

# GENERATING EVIDENCE ON TOBACCO ADVERTISING, PROMOTION AND SPONSORSHIP BANS (TAPS) TO PREVENT YOUTH NICOTINE USE

## POLICY BRIEF

### Youth are exposed to TAPS through multiple channels

The tobacco industry uses numerous strategies and channels to attract youth into tobacco and nicotine use. Smoking and tobacco-themed images are extensively present in entertainment media and pop culture, including movies, games and music videos, as well as several streaming services. Exposure to tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) has been linked to increased risk of youth smoking and electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) use.

### New research project to address the impact of TAPS bans

In 2022, a research partnership between the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Surveillance at Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) Georgia Southern University was established. Firstly, we used two rounds of cross-sectional data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) for 42 countries: first between 2006 and 2015, and second between 2017 and 2020, with current smoking as the outcome. The GYTS data were linked with the WHO FCTC implementation reports from 2016 and 2018. Secondly, we analyzed data from 165 299 students from 48 countries that had a WHO FCTC implementation report from year 2016 or 2018 and completed the GYTS between 2016 and 2019, including questions on current use of e-cigarettes. The studies examined differences in students' use of cigarettes and e-cigarettes by presence or absence of TAPS measures in their countries as required or recommended under Article 13 of the WHO FCTC. Separate analyses were conducted for low and lower-middle income countries and high and upper-middle income countries.

### Key results

Overall, the percentage of students currently smoking decreased over the study period from 10.1% to 7.7%. The decrease was larger in high and upper-middle income countries compared to low and lower-middle income countries (Figure 1).

When adjusting for respondents' age and sex, there were significant differences in the change of current smoking prevalence in according to implemented TAPS bans.

- In low and lower-middle income countries, degree of decrease in current smoking prevalence among GYTS respondents differed significantly by implementation of bans covering displays of tobacco products, partial Internet ban, ban on depiction of tobacco products, and by number of TAPS measures compared to countries without such bans.
- In high and upper-middle income countries, degree of decrease in current smoking prevalence among GYTS respondents differed significantly by implementation of partial or full Internet ban, ban on product placement, and by number of TAPS measures compared to countries without such bans.



## Change in current smoking prevalence (% ,adjusted) by country income level

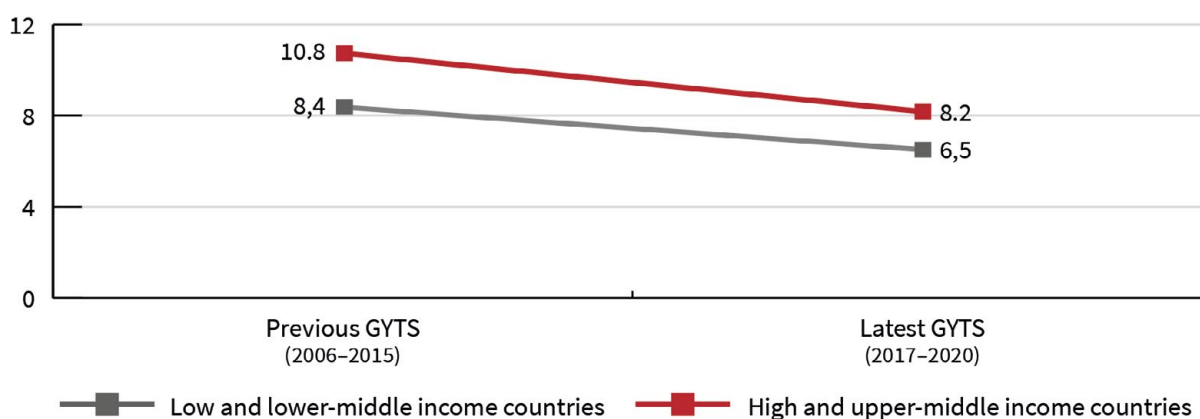


Figure 1. The percentage of students currently smoking by country income level

Utilizing the most recent GYTS data available, the prevalence of e-cigarette use was 9.7%. TAPS bans were protective of e-cigarette use. In lower-middle and low-income countries, students from countries with bans on displaying tobacco products at the point of sale, bans on product placement, and with stronger additional TAPS measures reported significantly e-cigarette use than their counterparts from countries without these regulations.

## Conclusions

This research project showed that implementing comprehensive TAPS bans is associated with a decrease in smoking and with lower e-cigarette use among youth. Yet, more needs to be done:

**Enhanced and continuous efforts are needed to protect youth from the promotion of the new tobacco and nicotine products. This can be achieved by strengthening the implementation of the WHO FCTC Article 13 and ensuring the regulations address comprehensively the changing media environment and emerging products.**

**National tobacco control monitoring and key surveillance instruments (in line with Article 20 of the WHO FCTC) need to be developed to incorporate measures that capture exposure to tobacco and related product promotion in newer channels such as social media.**

**The policy implementation data would benefit from better addressing the scope of the different policies in terms of the coverage of different tobacco and nicotine products.**

**More focus on the monitoring and research of tobacco control interventions is needed. This provides the evidence for effective policymaking and supports exchange of information.**

## MORE INFORMATION

[WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Surveillance website](#)



[GTSS Academy for Global Youth Tobacco Surveillance \(GYTS\) data](#)

[The WHO FCTC Implementation Database WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub](#)

[Twitter @FCTC\\_SurvKH](#)

## REFERENCES

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