% of students (2.4% of boys and 0.7% of girls) currently used smokeless tobacco compared to 0.6% (0.7% of boys and 0.4% of girls) in 2018.

There is an urgent need to strengthen the implementation of tobacco control policies in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Robust and comprehensive tobacco control policies that cover novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products have to be adopted and appropriately enforced.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Roles and leverages of civil society in the field of tobacco and nicotine prevention: the case of the ACT's call for a ban on puff bars

Marion Catellin[1], Loïc Josseran[1], Martin Drago[1], Astrid Billard[1], Ellen de Guiran[1]
[1]Alliance Contre le Tabac: ACT, Paris, France

The aim of this session is to present the roles and levers available to civil society in the field of nicotine and tobacco prevention. To illustrate the tools that can be mobilized, this session aims to present the mechanisms that have been put in place by ACT – Alliance Contre le Tabac to combat a new product developed by the tobacco industry: ""Puff bars"". Puff bars are disposable e-cigarettes, available in a wide variety of sweet and fruity flavours (e.g. marshmallow), with a packaging that is particularly attractive to young people. The rapid spread of the use of puffs among teenagers, especially in secondary schools, despite the ban on sales of this product to minors in France raises fears of an epidemic of nicotine addiction. To approach this new concern, our association has developed three main complementary lines of action on the subject (research and studies, advocacy and communication through awareness campaigns) that will be presented in the session.

First of all, we wanted to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, which is why ACT and BVA, an international research group, have been the first to survey French teenagers aged 13 to 16 about their perception and use of these flavored disposable e-cigarettes. This survey confirmed the sense of a sudden craze for these products among very young teenagers: 13% of them have already tested puff bars and 9% say they have already bought it.

This study enabled us to promote advocacy actions among French decision-makers, by supporting the introduction of a cross-party bill to ban these disposable electronic cigarettes. We also met with European decision-makers and representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health.

The environment was also an essential lever for mobilizing civil society more broadly in this battle, which is why we launched a public awareness campaign in June 2023 alongside the environmental association Surfrider Foundation, showing that tobacco and new nicotine products are ecotoxic bombs for our planet.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Evaluation of smoke free start initiative

Edward Murphy[1], Aishling Sheridan[1]
[1]Health Service Executive, Dublin, Ireland

Introduction

Smoking in pregnancy is a leading public health challenge. National and international studies highlight the urgent need to improve stop smoking care in pregnancy. This care gap was highlighted in the National Maternity Strategy (2016–2026) and an evidence-based care pathway was established in new National Stop Smoking Clinical Guidelines (2022). A pilot implementation of the new care pathway was undertaken in two Irish maternity hospitals.

Interventions included

Local implementation teams; dedicated trained and certified stop smoking midwives; implementation of QUITManager (an electronic stop smoking care record); Making Every Contact Count training for midwives; routine breath carbon monoxide tests (BCOT) with opt-out referral to stop smoking care for women who smoke. COVID-19 meant that routine BCOT was paused for infection control reasons.

Material and Methods

This is a mixed methods evaluation, where both quantitative and qualitative data were used; the quantitative data provided service activity and outcome data from QUITManager and the qualitative data provided insights to the experiences of pregnant women who used the services and the health professionals who provided the services, through semi-structured telephone interviews.

Results

In total, 691 women were referred to specialist Stop Smoking Midwives; 2.8% and 7.0% of births in each pilot site. Referrals were accepted by 81.6% of women, 23.4% set a quit date and 18.2% were quit at 4 weeks (intention to treat analysis),

with 14.5% of women delivering a smoke-free baby. The qualitative research highlighted the importance of a non-judgemental approach in both recruitment to the programme and engagement with women in the programme.

Conclusions

The new pathway was generally positively received by women and midwives; however, the importance of communication, and the contrast for women between fear of judgement up-front versus experience of sensitive and non-judgmental support were key themes relevant to wide-spread implementation. Proof-of-concept and lessons learned will inform and support national roll-out, including BCOT to improve referrals.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

Additional text

See Sláintecare Smoke Free Start: An Evaluation (2022) https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/tobaccocontrol/research/smoke-free-start-evaluation.pdf

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Strengthening the implementation of the comprehensive anti-tobacco law in Ukraine

Olha Masna[1]
[1]Advocacy center LIFE, Kyiv, Ukraine

Introduction

December, 16 2021 Ukrainian Parliament adopted the anti-tobacco law №1978-IX — one of the most important laws in health care sphere. July, 11 2023 The Comprehensive Anti-tobacco Law entered into force in Ukraine.

Objective

- Ensure a high level of awareness and implementation of new anti-tobacco legislation among the population and entities;
- To intensify work of the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection on informing entities about entry into force of anti-smoking law;
- To ensure extensive media coverage of key norms that come into force.

Material and Methods

- Developing infographics with clear explanations of key norms of the Law and
the easiest ways to submit a complaint about a violation of the Law;
- Organization of the briefing and performance in cooperation with MPs and enforcement authorities;
- Organization of the press conferences;
- Preparation of the expert`s articles about the importance of the Law and and its enforcement;
- Cooperation with the enforcement authorities that control the implementation of the law and members of Parliament;
- Ensuring extensive media coverage.

Results

- More than 100 medias spread information about new bans including our infographics;
- We ensured a high level of awareness of new anti-tobacco legislation;
- We intensified work of the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection and the Ministry of Healthcare.

Conclusions

Our team works for strengthening the implementation of the comprehensive anti-tobacco law in Ukraine was successful and contributed to activation of the enforcement authorities that control the implementation of the law. We provided a high level of familiarization with new bans on numerous Ukrainians. It is so important to reduce the prevalence of smoking in Ukraine.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflict of interest to disclose.

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Smoking behaviours in Poland before and after COVID-19 pandemic

Joanna Aleksandra Didkowska[1], Urszula Wojciechowska[2], Krzysztof Przewoźniak[2]
[1]Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [2]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

Some studies indicate that tobacco use rates may increase during the SARS-Cov-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. This study aims to assess if the use of traditional tobacco products, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco has substantially changed during the pandemic in Poland.

Material and Methods

The study presents Internet survey data from the National Health Test of Poles that was conducted in 2020 (before pandemic) and 2023(after pandemic) by Internet portal onet.pl in representative group of adult (aged 18 and older) Internet users. In each survey more than 200,000 people took part in the study. Results of the study were weighted to adult population in Poland with adjustment to gender, age, education and number of inhabitants in place of living.

Results

The 2023 study results show that proportion of adult men and women who use daily traditional tobacco products reaches the same level of 21%. Comparison of data from 2020 and 2023 indicates that there are no substantial changes among tobacco users in daily use of traditional tobacco products between 2020 and 2023 (68% in 2020, 62% in 2023), also in age groups. However, the use of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco has dramatically increased at that time among young adult tobacco users (aged 18 to 44), in particular among the youngest segment of analysed population (among aged 18 to 24 from 59% to 79% for e-cigarette use and from 20% to 52% for heated tobacco use).

Conclusions

Dramatic increase in proportion of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco users among young Polish tobacco users requires undertaking immediate and comprehensive counter-activities. These activities should be mostly addressed to teenagers and young adults and take into account both legislative and socio-economic tobacco control instruments.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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ENSP Youth Group: a new approach for

tobacco control in the European Region and beyond

Zaruhi Grigoryan[1], Karina Mocanu[1]
[1]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

The importance of youth engagement in tobacco control is vastly recognized. It provides a dual opportunity on the one hand to protect the youth itself by raising their awareness of the tobacco epidemic and on the other hand to encourage the influx of innovative and creative minds and bring an original perspective to diverse aspects of tobacco control.

Material and Methods

Starting in 2018, the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP) established a working group of young ENSP members to mark the start of the youth-oriented approach to tobacco control in the European Region. Since its conception, 65 total members of the Youth Group have been engaged in an overall 37 events: online (19) and face-to-face (14) meetings, and capacity-building (4) activities that aimed to accelerate youth engagement in tobacco control.

Results

Currently, the group expanded throughout the region to include 37 active young leaders and advocates for tobacco control in total 24 countries in 2 continents. Throughout the years, this multidisciplinary group of young leaders embarked on the consolidation of the three pillars of the ENSPNext activity, i.e. research and capacity building, advocacy and policy, as well as communication and collaboration. Activities include the development of materials (35), presentation of abstracts submitted to different conferences (23), implementation of multi-country digital campaigns (6), participation in international scientific conferences (9), recruitment campaigns (4), events organized (10), and signed official partnerships with international youth organizations (2).

Conclusions

The early outcomes of the ENSP Youth Group reaffirm the importance of youth-oriented initiatives and signify the potential impact of youth engagement in tobacco control across the involved countries. Future concerted youth-oriented efforts must be deployed in order to expand and enhance the reach of youth initiatives and eventually elevate the ENSP Youth Group's impact to a larger scale.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Dual and poly-use of novel tobacco products in Europe: A regulatory challenge

Daniel Chen[1]
[1]University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

Introduction

Europe faces a significant challenge with tobacco-related mortality, accounting for over 700,000 deaths annually. Alongside the persistent prevalence of smoking in some countries, the emergence of novel nicotine and tobacco products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) has added complexity, leading to a landscape of dual and poly-product use and posing new challenges for public health policies and regulations.

Objective

This study aimed to analyse the prevalence and patterns of dual and poly-use of both conventional and novel nicotine and tobacco products in Europe, with a focus on understanding the associated regulatory challenges. It also sought to offer evidence-based recommendations for comprehensive tobacco control policies to tackle increasing dual- and poly-product use.

Material and Methods

A narrative review of recent studies was conducted, focusing on the prevalence of smoking and dual and poly-use of tobacco products across European countries by geographic regions. The study also reviewed current tobacco control policies, regulatory environments, and the impact of novel products on the market.

Results

The results revealed a varying prevalence of smoking across Europe, with the highest percentages in the Central and Eastern regions. Novel products are gaining popularity, leading to a high prevalence of e-cigarette users and HTP users engaging in dual use, especially in Western and Northern European regions. The study identified regulatory gaps that could be strengthened to prevent the tobacco industry from exploiting marketing opportunities and highlighted the need for stricter controls on packaging, labelling, advertising, and taxation of products.

Conclusions

The growing market for novel nicotine and tobacco products threatens existing tobacco control measures and adds complexity to the public health landscape. Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based policies that encompass all novel products is critical to reducing overall and dual and poly-product use. The findings call for Europe-wide monitoring, extended smoking bans, cessation support, and enforcement of advertising and taxation policies to safeguard population health and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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From internet to reality: Studying population interest in tobacco and related terms and topics using Google Trends

Darius Lotrean[1], Teresa Bonarrio[2], Martina Antinozzi[2], Gema Aonso-Diego[3], Adena Alahverdian[4], Valentina Vukmirović[5], Jorgjia Bucaj[6], Zhanna Sargsyan[4], Tonka Karin[7], Karina Mocanu[8], Cornel Radu-Loghin[8]
[1]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention Youth Group, Brussels, Belgium, [2]Department of Public Health and Infectious Diseases, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy, [3]University of Oviedo, Oviedo, Spain, [4]Turpanjian College of Health Sciences, American University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia, [5]Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, [6]Paediatric Resident Medical University of Tirana, Tirana, Albania, [7]Croatian Institute of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia, [8]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

Substantiating data shows a growing inclination among the population to utilise the internet as a principal resource for acquiring information and knowledge pertaining to diverse health behaviours and conditions, including smoking and tobacco use. In this regard, the utilisation of Google Trends as a tool within the concept of infodemiology allows health researchers to explore and use non-clinical data, such as simple internet searches, to evaluate and assess the population's interest in health-related issues, with particular emphasis on Google platforms. This study aims to analyse the interest of the population of: Romania, Italy, Croatia, Armenia, Albania, Spain and Serbia using the relative search volume (RSV) of Google Trends.

Material and Methods

The RSV was calculated and extracted from Google Trends for the terms: IQOS, Elfbar and Vape and for the topics: Camel (Cigarette brand), Marlboro (Cigarette brand), Cancer, Smoking, Electronic Cigarette, Cigarette and Smoking Cessation. Using SPSS 26 descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were calculated.

Results

Descriptive statistics showed similarities between mean RSV(mRSV) among these countries. "IQOS" had the highest mRSV compared to other terms among all countries except Spain, where "Vape" had the highest mRSV. The lowest mRSV across all countries presented the term "Elfbar". The topic "Cancer" had highest mRSV in Albania, Croatia and Serbia, while Italy and Spain presented the lowest mRSV. "Smoking" had the highest RSV in Romania and Spain. Moreover, "Smoking cessation" had the lowest RSV in Armenia and Albania. "Marlboro" had the highest mRSV in Italy and the lowest mRSV in Romania. "Camel" in Serbia and Croatia showed the lowest mRSV in comparison to other countries.

Conclusions

Using Google Trends, we examined the popularity of terms and topics across 7 European nations. Our study unveiled both commonalities and disparities, requiring deeper investigations into underlying determinants of these similarities and differences.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Global Youth Tobacco Survey: prevalence of tobacco use in countries of the WHO European Region

Angela Ciobanu[1], Yelena Tarasenko[2], Elizaveta Lebedeva[1]
[1]World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, [2]Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia

As a crucial part of the Global Tobacco Surveillance System, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) enables monitoring tobacco use among students aged 13-15 years and implementation of key tobacco control indicators. The GYTS has been conducted in over 180 countries worldwide, including more than 35 countries and territories in the WHO European Region.

Tobacco use among youth remains to be a significant public health concern in the Region. Despite decreases in tobacco use in some European countries, there are places where more students aged 13 to 15 are using tobacco as evident from the latest GYTS round compared to the previous one.

Cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco products in the European countries. However, novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products have been gaining popularity among 13 to 15-year-olds. In some countries of the Region, the prevalence rates of e-cigarette use are equal to or even higher than cigarette use rates. For instance, in San Marino (2022), 16.1% of students currently use e-cigarettes and 10.8% currently smoke cigarettes; in Italy (2022) 19.3% of students currently use e-cigarettes and 14.9% currently smoke cigarettes.

Cigarettes remain to be easily accessible to students in almost all countries. In more than half of the countries with GYTS data, over half of young students who currently smoke cigarettes were able to purchase or obtain them from various sources, and more than two-thirds of students who tried to buy cigarettes had not been deterred from doing so considering their age.

A limited number of countries in the Region have tailored tobacco-dependence treatment for youth. More than 50% of young people in most of the surveyed countries tried to stop smoking in the past year. However, the proportion of those who received support to quit smoking from a programme or professional was low ranging from the highest of 29.4% in Kyrgyzstan (2019) to the lowest of 3.4% in Slovenia (2017).

Although smoking in educational facilities is prohibited in most countries by smoke-free laws, their enforcement has been challenging. The proportion of students who saw people smoking on school premises varies from 80.5% in Bulgaria (2015) to 14.5% in Tajikistan (2019). Exposure to tobacco advertisements is yet another challenge, with more than half of students taking notice of tobacco advertisements on television, or in videos and movies in surveyed countries.

The data from GYTS in the WHO European Region show the urgent need to implement bold, comprehensive, and multi-sectoral measures to curtail tobacco use in youth. These measures should be aligned with the guidance provided by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and be strictly enforced. School-based prevention programs should be implemented as part of the national tobacco control strategy to prevent youth experimentation and smoking initiation.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Changes in the prevalence of regular smokers depending on education in Poland in 1996-2020

Urszula Wojciechowska[1], Joanna Didkowska[1]
[1]Maria Sklodowska-Curie Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

Over the past two decades, there has been a gradual decline in smoking rates among adults in Poland. According to Statistics Poland survey conducted in years 2019, the prevalence of current smokers among adults aged over 15 years of both sexes was 20%, compared to 35% in 1996. The decline varies

depending on education from 14 to 24 percentage points.

Material and Methods

The study presents results of surveys from Statistics Poland in the years 1996, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and 2020. The surveys were carried out by Eurostat recommendations (European (EHIS). Data on current smokers (daily and occasional smokers) in the adult population (aged 15 and over) by education and gender were included in the analysis. The survey carried out in 2020 for the first time includes heated tobacco and e-cigarettes.

Results

In the years 1996-2019, a decrease (from 14 to 24 pp) in the percentage of daily smokers of both sexes was observed in all education groups: university - from 27% to 12%, secondary - from 35% to 20%, vocational - from 50% to 26%, primary and lower – from 29% to 15%.

A decrease in the percentage of current smokers in 2009-2019 is also observed in all education groups depending on gender (men 10-13 pp, women 4-10 pp). The survey carried out in 2020 that includes heated tobacco shows an increase in the proportion of daily smokers with a university degree in both sexes.

Conclusions

The decreasing trend in the frequency of smoking traditional cigarettes observed in years 1996-2019 was stopped after the introduction of heated tobacco and e-cigarettes on the Polish market, which is visible in the 2020 study. The percentage of regular smokers with higher education increased compared to 2019, which may be related to the message promoted by tobacco industries about the less harmfulness of smoking new tobacco products.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Novel tobacco products use – preliminary results from the Polish National Quitline

Irena Przepiorka[1], Marta Manczuk[1], Magdalena Cedzynska[1]
[1]Maria Sklodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

Compared to 2020, changes were observed in smoking behaviors among adults in Poland. In 2020, 23.7% of adults reported daily smoking, and in 2022 as much as 28.8%. Most smokers use traditional cigarettes (62.1%), but e-cigarettes - 4.8% and heated tobacco products (HTP) - 4.0% are becoming more popular.

Objectives

Characteristics of the Quitline customer population using e-cigarettes and HTP who want to quit smoking, including factors impacting the decision to quit.

Methods

Analyzed data were collected from 842 Quitline callers. HTP and e-cigarette use questions were added to the standard questionnaire. The study is ongoing.

Results

Among Quitline callers, there are 6.5% of novel tobacco product users, 3.7% of HTP, and 2.8% of e-cigarettes.

65.7% of HTP users were highly addicted, 35% preferred menthol flavor, 35% attempted to quit. 35% began smoking using heated tobacco. 41% believe HTPs are healthier; however, 64.7% want to quit because of health concerns.

70.8% of e-cigarette users were highly addicted. The preferred flavors were menthol and fruity. 16% declared they began smoking with e-cigarettes. 45.8% use ""because it's cheaper,"" and 29.1% use ""because it's healthier."

Conclusions

The increase in e-cigarettes and HTP use can be attributed to the belief that these products are less harmful, have attractive prices, and are available in flavors that are prohibited in traditional cigarettes. There is a need to strengthen educational activities and introduce legal regulations identical to traditional cigarettes: price increase, taxation, and elimination of flavor additives. It is crucial to develop treatment recommendations for people addicted to novel tobacco products.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Lessons learned from banning menthol cigarettes in Europe: A mixed methods study examining policy implementation and impact

Christina Kyriakos[1], Geoffrey Fong[2,3,4], Pete Driezen[2,3], Marc Willemsen[5,6], David Hammond[3], Ernesto Sebrié[7], Filippos Filippidis[1]
[1]Department of Primary Care and Public Health, School of Public Health, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom, [2]Department of Psychology, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada, [3]School of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Health, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada, [4]Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Toronto, Canada, [5]Department of Health Promotion, Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands, [6]Trimbos Institute, Netherlands Expertise Centre for Tobacco Control, Utrecht, The Netherlands, [7]Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Washington, United States

Introduction

Europe is a global leader in banning flavours, including menthol, in cigarettes. The 27 European Union member states, the United Kingdom, Moldova, and Turkey banned menthol as a characterising flavour in cigarettes in May 2020.

Objectives

As other countries aim to ban flavours of tobacco products it is critical to understand the lessons learned from Europe to ensure regulations are maximised. This mixed methods study examined implementation and impact of European menthol cigarette bans.

Material and Methods

Quantitative data came from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Project Surveys among adults who smoke in the Netherlands (2020) and youth who smoke in England (2021). Qualitative data came from review of policy documents, as well conducting semi-structured interviews with key informant stakeholders in Moldova and Turkey. Outcomes examined included: factors influencing policy implementation, quitting behaviours, illicit purchasing, use of flavour accessories, and health equity.

Results
Key factors that were perceived by stakeholders in Moldova and Turkey to influence implementation of the menthol ban included: social climate, institutional capacity and operational effectiveness, political commitment, and tobacco industry interference. Findings from the Netherlands indicate that the menthol ban resulted in 17.3% additional quit attempts and 12.0% additional quitting among adults who smoked menthol cigarettes compared to non-menthol, while not increasing illicit purchasing. However, one-quarter of youth who smoke in England reported using menthol accessories, with disproportionately higher use among youth identifying as Black (60%). Use of 'non-menthol' replacement cigarette brands were also popular in England and the Netherlands.
Conclusions
The experiences of European countries in implementing menthol cigarette bans can support other countries in taking measures to ban products known to facilitate smoking initiation and regular use. Menthol regulations may be strengthened by banning all additives with sensory and flavour properties, as well as flavour accessories.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Progress of Balkan countries on tobacco control. Evidence from the 2023 WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic

Enkeleint Mechili[1,2], Charis Girvalaki[3], Christina Kyriakos[4], Sonila Nika[5], Jorgjia Bucaj[6], Neada Cakerri[1], Marjola Muhaj[1]
[1]Department of Health Care, Faculty of Health, University of Vlore, Vlore, Albania, [2]School of Medicine, University of Crete, Heraklion, Greece, [3]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium, [4]Department of Primary Care and Public Health, School of Public Health, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom, [5]Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health, University of Vlora, Vlora, Albania, [6]Mother Tereza University Hospital, Tirana, Albania

Introduction
Tobacco consumption remains one of the main factors of morbidity and mortality with more than 8 million deaths globally each year. Secondhand smoking is also a key factor that provokes the death of more than 1.3 million deaths annually. Despite the fact that many Balkan countries have adopted strong tobacco control policies, in many cases there is a lack of implementation. The current study aimed to assess the progress of the Balkan countries.
Material and Methods
Data came from the 2023 WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic. for11 Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Türkiye). Countries were compared on adoption and implementation of tobacco taxation and tobacco-free places, as well as in comparison to 2012 levels.
Results
In 2022, tobacco prevalence ranged in the Balkan countries from 18% in Albania and Slovenia to 33% in Serbia. Croatia has the highest taxation level (86.0% of retail price) while Albania has the lowest (66.7%). Cigarettes were less affordable in 2022 compared to 2012 in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Bans of tobacco use were reported to be in place in healthcare facilities (in all countries except Bosnia and Herzegovina), in government facilities (in all countries except Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia) and pubs and bars (in all countries except Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia). The compliance level ranged across countries.
Conclusions
Tobacco prevalence is still high in the Balkan countries in comparison to western and northern European countries. Some progress has been made since 2012 in some Balkan countries, however more efforts are needed for adoption and implementation of tobacco control measures.
Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Capacity building, national and international cooperation for enhancing tobacco control activities in Romania

Lucia Maria Lotrean[1,2], Marius Eremia[1], Monica Marc[3], Ioana Trifescu[1], Constantine Vardavas[4], Viktoria Vivilaki[5], Cornel Radu-Loghin[6]
[1]Asociatia Aer Pur Romania, Romania, [2]Iuliu Hatieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, [3]University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timisoara, Romania, [4]School of Medicine, University of Crete, Heraklion, Greece, [5]University of West Attica, Athens, Greece, [6]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction
Recruiting, training, motivating and maintaining well qualified people in the field of tobacco control is a challenge, but an important pillar for long term and sustainable strategies in this field.
Objectives
This study aims to present examples from Romania with regard to activities for capacity building in the field of tobacco control developed in the period 2019-2023, giving a special attention to the role of national and international cooperation between academia, non-governmental organizations, public health and educational institutions, professional organizations.
Material and Methods
This is a narrative review based on data from literature as well as information and experience gained by the authors during their involvement in this field.
Results
The results cover the following domains: 1.Graduation thesis and PhD thesis 2.Research and health promotion projects 3.Training and scientific events organization and participation For each domain, there are presented several activities, underlying their potential for capacity building and to which extent networking and cooperation made them possible or enhanced their effects.
Examples of such activities are development, implementation and evaluation of research and health promotion projects for smoking prevention and cessation as well as reduction of

electronic cigarettes use among different population groups, organization of different training and scientific events, such as the participation in the Eurest-Rise project and the organization in 2023 of the workshop Innovative Techniques and Interdisciplinary and Interinstitutional Collaboration to Improve Health Status at the Population Level.

Conclusions

The study presents several examples from Romania with regard to capacity building in the field of tobacco control, underlining the lessons learned and making recommendations for future activities in this field.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Smoking behaviours in Poland before and after COVID-19 pandemic

Joanna Didkowska[1], Urszula Wojciechowska[1], Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1]
[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

Some studies indicate that tobacco use rates may increase during the SARS-Cov-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. This study aims to assess if the use of traditional tobacco products, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco has substantially changed during the pandemic in Poland.

Material and Methods

The study presents Internet survey data from the National Health Test of Poles that was conducted in 2000 and 2003 by Internet portal onet.pl in representative group of adult (aged 18 and older) -Internet users. In each survey more than 200,000 people took part in the study. Results of the study were weighted to adult population of Internet users in Poland with adjustment to gender, age, education and number of inhabitants in place of living.

Results

The 2023 study results show that proportion of adult men and women who use daily traditional tobacco products reaches the same level of 21%. Comparison of data from 2020 and 2023 indicates that there are no substantial changes among tobacco users in daily use of traditional tobacco products between 2020 and 2023 (68% in 2020, 62% in 2023), also in age groups. However, the use of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco has dramatically increased at that time among young adult tobacco users (aged 18 to 44), in particular among the youngest segment of analysed population (among aged 18 to 24 from 59% to 79% for e-cigarette use and from 20% to 52% for heated tobacco use).

Conclusions

Dramatic increase in proportion of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco users among young Polish tobacco users requires undertaking immediate and comprehensive counter-activities. These activities should be mostly addressed to teenagers and young adults and take into account both legislative and socio-economic tobacco control instruments.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Call to achieve a tobacco-free environment and the first European tobacco-free generation by 2030 (ECI-TFE) - The reality of European citizen initiatives

Raquel Fernández Megina[1], Cornel Radu-Loghin[2], Francisco Rodriguez Lozano[3]
[1]Nofumadores.org, Madrid, Spain, [2]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium, [3]Cancer Patients Europe, Brussels, Belgium

Introduction

Given the need to stop the introduction of tobacco and nicotine consumption by new generations, the Spanish association Nofumadores.org involves ENSP, and a large part of its members, in the registration of the European citizen initiative "CALL TO ACHIEVE A TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FIRST EUROPEAN TOBACCO-FREE GENERATION BY 2030" (ECI-TFE), which is accepted by the European Commission in August 2022.

Objectives

The ECI-TFE has six objectives:

1. Promote the first tobacco-free European generation, ending the sale of tobacco and nicotine products to citizens born since 2010.
2. Create an European Net of tobacco-free and butts-free beaches and riverbanks, making this spaces more healthy and environmentally sustainable.
3. Establish an European Net of tobacco-free and butts-free National Parks making them more healthy and reducing contamination and risk of fires.
4. Extend outdoor smoke and vapor free spaces, especially those frequented by minors (parks, swimming pools, sports events and centers, shows and restaurants terraces).
5. Eliminate tobacco advertising and presence in audiovisual productions, social media, specially addressing covert advertising through influencers and product placement.
6. Finance R&D projects for diseases caused by tobacco use to improve their prognosis and make them curable.

Material and Methods

Ongoing collection of 1 million signatures from European Citizens from at least 7 different countries of the EU. The signatures are collected on line through the European Commission Central online collection system until January 16th, 2024 (12 months since the beginning of collection starting date).

Results

A new European legislations/directive which address the six objectives of the initiative and to put Tobacco Control in the agenda of all Politic Parties the year before to the European parliament Elections.

Conclusions

Although the European Commission presents the European Citizens' Initiatives as a unique way for EU citizens to propose new laws, the reality is that, since it is not accompanied by any type of budget, it is very difficult and almost impossible for ordinary citizens to be able to spread their initiatives to the rest of Europeans to collect the necessary 1 million signatures. Only with a sufficient budget to hire communication agencies is it possible to reach all citizens, which is only within the reach of large companies or organisations. This is not something that can be achieved only with voluntary work.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Session proposal: Tobacco control and cessation in Poland: past, present and future

Witold Zatoński[1,2], Kinga Janik-Koncewicz[1,2], Aleksandra Herbeć[3,2], Robert West[4], Nancy Rigotti[5], Susan Michie[6], Krzysztof Przewoźniak[7,8]
[1]Institute - European Observatory of Health Inequalities, Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland, [2]Health Promotion Foundation, Nadarzyn, Poland, [3]Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland, [4]Institute of Epidemiology and Healthcare at University College London, London, United Kingdom, [5]Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, Division of General Internal Medicine and Mongan Institute, Department of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States, [6]Centre for Behaviour Change, University College London, London, United Kingdom, [7]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [8]Institute of Family Health, Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland

Poland is a country of successful tobacco control history. In early 2000. the World Health Organization labelled the Polish law as an 'example to the rest of the world'. It was a hub of anti-tobacco measures in Central and Eastern Europe. Apart from establishing successful educational and intervention campaigns, Poland also significantly contributed to research on treatment of tobacco dependence. It was a pioneering country conducting first clinical trial on cytisine confirming its effectiveness and safety in quitting smoking. Currently, such studies are being conducted all over the world.

Unfortunately, in the last years some distressing and alarming changes have been observed in Poland. In 2015 the "National programme to reduce health consequences of tobacco smoking" was suspended. Economic policy of tobacco ceased to be effective. Tobacco affordability increased. Declining trend of cigarette consumption reversed. About 7 million people still smoke in Poland, however if no immediate action is taken, the burden of tobacco-related diseases will start to increase.

During this session, we would like to discuss current challenges for tobacco control in Poland at the background of its historical achievements. In the face of rising trends of cigarette consumption, we would like to underline the role of cytisine as potential "aspirin" for smoking cessation by summarizing studies on cytisine around the world and discussing the future of clinical practice and research on treatment of tobacco dependence, including the power of AI and machine learning.

After the session we would like to prepare an appeal to Polish government to undertake immediate action against rising trends of cigarette sale in Poland and return to the effective "National programme to reduce health consequences of tobacco smoking". We would like to ask participants of the conference, tobacco control leaders and scientific experts for their support and be a warning for other European countries.

Conflicts of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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GYTS country report from Czech Republic: Current and long-term trends in the use of tobacco and nicotine products among 13-15 years old students by Petra Kamaradova, Czech Republic

Petra Kamaradova[1]
[1]National Institute of Public Health, Vinohrady, Czech Republic

The results of GYTS 2022 in the Czech Republic show that almost half of students (47.3 %) reported ever used tobacco. Total of 16.4 % students reported current tobacco use, currently smokes cigarettes 11.2 %. By comparison, in 2002, 34.6% of students reported currently smoking cigarettes. On the other hand, e-cigarette use has increased from 11.2% since 2016 to 21.4 % in 2022 and it is becoming more popular among the young people.

Czech Republic adolescents are faced with the double burden of cigarette use and the use of other forms of tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, nicotine pouches, e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products etc.

Due the aforementioned reason, the Czech Republic started policy-making processes aimed at limiting the accessibility of these products to the young population.

The results are also considered in proposed interventions or further examination.

Conflicts of interest
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.
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Dual voice on tobacco control in Poland. Inequalities, urgent needs, new challenges

Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1,2], Andrzej Wojtyła[2], Cezary Wojtyła[2], Marek Przybył[2]
[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland, [2]Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland

Introduction
Enforcement of the comprehensive tobacco control policies in Poland in mid-1990s contributed to substantial decrease in tobacco smoking and lung cancer mortality. However, there are still gaps, social inequalities, urgent needs and new challenges in tobacco control to be addressed and solved.

Objectives
To identify and evaluate current inequalities, urgent needs and new challenges in tobacco control in Poland.

Material and Methods
1/ Analysis of cigarette sale in Poland (1923-2022); 2/ Results of nation-wide surveys conducted in youth and adult population in Poland (1974-2019); 3/ Values of tobacco excise taxes and cigarette prices in Poland (2000-2019); 4/ Scores of Tobacco Control Scale (TCS) for Poland and selected countries (2003-2021).

Results
Analyses show that production of cigarettes in Poland (and its value) has constantly increased since 2002 to almost 150-160 billions cigarettes a year but most of cigarettes are now exported. After long-time decline, cigarette sale currently again grows. It is mainly caused by substantial decrease in

real tobacco taxes and prices, gaps in other comprehensive tobacco control measures, programs and services, over two times increase in cigarette smoking among women living in rural area and dramatic increase in the use of e-cigarettes (ENDS) by teenagers and young adults. GYTS data indicates that current ENDS use in Poland is the highest one in Europe both among boys and girls. Gender differences in cigarettes smoking among adults and teenagers tend to substantially decrease in Poland. By now, education and household income are key predictors for tobacco use. Comparison of TCS scores shows that Poland is year by year at lower position on TCS ranking list.

Conclusions

Tobacco control in Poland needs in particular to 1/ have effectively enforced long-term comprehensive strategy and action plan for tobacco endgame, 2/ close major gaps in enforcing tobacco control measures (i.e. introduce complete smoking ban in public places, plain packaging, tobacco advertising and promotion ban in points of sale), 3/ raise tobacco taxes and prices over inflation rate, 4/ raise funds for tobacco control research, programs and smoking cessation services according with present and future needs, 5/ create comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluation of tobacco use, its health, social and economic consequences, and effectiveness of tobacco control program and policies, with special focus on new emerging tobacco and nicotine products.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Prevalence, patterns and trends of tobacco smoking and secondhand exposure by pregnant women in Poland

Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1,2], Cezary Wojtyła[1], Paulina Wojtyła-Buciora[1], Marek Przybył[1]
[1]Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland, [2]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

Smoking and secondhand exposure to tobacco smoke during pregnancy is well-known health risk factor for pregnant woman, fetus, newborn and small child. Smoking also determines children's health in further stages of his life and through epigenetic modifications may influence on the health of future generations.

Objectives

To evaluate prevalence, patterns and trends of tobacco smoking among pregnant women in Poland.

Material and Methods

Population-based questionnaire studies on health beliefs and behaviors of pregnant women are carried out in Poland since 2009. They were conducted by trained sanitary-epidemiological inspectors in gynecological and maternity wards and based on study concept and questionnaire used in the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), a surveillance project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In order to make comparable analysis, presented paper is based on study results from 2013 (N=2913) and 2017 (N=3451). Both studies were coordinated by the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate and financed from the Swiss-Polish Cooperation Program.

Results

In 2017, 33.8% of Polish pregnant women smoked tobacco before or during pregnancy. 11,9% of them quit smoking before and 15.7% during pregnancy whereas 5.9% continued smoking when were pregnant. Prevalence of current smoking during pregnancy is at highest level among the least educated women and women from households with the lowest income. Average number of cigarettes smoked daily tends to be twice reduced during pregnancy – from 6,6 cigarettes a day 3 months before pregnancy to 3,3 cigarettes a day just before delivery. Results of the 2017 study also show that 33% of pregnant women is exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS) at home (18% at daily basis) and 16% at worksite (9,8% at daily basis). Comparison of the 2013 and 2017 study results indicate that both active and passive smoking among pregnant women were substantially decreased in Poland.

Conclusions

Tobacco smoking and SHS exposure during pregnancy is still at high level in Poland. Although it was reduced in last decade, additional tobacco control activities are recommended to strengthen this trend. In particular, there is a need to: 1/ implement hospital-based tobacco control and smoking cessation programs, including brief intervention, for pregnant women treated in all gynecological and maternity clinics, 2/ organize trainings on the risk of tobacco use during pregnancy and treatment of tobacco dependence for gynecologists, pediatricians and midwives, 3/ incorporate recommendations on smoking cessation and treatment of tobacco dependence into gynecological and obstetric guidelines, 4/ conduct media and social campaigns on the risk of smoking before, during and after pregnancy, with focus on children's health and epigenetic consequences.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Implementation of pharmacological interventions to help quit smoking. The progress of western Balkan countries according to the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2021

Jorgjia Bucaj[1], Boban Nedeljković[2], Valentina Vukmirović[2], Lorena Sila[1], Melisa Qosja[3]
[1]Pediatric Department, Mother Teresa University Hospital, Tirana, Albania, [2]Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia, [3]Pediatric Department, Primary Healthcare Centre No.3, Elbasan, Albania

Introduction

More than 60% of tobacco users report wanting to quit, and over 40% have made at least one attempt in the last 12 months. Cessation medications and professional support can double the chances of successfully quitting. Pharmacotherapy interventions include Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRTs), as well as medications such as Bupropion, Varenicline, and similar. According to studies, the quit rate increased from 6% for a single type of NRT to almost 15% for Varenicline. This study aims to assess the progress of Western Balkan (WB)

countries in the pharmacotherapy use for tobacco cessation.

Material and Methods

Data has been extracted from the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. Despite the improvement in the legislation of these countries (due to their aspiration to join the EU), tobacco prevalence remains high.

Results

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Serbia offer NRT and/or some cessation services (at least one of which is cost-covered). In none of these countries is a toll-free telephone quit line/help line with a live person available to discuss cessation with callers. In Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, NRTs are sold legally and can be easily purchased in pharmacies without Rx, while in Albania and Montenegro, NRT products are not sold legally. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both Bupropion and Varenicline are sold legally in pharmacies with Rx, in Serbia only Bupropion is available, while in other countries none of these medications are available. Except for Montenegro, in all other countries, there are health clinics or other primary care facilities that offer support for smoking cessation.

Conclusions

Despite the efforts of the WB countries to provide smoking cessation therapies in the WB countries, their availability still remains a big issue. In some countries, NRTs or other medications are not available, while in those countries that can be accessed, they mostly are not reimbursed. We strongly recommend that pharmacotherapy should be available and fully/partially reimbursed by the national health authorities.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco, e-cigarette and heated tobacco use in Poland: Findings from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 1999-2022

Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1], Paweł Koczkodaj[1], Marta Mańczuk[1], Joanna Didkowska[1]
[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland,

Introduction

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) is a global CDC and WHO coordinated survey that is aimed to monitor the use of tobacco and new emerging products by schoolchildren and their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes toward tobacco and tobacco control policies.

Objectives

To evaluate prevalence and trends of the use of tobacco (smoked and smokeless), ENDS and HT in Poland and identify major tobacco control challenges in youth population.

Material and Methods

GYTS includes a two-stage (school and classes) sample design with schools selected with a probability proportional to enrollment size. GYTS is a cross-sectional, nationally representative school-based self-administered questionnaire survey of school students aged 13 to 15 years. In Poland, GYTS sample sizes of 13-15 years old students count from 3,000 to 4,000 respondents. Current analysis of data on tobacco use, beliefs and attitudes are based on all five GYTS rounds (1999, 2003, 2009, 2016 and 2022), while data on ENDS and HT use refer to GYTS data from 2016 and 2022.

Results

In 2022, 17.1% of Polish students used any tobacco products, 12.5% currently smoked tobacco and 11.7% currently smoked cigarettes. Currently use of ENDS was at substantially higher level (21.2%) than tobacco products and two times more frequent than for cigarettes and HT (10%). The lowest proportion of current tobacco products use was observed for smokeless tobacco (4.5%). GYTS Poland results show that prevalence of cigarette smoking has decreased from 20% in 2016 to 11.7% in 2022. On other side, there is observed a sharp increase in prevalence of ENDS use among teenagers after 2009.

Conclusions

There is a need to adapt Polish tobacco control activities addressed to youth to current challenges. These activities have to include: 1/ limitation of tobacco, ENDS and HT availability and affordability among youth, 2/ implementation of national school-based tobacco control program, 3/ enforcement of complete ban on tobacco, ENDS and HT use in public places, in particular pubs, night and disco clubs, sport objects, children playgrounds and youth entertainment venues, 4/ development of social media campaigns and mobile applications to prevent and quit youth smoking, 5/ implementation of population-based system for monitoring youth tobacco use, beliefs and attitudes.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Tobacco use and urological cancers: An overlooked priority

José Ignacio Nolazco[1]
[1]Harvard Medical School, Boston, United States

Introduction

Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. It causes or exacerbates most of the top ten leading malignancies, including bladder, upper urinary tract, kidney, and prostate cancer. Unfortunately, many patients are unaware of these associations. Furthermore, the critical role of urologists in facilitating tobacco cessation throughout target counseling interventions remains vastly underutilized. This presentation examines the association between tobacco smoking and urological cancers and discusses urologists' role in tobacco cessation efforts.

Material and Methods

A comprehensive literature review examined the association between smoking and urological cancers and urologists' role in tobacco cessation counseling.

Results

Smoking is associated with aggressive tumors, advanced cancer stage, higher risk of recurrence and progression, surgical complications, worse treatment outcomes, and increased cancer-specific mortality in urological cancers. Furthermore, it is associated with other health problems, such as cardiovascular events, lung disease, impaired immune function, poor wound healing, and diminished quality of life. However, few urologists are engaged in tobacco cessation

practice.

Conclusions

Urologists are paramount in addressing tobacco use and providing tobacco cessation support to all patients. Urologists should incorporate screening, patient education, and tobacco cessation counseling into routine practice to reduce the tobacco-related disease burden.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Smoke control activities in Greece. The 2 pillars: 1. School teaching interventions 2. Interventions of oral health professionals

Eleana Stoufi[1], Vergina Konstantina Vyzikidou[1], Panagiotis Behrakis[1]
[1]Hellenic Cancer Society, Athens, Greece

Tobacco use accounts for 25% of all cancer deaths globally and kills more than 8 million people each year, including 1.3 million non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke (WHO, 2023).

WHO's Framework on Tobacco Control recommends that all health-care professionals (HCPs) become advocates for tobacco control by offering help to people who use tobacco.

The main objective of the SmokefreeGreece initiative is to raise a smokefree generation, enhance youth awareness on the risks of tobacco addiction. The initiative coordinates a series of actions, with friendly approach based on positive messages and colorful images and from September of 2022 is fully supported by the NGO Hellenic Cancer Society.

The SmokefreeGreece educational program includes:

- School-based interventions. From 2014 more than 75.000 students have participated in 2.183 interventions.
- Train the trainer workshops. From 2010, over 2,500 teachers and healthcare professionals have completed the seminars.
- Educational material for students, teachers, parents, health professionals.
- Annual Panhellenic Student conferences. Since 2010, more than 8.000 students have participated with educational activities in 12 conferences.
- Student Competitions. 9 Annual Panhellenic Student Competitions since 2013, with more than 3.000 participations.
- Collaborations with other NGOs
- Social media activity

On May 4 2022, SmokefreeGreece was rewarded by the European Commission, with first place in the ""2021 EU Health Award on Cancer Prevention"" competition, as the most successful cancer prevention campaign in Europe and on May 25 2023, professor Panagiotis Behrakis was awarded, by the WHO for his offer to reduce smoking on youth in Greece.

FDI (World Dental Federation) has created protocols to educate and train Dentists, to support their patients effectively to quit using tobacco-nicotine products with short interventions.

In Greece, the Greek Dental Association, and the SmokefreeGreece initiative have organized nationwide seminars for Dentists, based on FDI's protocols.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The UN treaty against plastic pollution: towards a global filterban?

Danielle van Kalmthout[1]
[1]Belgian Alliance for a Smoke Free Society, Brussels, Belgium

Plastic pollution is a global problem and an urgent one. Cigarette butts are single-use plastics and a big part of this problem, being the most polluted item in the world. Moreover, cigarette butts contain toxic chemicals that leach into the (aquatic) environment. According to cigarette manufacturers, the filter was introduced to limit the harmful impact of cigarettes on health. However, research shows that the introduction of filter has only made cigarettes more and not less harmful. Cigarette filters should therefore be banned to protect public health and the environment by recognizing them as 'problematic and avoidable plastics' under the UN Convention Against Plastic Pollution which is currently being negociated. Belgium's Supreme Health Council already advised in favour of banning cigarette filters. The session will introduce participants to the health and environmental arguments on the filterban, the negotiations on the UN Convention Against Plastic Pollution, the Belgian advice to ban cigarette filters and how participants can influence their national delegations working on this convention.

Conflicts of interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Current and long-term trends in tobacco product use among 13-15 year old students in Lithuania: GYTS country report and the control policy context

Nijole Gostautaite Midttun[1,2], Antanas Gostautas[3]
[1]Mental Health Initiative, Vilnius, Lithuania, [2]Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition, Vilnius, Lithuania, [3]Union of Lithuanian Health Psychologists, Vilnius, Lithuania

Introduction

Tobacco smoking in Lithuania among adolescence is highly prevalent but has been decreasing over the past 20 years. There have been major tobacco control policy changes during the same period in Lithuania, with varied degree of implementation, which contributed to changes in smoking patterns. Failure of control policy to prohibit access of e-cigarettes has led to increased prevalence among adolescents.

Objectives

To assess changes in prevalence of smoking and accessibility of cigarettes among 13-15-year-old students in the GYTS sample for 2001-2022.

Methods

Data from five editions of GYTS were used: from 2001 to 2022.

Results

Prevalence of current tobacco users in GYTS 2001 to 2022 samples show a reduction from 33.8 % (2001) to 22.6 % (2018) to 14.2 % (2022), with no difference in prevalence among boys and girls in the latest samples. E-cigarette use, which has

been assessed for the first time in Lithuanian GYTS sample was reported at total 23 % for current use (19 % of boys and 27 % girls), comparable with other studies in Lithuania. The e-cigarette prevalence is accompanied with a lower prevalence of cessation attempts and willingness to quit among adolescence. Results show positive changes in young people exposure to second hand smoke and access to tobacco products: 65.8 % of respondents in 2001 bought tobacco in stores, while only 10.9 % did the same in 2022, exposure to smoking at home fell from 47.0 % to 35.2%.

Conclusions

There is a long-term trend in Lithuania for lower prevalence of tobacco use among adolescents, especially for traditional cigarettes. There is a very high prevalence of e-cigarette use, especially among girls. Monitoring tobacco and nicotine consumption among adolescents helps inform tobacco control and public health policies.

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Campaign for tobacco-free kids' International Legal Consortium with Gezondheidsfondsen voor Rookvrij: Policy and drafting guidance for e-cigarette and heated tobacco product regulation

Deniece Carrington[1], Daniëlle Arnold[2]
[1]Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Washington, United States, [2]Gezondheidsfondsen voor Rookvrij, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Target Audience

This workshop is intended for lawyers and other individuals involved in proposing, drafting, and adopting tobacco control policy, including advocates, government regulators, and policymakers.

Description

This workshop will guide participants through some aspects of a decision-making process for drafting policies to regulate e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs). Participants will review and understand common drafting issues and solutions to ensure that these products are adequately covered using WHO FCTC measures.

Background

The WHO has concluded that e-cigarettes are harmful and that countries that have not banned the sale of e-cigarettes should ensure that their tobacco control measures are "comprehensive enough to regulate all forms of novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products." This is consistent with the general obligations of the WHO FCTC, which require Parties to the Convention to implement measures for preventing and reducing nicotine addiction. Regarding HTPs, Parties to the WHO FCTC have recognized that consumption of and exposure to any tobacco product causes death, disease, and disability and have adopted as a guiding principle the need "to decrease the consumption of tobacco products in any form." In 2018, Parties to the WHO FCTC agreed that they should "regulate, including restrict, or prohibit" novel and emerging tobacco products such as HTPs, including "the devices designed for consuming such products."

The tobacco industry has framed a false narrative around HTPs and e-cigarettes, both by conflating the two products around the term "vaping" and by marketing these products as "reduced risk" or "reduced harm". All available independent evidence shows that these products are harmful and should be subjected to strict regulation if allowed on the market, and yet the industry is using the confusion over them to confound regulators and policymakers from doing so.

This workshop will present a framework for crafting strong, effective, and WHO FCTC-compliant policies on these products. The workshop will take participants through the factors that must be considered when preparing to regulate, including whether and which products have entered the market, current prevalence data, the country's institutional capacity to regulate and monitor the market, and the definitional considerations to ensure all parts of these products are regulated. The workshop will provide drafting tips and best practices to ensure policies are sufficiently comprehensive to protect populations from both existing and future products.

The workshop will share advocacy experiences in regulating emerging products in the Netherlands. A first-hand account of the challenges encountered and successes achieved throughout the process will be provided.

Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will understand:

- What factors should be considered when determining how emerging products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products should be regulated;
- The differences in defining and regulating heated tobacco products versus e-cigarettes;
- What type of policy framework may be the best fit for their country's context;
- How to draft legal measures to ensure all emerging products are adequately covered by WHO FCTC measures (regardless of whether the products are banned or regulated); and
- Examples of countries implementing strong WHO FCTC measures regulating e-cigarettes and HTPs.

Results

Participants will take part in a drafting exercise concerning emerging products.

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Maximizing on UN environmental treaties to advance tobacco endgame

Laurent Huber[1]
[1]Action on Smoking and Health, London, United Kingdom

The product cycle of the commercial tobacco industry is a major contributor to environmental degradation causing the loss of 600 million trees and the production of large amounts of plastic waste including plastic wrappers, electronic cigarette components and cigarette filters which particularly problematic, as they take many years to biodegrade and are the most discarded waste item worldwide. Participants will learn how to engage with UN environmental processes like the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and particularly the negotiations for a UN international legally binding Treaty to End Global Plastic Pollution with the aim of phasing out cigarette filters.

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Smoking cessation in cancer care

Antonella Cardone[1], Maria Sofia Cattaruzza[2], Michelle Halligan[3], Stephanie Land[4], Mahdi Sheikh[5], Caroline Silverman[3], Graham Warren[6], Charis Girvalaki[7], Cornel Radu Loghin[7], Saverio Caini[8], Sara Gandini[9], Yannick Romero[10], Rebekka Aarsand[11], Dongbo Fu[11]

[1]Cancer Patients Europe, Brussels, Belgium, [2]Italian Society against Tobacco, Italy, [3]Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, Toronto, Canada, [4]National Institutes of Health, Maryland, United States, [5]International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon, France, [6]Medical University of South California, Los Angeles, United States, [7]European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention, Brussels, Belgium, [8]Institute for the Study and Prevention of Cancer, Florence, Italy, [9]European Institute of Oncology, Milano, Italy, [10]Union for International Cancer Control, Geneva, Switzerland, [11]World Health Organization, Switzerland

It is well documented that tobacco use is strongly associated with a number of malignancies. There are over 60 carcinogens in tobacco smoke that lead to development of cancers in the lung and at least 19 other sites.

Strong evidence indicates smokers can reduce their risk for developing cancer by quitting smoking. Even after developing cancer, patients may benefit from quitting smoking. Accumulating evidence indicates quitting vs. continued smoking after cancer diagnosis is associated with 30% to 50% lower risk of death and disease progression.

Several mechanisms have been suggested by which smoking can reduce survival in patients with cancer; cigarette smoke contains many carcinogens and mutagens that can directly affect tumor cells and increase their proliferation and migration, smoking can impair the immune response to malignant growth, smoking can affect the response to and complications from some cancer treatments and accelerate other illnesses including cardiovascular and other chronic diseases in patients with cancer.

However, up to 50% of patients who were smoking before a cancer diagnosis continue to smoke during treatment. Healthcare professionals can optimize the management of cancer if they understand the impact of smoking cessation on cancer treatment share this information with patients and provide support to quit. Smoking cessation interventions should be offered to cancer patients in a systematic way, using evidence-based guidelines. Pharmacological interventions combined with cognitive and behavioral interventions currently provide the best opportunity for long-term cessation of smoking in cancer patients and should be part of the patient navigation process.

This session will focus on:

- The importance of smoking cessation after a cancer diagnosis – The evidence on different cancers and outcomes
- The evidence of the economic benefit of the healthcare systems
- Initiatives from Canada, USA, and Europe
- A patient's view/experience

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Evaluating tobacco product flavors using a combination of sensory and chemical analysis

Constantine Vardavas[1], Alexander Vardavas[1], Zinovia Plyta[1], Ioanna Lagou[1], Valia Marou[1], Manolis Tzatzarakis[1], Aristidis Tsatsakis[1]

[1]Laboratory of Toxicology, Medical School, University of Crete, Heraklion, Greece

Introduction

By covering up the unpleasant taste and odor of tobacco, flavors in tobacco products can make smoking or other types of tobacco use more acceptable to users. This may facilitate inhalation for users and raise the risk of addiction. Additionally, flavors might increase the social acceptability of smoking and other tobacco use, especially among young people who may be more prone to experimenting with flavored tobacco products. The Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) in Europe is responsible for regulating flavors in tobacco products. To make tobacco products less appealing to young people, the TPD lays forth a number of prohibitions on the use of flavors in these products. A set of reference tobacco products against which test items would be judged was necessary since, in accordance with the TPD, tobacco products that impart a distinguishing flavor other than that of tobacco are not permitted on the EU market.

Material and Methods

123 goods were subjected to a thorough sensory and chemical evaluation as part of the development of a reference space for tobacco products utilizing the specified standard operating procedures. Through descriptive profiling, the sensory qualities of each product were evaluated. The average old intensity for each individual characteristic assigned by all 12 assessors was obtained for each of the three test sample replicates. Within the stage, each product was rated by 12 train sense recesses in triplicate for 51 probable odor attributes.

Results

Principal component analysis (PCA) and the presentation of confidence ellipses were used to further perform sensory assessment. After the sensory evaluation, gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC-MS analysis) was used to analyze all samples chemically and produce a chemical profile for each product. After the thorough evaluation, some tobacco products were eliminated, leaving 121 items on the final list of boxed and roll-your-own tobacco goods in the reference area.

Conclusions

Overall, evaluating tobacco flavors is a crucial step in the regulation of tobacco products. By combining sensory and chemical analyses, it is possible to compare the flavor characteristics of test tobacco products to those of tobacco products that have been determined not to have a distinctive flavor.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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The use of traditional tobacco, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products among schoolchildren: findings from the recent Global Youth Tobacco Surveys in Czech

Republic, Lithuania, Italy, Poland and San Marino.

[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland
[2]National Institute of Public Health, Praque, Czech Republic
[3]Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition, Vilnius, Lithuania
[4]National Centre for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Rome, Italy
[5]Health Authority, San Marino
[6]Office on Smoking and Health, CDC, Atlanta, GA, USA
[7]WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, Denmark

Background

Tobacco and nicotine use among European teenagers still remains a major public health concern. In the whole WHO European Region, including five selected countries, the prevalence of tobacco use by teenagers substantially varies.

Objectives

1/ To overview the picture of tobacco, e-cigarette and heated tobacco use in Europe among 13-15 years-old schoolchildren; 2/ to evaluate and compare the prevalence and trends in the use of above products in selected European countries; 2/ to identify major tobacco control challenges in youth population in analyzed countries.

Material and Methods

The presented research findings are based on results of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey. GYTS is a cross-sectional, nationally representative school-based self-administered questionnaire survey of school students aged 13 to 15 years. GYTS includes a two-stage (school and classes) sample design with schools selected with a probability proportional to enrollment size.

Results

GYTS data from four analyzed countries show a substantial decrease in cigarette smoking and the use of other traditional tobacco products and, at the same time, a sharp increase in the use of novel and emerging tobacco and nicotine products, in particular e-cigarettes, among 13-15 years-old adolescents. Only in San Marino the prevalence of any tobacco products use tends to increase, comparably to increase in e-cigarette and heated tobacco use. In all analyzed countries, current use of e-cigarettes is at higher level than the use of traditional tobacco products. Additional challenges are associated with the increase of dual use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes or heated tobacco among adolescents and a rapid uptake of novel and emerging tobacco and nicotine products by young girls. In some countries, the prevalence of e-cigarette use among girls now exceeds that of boys.

Conclusions

The GYTS data from the WHO European Region show a sharp increase in the use of e-cigarettes, heated tobacco and dual product use among young people, and underscores the urgent need to implement bold, robust, comprehensive and multi-sectoral tobacco control strategy. This strategy should include population and school-based preventive programs, the creation of tobacco-free environments, the provision of youth tobacco cessation services, and the implementation of legislative measures. These measures should be aligned with the guidance provided by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and be strictly enforced.

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Smoking cessation in urinary cancer prevention, screening and treatment

Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1]
[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland

Background

The 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study shows that approximately 25% of deaths and 20% of DALYs due to cancer was as a result of active or passive exposure to smoking. Tobacco smoking is also well-known risk factor for bladder and kidney cancer, and findings from some epidemiological studies suggest a positive association between tobacco smoking and prostate cancer risk.

Objective

To review the scientific evidence on the role and effectiveness of tobacco cessation in urinary cancer prevention, screening and treatment.

Methods: A narrative review of papers published since 2000 in peer-review scientific journals and monographs or research reports of highly respected research institutes or international health organizations such as the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, MD, USA and the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France. The search was done using PubMed, Medline, Web of Science and other Internet-available scientific or medical platforms.

Results

Both long-term prospective and case-control epidemiological studies prove that cessation of smoking is beneficial at every stage of life. There is also enough evidence, including clinical trials that smoking cessation effectively prevents the risk of lung, head or neck cancers and improves effectiveness of the cancer treatment. However, the scientific knowledge on the impact of smoking cessation on prevention, screening and treatment of urinary cancers is still limited and conclusions are not so clear as for lung, oral or laryngeal cancer. There are only few studies that analyze specific methods of smoking cessation, such as brief intervention based on 5As, in the context of cancer prevention, treatment and recurrence, including bladder cancer. This paper refers to major clinical and epidemiological studies where these associations and procedures are analyzed.

Conclusion

Urologists may play an essential role in motivating and helping their patients cease smoking. It could decrease incidence of urinary cancers and improve the cancer survival rates. Unfortunately, most urologists still do not incorporate smoking cessation into their routine medical practice when diagnosing and treating at-risk urinary cancer patients. It mainly results from lack of clear scientific evidence on the effectiveness of smoking cessation in prevention and treatment of urinary cancers, lack of knowledge of urologists on treatment of tobacco dependence and lack of standardized tobacco prevention and cessation methods in clinical guidelines for urologists and urological oncologists.

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Session on tobacco and e-cigarette use and urological cancers: major conclusions on the risk, beliefs and behaviors, preventive recommendations

Krzysztof Przewoźniak[1], Jose Nolazco[2], Marc Bjurlin[3], Richard Matulewicz[4], Jacqueline Daly[5], Francesco Soria[6]

[1]National Research Institute of Oncology, Warsaw, Poland
[2]Harvard University, Boston, MA, USA
[3]University of North Carolina, NC, USA
[4]Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY, USA
[5]Cancer Patients Europe, Brussels, Belgium
[6]University of Torino School of Medicine, Torino, Italy

The 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study shows that global deaths attributed to tobacco smoking increased from 1.5 million in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2019. Cigarette smoking is a well-known risk factor for urinary cancers, with well-established positive association between smoking and the cancer of bladder and kidney and presumable connection with increased risk of morbidity and mortality from prostate cancer.

This paper aims to summarize major conclusions made by American and European scientists, researchers and representatives of the European Association of Urologists and the Cancer Patients Europe network on the special session during the ENSP Conference on Tobacco Control in Florence (October 10-12, 2023). The session has the following objectives: 1/ to sum up the recent evidence on the association between tobacco smoking and e-cigarette and the risk of urological cancers (bladder, kidney and prostate); 2/ to evaluate knowledge, beliefs and behaviors of urologists to the cancer risk and on the role of tobacco prevention and cessation in prevention and treatment of urological cancers; 3/ to assess recommended preventive and cessation procedures, programs and services that could be used by urologist, urological oncologists and cancer patients to decrease morbidity and mortality from urological cancers. The session concludes on strong relationship between cigarette smoking and bladder and kidney cancer and suggested association between tobacco smoking and prostate cancer. It also indicates on the serious health problem of smoking continuation in urological cancer patients after diagnosis. Results of the new epidemiological studies show that well-known carcinogens of bladder cancer, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds, are also present in the urine of e-cigarette users. These findings suggest the urgent need for additional data collection and further clinical and epidemiological studies on the association between e-cigarette use and urological cancers. American research reports on beliefs and behaviors of urologists indicate, on the one side, that urologists recognize the importance of tobacco use assessment and treatment and relationship between tobacco smoking and urologic disease, but, on other side, very rarely include routine screening for tobacco use and evidence-based treatment of tobacco dependence. It takes a place despite scientific evidence that tobacco prevention and cessation decreases the cancer risk, incidence and mortality, also for urological cancers. It happens despite tobacco cessation counselling, including brief intervention based on 5As, is well-established and cost-effective method for improvement of the cancer prevention, treatment and overall cancer survival after diagnosis. It results, as urologists say, from a lack of time for incorporating these procedures in routine medical practice, loopholes in their training on tobacco dependence diagnosis and treatment, and limited comfort with recommended procedures. It is also not very clear how smoking cessation programs can be systematically embedded into cancer treatment. There is a need to comprehensively train urologists in treatment of tobacco dependence, motivate them to systematically lead a brief intervention in their medical work, set up standardized smoking cessation programs and services for smoking cancer patients, incorporate tobacco prevention and cessation procedures into clinical guidelines for urologists and urological oncologists, create a multi-stakeholder network of tobacco control specialists and advocates, urologists and cancer patients.

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