



INSTITUTE OF
ECONOMIC SCIENCES
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ENSP
European Network
for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention



tobaccotaxation
Economic Research Informing
Tobacco Taxation Policy

10TH ENSP EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL (ECTC) ABSTRACT BOOK

Editors

Jovan Zubović

Cornel Radu-Loghin

Olivera Jovanović





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PREFACE

It is our great pleasure to present the *Book of Abstracts* of the **10th ECTC ENSP Conference – Tobacco Economics 360: Science, Strategy and Policy Impact**, held in 2025 under the auspices of the European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) and the Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade.

Reaching its tenth edition, the ECTC Conference has become a recognized platform for researchers, policymakers, public health professionals, economists, and civil society representatives dedicated to advancing evidence-based tobacco control. This milestone edition highlights the growing importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing one of the most significant public health challenges of our time.

The conference theme, *Tobacco Economics 360: Science, Strategy and Policy Impact*, reflects the need to examine tobacco control through multiple and interconnected perspectives. Effective tobacco control requires not only robust scientific evidence but also strategic policy design, economic evaluation, behavioral insights, and strong institutional cooperation. The abstracts presented in this volume demonstrate the breadth and diversity of contemporary research, covering topics such as tobacco taxation, health economics, smoking cessation, behavioral determinants of tobacco use, youth smoking initiation, alternative nicotine products, illicit trade, environmental impacts of tobacco, and innovative approaches to prevention and advocacy.

This Book of Abstracts brings together contributions from researchers and experts representing numerous countries and institutions across Europe and beyond. Their work provides valuable insights into the economic, social, and health consequences of tobacco use while offering practical solutions to support effective tobacco control policies. The collection reflects the conference's commitment to fostering international collaboration, promoting scientific excellence, and translating research findings into meaningful policy action.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all authors, keynote speakers, reviewers, members of the Scientific and Organizing Committees, and partner institutions whose dedication and expertise made this conference possible.

10th ENSP European Conference on Tobacco Control (ECTC)

Their contributions have enriched the scientific dialogue and strengthened the collective effort to reduce the burden of tobacco use worldwide.

We hope that the research presented in this volume will inspire further collaboration, stimulate new ideas, and contribute to the development of effective, evidence-based policies that protect public health and support future generations.

Editors

Jovan Zubović

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ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

1. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR INCREASED CIGARETTE TAXATION IN ITALY: FINDINGS FROM A 2024 NATIONAL SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

Raising tobacco taxation is one of the most effective strategies to reduce smoking prevalence, encourage cessation, and prevent initiation. While some European countries such as France and the United Kingdom have progressively increased the price of cigarettes to over €10-12 per pack, prices in Italy remain comparatively low, at around €6 per pack, reflecting limited progress in tobacco control. Understanding public support for substantial tax increases is crucial to inform future policy action.

METHODS

We analysed data from a cross-sectional, face-to-face survey of a representative sample of 3,125 Italian adults conducted in 2024. Respondents were asked whether they would support a substantial increase in tobacco taxation, raising the cost of a cigarette pack from approximately €6 to €10, with revenues allocated towards funding cessation services and research. Multivariable logistic regression models were used to estimate adjusted odds ratios (aOR) of support by sociodemographic and behavioural characteristics.

RESULTS

Overall, 61.5% of respondents supported a substantial increase in tobacco taxation. Support increased with age (p for trend=0.037), reaching 67.6% among those aged 65 years and over. Support was higher among never smokers (79.6% in favour), and lower among current smokers (17.9%; aOR for current vs never smokers = 0.06, 95% confidence interval, CI: 0.04-0.07). Heated tobacco product users also showed significantly lower support (13.2%) compared with non-users (63.8%; aOR = 0.48, 95% CI: 0.27-0.84).

* Corresponding author

CONCLUSIONS

Almost two out of three Italian adults support raising taxes to substantially increase cigarette prices. Notably, the proposed increase was also endorsed by around one in five current smokers. This level of public support creates a favourable context for policymakers to introduce fiscal measures that reduce tobacco consumption and generate revenue for smoking cessation services and independent research. Targeted communication strategies are needed to gain wider acceptance among tobacco consumers.

2. HOSPITALISATION COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO TOBACCO SMOKING IN ITALY

Irene Possenti*

Marco Scala

Alessandra Lugo

Silvano Gallus

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INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use remains one of the leading preventable causes of disease and death worldwide. In Italy, it is estimated to cause over 90,000 deaths annually. Beyond its health consequences, tobacco-related diseases generate substantial economic costs. This study aims to estimate the annual direct economic impact of hospitalisations attributable to tobacco smoking on the Italian National Health System.

METHODS

We analysed hospital discharge data from all admissions in Italy in 2018 involving patients aged 30 years and over, focusing on 12 tobacco-related diseases. These diseases were: oropharyngeal, oesophageal, gastric, lung, pancreatic, bladder, and laryngeal cancers; ischaemic heart disease; stroke; diseases of arteries, arterioles, and capillaries; pneumonia and influenza; and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. A total of 984,322 hospitalisation records were retrieved, each containing information on direct medical costs. To estimate the economic burden attributable to tobacco smoking, we calculated the population attributable fraction (PAF) for each condition using relative risk estimates derived from the scientific literature.

RESULTS

In 2018, tobacco smoking was responsible for around one third (40% among men and 22% among women) of hospitalisations in Italy among people aged 30 and over for the selected tobacco-related diseases. This resulted in an estimated direct cost of €1.64 billion to the National Health System, equivalent to an average of €27.40 per-capita, and representing 5.88% of the total hospitalisation costs in Italy.

* Corresponding author

CONCLUSIONS

Tobacco smoking continues to impose a significant economic burden on the Italian healthcare system. This highlights the urgent need to strengthen tobacco control policies and prevention strategies, to reduce morbidity and mortality and ease the financial strain on public health resources. The estimated burden presented in this study is likely conservative, as assumptions made in the analysis may underestimate the true impact of tobacco use.

3. THE TOBACCO TAX GAP: LESSONS FROM FRANCE THAT ITALY HASN'T TAKEN

Silvano Gallus

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BACKGROUND

Tobacco remains the leading risk factor for disease, disability, and death. Increasing taxation on tobacco products is the most effective tobacco control policy. Higher prices reduce smoking initiation, prevalence, and consumption—particularly among younger populations—and increase cessation. In high-income countries, price elasticity is around -0.4 (a 10% price increase reduces consumption by 4%). Within this scenario, price increases are associated with increased revenues. Most elasticity estimates come from studies with modest year-on-year price changes. Between 2017 and 2023, France implemented substantial tax increases, providing a unique opportunity to assess the impact on cigarette sales and revenues.

METHODS

We analysed official data from the “Taxes in Europe Database v4” on weighted average price (WAP), sales, and revenues (excluding VAT) from manufactured cigarettes in France and, for comparison, in Italy between 2017 and 2023.

RESULTS

Over six years, the WAP of a cigarette pack rose by 60.8% in France (from €6.81 to €10.95) and by 10.5% in Italy (from €4.76 to €5.26, i.e., insufficient to match inflation). Cigarette sales fell by 34.2% in France (from 44.3 to 29.1 thousand tonnes) and by 15.8% in Italy (from 69.3 to 58.3 thousand tonnes). Concurrently, annual fiscal revenues from cigarette sales increased systematically in France, by an average of €1,127 million per year compared to 2017, while decreasing in Italy by an average of €278 million per year.

CONCLUSIONS

France demonstrates that large, rapid price increases substantially reduce cigarette sales while significantly increasing revenues -a clear public health and fiscal “win-win”. This evidence raises the question of why other European countries, as Italy, hesitate to implement similarly substantial excise tax increases, preferably across all tobacco and nicotine products.

4. KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF ALBANIAN MIDWIFERY FOR SMOKING CESSATION DURING PERINATAL PERIOD

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INTRODUCTION

Tobacco consumption during pregnancy is a major risk factor that adversely affects the health of both the mother and the fetus/newborn. It increases the likelihood of serious complications, including preterm birth, low birth weight, and developmental challenges. Midwives play a vital role in offering counseling and support to help them quit smoking. This study aims to assess the knowledge and attitudes of Albanian midwives regarding the effects of smoking during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

METHODS

This cross-sectional study included 102 midwives from primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare services. Data was collected using the KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS 29. Approval was received for the use of the instrument while all ethical standard were strictly followed.

RESULTS

Most midwives exhibited a solid understanding of the consequences of smoking, maintained a moderate view of its effects, and generally practiced effective counseling with pregnant women. However, deficiencies were noted in their understanding of standard counseling models (the “5As” and “5Rs”), referral services, and harm reduction. Overall, their self-confidence was primarily moderate, and those with a higher level of knowledge demonstrated improved perceptions and practices.

* Corresponding author

CONCLUSIONS

Midwives' involvement is crucial in educating, motivating, and providing resources to promote healthier pregnancies. Training courses and seminars for midwives are strongly recommended.

5. THE TOBACCO TRACEABILITY SYSTEM: APPLICATIONS FOR TAX COMPLIANCE AND REVENUE PROTECTION

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INTRODUCTION

The EU traceability system for tobacco products generates data which can be useful in a wide range of analyses. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is the only Swedish authority with access to the EU traceability database.

METHODS

The traceability system requires all movements of tobacco products to be recorded throughout the European Union. Each unit packet can be traced to a specific retail outlet, allowing for detailed mapping of tobacco sales and distribution across cities and municipalities. Economic transactions are also recorded. The primary objective of the traceability system is to combat illicit trade in tobacco products.

RESULTS

It can serve as a powerful tool to protect tax revenues, ensure fair market conditions, and support enforcement.

CONCLUSION

This presentation aims to illustrate through maps, diagrams and statistics from the traceability database practical approaches to use the traceability data for economic purposes; mainly illicit trade analysis and health economics.

6. TOBACCO CONTROL IN HEALTHCARE: THE GLOBAL NETWORK GOLD STANDARD

Susann Koalick

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INTRODUCTION

As healthcare systems strive to reduce the health and economic burden of tobacco use, structural interventions are key to achieving long-term impact. The Global Network for Tobacco Free Healthcare Services promotes comprehensive tobacco control through its eight Global Standards. The GOLD Forum honors institutions that implement these standards at the highest level, serving as role models for tobacco-free healthcare.

METHODS

To achieve GOLD Forum status, institutions complete a structured self-audit and must score ≥ 126 points across eight domains—including leadership, training, clinical practice, cessation support, community engagement, and monitoring. The certification process includes external validation and international peer review. Institutions that meet these criteria are recognized as GOLD members for a four-year period and commit to ongoing implementation and knowledge-sharing.

RESULTS

Since the inception of the GOLD Forum in 2008, more than 200 healthcare institutions worldwide have joined the network—averaging approximately 15 new members per year. These include hospitals, mental health services, and primary care providers across Europe, Asia, and beyond. Participating institutions report a range of benefits: integration of systematic patient counselling, increased staff engagement, reduced tobacco-related incidents, and the establishment of supportive environments. While formal cost-effectiveness analyses are underway, early outcomes suggest improved health service efficiency and potential long-term savings in treatment costs and staff-related outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

The GOLD Forum exemplifies how institutionalized tobacco control can generate both public health and economic value. By embedding the principles of governance, prevention, and quality improvement into daily healthcare

Economics of Public Health

practice, GOLD-certified institutions contribute to the economic goals of tobacco control. Their structured, reproducible model offers a scalable strategy to reduce tobacco-related burden while fostering a culture of health within healthcare systems—aligning with the core objectives of "Tobacco Economics 360°".



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS IN TOBACCO CONTROL

1. THE TOBACCO AND MUSIC INDUSTRIES ON THE RISE OF THE NEW “COOL”: TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

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BACKGROUND

Throughout the 20th century, tobacco and music industries intersected in leveraging the concept of “cool” as a marker of cultural capital. Cigarettes transcended their physical function to symbolize freedom and social prestige, while music reinforced the culture.

OBJECTIVES

This study examines how cultural capital was historically constructed through tobacco and music, and how independent musicians and movements are redefining “cool” in healthy contexts. It aims to explore the ways for the transformation of symbolic value from tobacco-associated prestige to smoke-free cultural practices by situating it within European tobacco control strategies.

METHODS

A multidisciplinary literature review and secondary data analysis were conducted, incorporating cultural sociology, musicology, public health policy, and case studies across Europe. Discourse analysis was applied to historical sources, industry documents, and cultural texts to trace the symbolic construction of “cool.” Statistical evidence from WHO and Eurobarometer, also netnography on social media was integrated to capture behavioral and attitudinal practices among the populations. It was framed by Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, emphasizing how the symbolic status of “cool” can shift from smoking to healthy participation.

RESULTS

Tobacco’s role as a symbol of “cool” has diminished, while independent music scenes have potential to define prestige through smoke-free practices. The declining smoking rates among 15–24 year-olds, accompanied by a growing perception that smoking loses its cultural legitimacy. Social media, festivals, and venue-level smoke-free policies further accelerate this cultural revalorization, a transition from tobacco-driven symbolic value to health-oriented practices.

CONCLUSIONS

The convergence of independent music organizations, and health NGOs demonstrates the potential of the arts to promote public health. Smoke-free music culture not only weakens the cultural presence of the tobacco industry but also reinforces ongoing EU efforts to regulate tobacco, including the Tobacco Tax Directive. Ultimately, such collaborations contribute to a sustainable cultural shift towards healthier lifestyles.

2. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CYTISINE ON SMOKING CESSATION TREATMENT; GÜLHANE EXPERIENCE

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OBJECTIVE

Tobacco use is a global health problem. Nicotine is the primary ingredient in addiction that develops from tobacco use. Tobacco addiction is an acquired industrial disease with biopsychosocial components, defined by ICD code F.17. Treatment of this addiction requires a holistic approach that includes motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, and pharmacotherapy. Cytisin is a popular therapeutic agent derived from a natural plant used for smoking cessation and recommended by the WHO. It acts via nicotinic

* Corresponding author

MATERIALS-METHODS

We investigated the success rates of smoking cessation at the end of the first month of smoking cessation treatments in 414 patients who received cytisine, one of the components of the holistic smoking cessation treatment approach, between April 2023 and February 2025 in the Smoking Cessation Clinic of Gülhane Training and Research Hospital.

RESULTS

Of the patients who began treatment, 50 could not be reached, resulting in a total of 364 patients being included in the study. According to the information obtained from the control examinations and control telephone interviews, the smoking cessation success rates were determined as 47.9% and 28.15% at the end of the first and sixth months, respectively. At the end of the sixth month, the success rate of those who quit smoking according to gender was observed as 53.73% against 46.27% in favor of men. 70.15% of those who successfully quit smoking did so on their first attempt and with the use of cytisine. 79.1% of those who successfully quit smoking were found to have a high FNDT level of dependence.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The holistic smoking cessation treatment approach including the use of cytisine achieved a high success rate of 28.15%, especially in the high addiction level and male gender predominance, demonstrating the strength of treatment effectiveness.

3. TAILORING TOBACCO CONTROL MEASURES USING BEHAVIORAL AND CULTURAL INSIGHTS

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BACKGROUND

Tobacco use continues to pose a major public health challenge which is rooted in human behavior. Applying Behavioral and Cultural insights (BCI) through various scientific models and methods can improve uptake of tobacco control evidence-based measures.

OBJECTIVES

To synthesize current knowledge on the effectiveness of applying BCI to tailor policies, services, and communications for tobacco control in various target groups.

METHODS

We conducted a rapid narrative review using purposive searches of PubMed, Google Scholar, the WHO website, international guidelines/recommendations, and grey literature on applying behavioral and cultural insights to tobacco control policies, services and communication.

RESULTS

Results of this rapid narrative review indicate that applying behavioral and cultural insights (BCI) consistently enhances the effectiveness of tobacco control measures, more specifically in improving smoking cessation outcomes, strengthening communication impact, especially among youth and vulnerable groups, and supporting policy implementation and public acceptance. Data also show this approach is useful for planning, implementing, and enforcing economic measures especially taxation and price policies. Some of the approaches used are audience segmentation, formative research, message pre-

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The Importance of Behavioral Insights in Tobacco Control

testing, application of theories in design of interventions, social norms research, and economically informed nudging and framing.

CONCLUSIONS

Standard approaches to smoking cessation and other measures aimed at reducing smoking prevalence at the population level may not be as effective for specific population groups and in specific context. This review indicates that BCI approach strengthens tobacco control across interventions and policy, and is valuable for the design, implementation, evaluation and enforcement of both price and non-price measures. Obtaining insights into how context, norms, identity, and cognitive shortcuts shape health behavior can make tobacco policies, smoking cessation and communication campaigns more effective and equitable.

4. PREVALENCE OF FACTORS DETERMINING SMOKING INITIATION AMONG STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

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BACKGROUND

Smoking initiation in students in higher education is a persisting problem. This paper aims to identify factors determining smoking initiation and evaluate their presence among students in higher education in Romania using the most recent data available on the EUROSTUDENT database.

METHODS

A literature review was conducted using Web of Science and PubMed in order to identify the factors influencing smoking initiation in higher education students. The identified factors, of which the prevalence was available in the EUROSTUDENT database, were further included in this review and further grouped by age, sex, and socioeconomic background. The EUROSTUDENT database is an open access database presenting the social dimentions of higher education in Europe. The EUROSTUDENT interactive visualisation tool was used for this review.

RESULTS

Low socioeconomic background, low well-being and low study performance were identified as factors of smoking initiation. 21.03% described parents as "not very well off" financially (9% with concurrent low parental education); 8.01% reported their parents as "not at all well off" (19% with concurrent low parental education); and 14.06% experienced serious financial difficulties. The mean WHO-5 well-being score was 47.6/100. Students facing financial difficulties scored 7.7 points below average, while those with lower-educated parents scored 4.7 points above average. Students rating their academic performance as "(much) worse" than peers scored 12.4 points below the overall average.

* Corresponding author

CONCLUSIONS

This exploratory analysis highlights epidemiologic data on smoking initiations in Romania, highlighting the need for further actions to support students with diverse educational and financial backgrounds in order to reduce smoking initiation rates and improve well-being.

5. SURVEY STUDY ON ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS OF MEDICAL FACULTY STUDENTS TOWARDS CLASSICAL AND NEW TOBACCO PRODUCTS

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INTRODUCTION AND AIM

Tobacco addiction is a major public health problem worldwide. The tobacco industry specifically targets young people with new tobacco products. The prevalence of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, produced in attractive and appealing shapes and colors, is higher among young people than adults. This survey aimed to determine the attitudes and behaviors of medical students regarding both traditional and new tobacco products.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A 36-question survey was administered electronically to 185 students from different classes at Gülhane Faculty of Medicine. Ethics Committee approval was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Gülhane Faculty of Medicine, University of Health Sciences, at its meeting dated 28.05.2024, with decision number 2024-308.

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FINDINGS

Demographic information and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. The rates of tobacco use were 40% (n=74) among students, 52.43% (n=97) among parents, and 54.6% (n=53) among parents of students who use tobacco. The distribution of tobacco products used by students was as follows: conventional tobacco 25.4% (n=46), electronic cigarettes 12.22% (n=22), hookah 9.94% (n=18), and heated tobacco 2.21% (n=4).

The rate of dual use of electronic cigarettes along with conventional tobacco was 23.91% (n=11), and the rate of heated tobacco use was 6.52% (n=3). While 66.48% (n=121) of the participants defined themselves as “not addicted”, 88.65% (n=164) stated that they “know that tobacco products are harmful”, 42.59% (n=69) stated that tobacco products “reduce stress”, 69.4% (n=127) stated that they are “easy to obtain” and 57.7% (n=105) stated that new tobacco products are “less irritating”.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Tobacco addiction rates among both participating students and their parents were significantly higher than the Turkish average of 34.8%. As expected, the most frequently used tobacco product was traditional tobacco products, while the use of electronic cigarettes, despite their sale being banned in our country, was second in the list at 12.22%. The high rates of tobacco use among medical students are considered concerning for the future.

6. SOCIOECONOMIC AND HEALTH DETERMINANTS OF SMOKING CESSATION: EVIDENCE FROM SERBIA

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BACKGROUND

Smoking cessation is not only a behavioral challenge but also an economic and social issue due to the costs associated with smoking. In the context of tobacco control, understanding how socioeconomic vulnerability shapes quitting patterns is essential for designing targeted interventions.

OBJECTIVE

We explored individual-level factors associated with smoking cessation in Serbia, a country with high smoking prevalence and socioeconomic disparities. Methods: We used data from the 2023 national survey of adults in Serbia (aged 18 to 64; N = 1,598). Analyses focused on 782 ever-smokers (606 current, 176 former). We applied binary logistic regression (former vs. current smoker), considering age, sex, education, economic status, self-reported health, and alcohol consumption as predictors. Marginal effects were computed from predicted probabilities.

RESULTS

Older age (OR = 1.026 per year) and impaired health (OR = 1.79) increased the likelihood of being a former smoker, while economic hardship (OR = 0.63) and weekly alcohol use (OR = 0.37) reduced it. Marginal effects showed that impaired health raised the predicted probability by 11.7 percentage points (baseline = 22.5%), whereas economic hardship and alcohol use lowered it by 7.1 and 12.9 percentage points, respectively. The negative effect of economic hardship became stronger with age, ranging from -4.8 percentage points in the youngest group (18 to 24 years) to -14.6 percentage points in the oldest group (55 to 64 years).

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CONCLUSIONS

These findings suggest that quitting smoking is not only health-driven but also economically constrained. Financial hardship acts as a persistent barrier, and its negative impact tends to grow with age, which dampens the natural increase in cessation likelihood later in life. This pattern reinforces the view of tobacco as an inferior good and highlights the need for policies that combine price measures with targeted support for socioeconomically disadvantaged smokers.



ALTERNATIVE TOBACCO PRODUCTS

1. NICOTINE POUCHES - THE MAIN GATEWAY TO SMOKING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN SWEDEN

Niclas Malmberg

Tobaksfakta (facts about Tobacco), Sweden

In Sweden, snus has for long been a gateway to smoking. While the tobacco industry argue snus helps to quit, research shows the opposite – those who use snus are more likely to start smoking compared to those who don't.

Unlike traditional snus, nicotine pouches (or "white snus") is not banned in the EU. The Swedish snus industry is therefore now concerned to counteract the legislative measures that are under process in parts of the EU in order to ban nicotine pouches, and thereby maintain the new EU market that nicotine pouches has opened up. Therefore it's necessary to spread basic facts to policy makers about the latest research on nicotine pouches.

1. The low rate of smokers in Sweden has nothing to do with nicotine pouches. The rates have fallen since about 1980 due to a range of measures, including high tobacco taxes, age restrictions, advertising bans and smoke-free public spaces.
2. The use of nicotine pouches amongst youngsters has exploded in Sweden during the last years. Although the age limit to buy the nicotine pouches is 18, still about 30% of the 17-year olds use the product regularly. The traditional (or "brown") snus was never a product that attracted girls; but the nicotine pouches is about as popular with girls as with boys. This is problematic, as expectant mothers using snus are in big risk to harm their unborn child.
3. The rate of smokers amongst youngsters in Sweden is now increasing for the first time in decades. 80% of 17-year olds say the first nicotine product they tried was nicotine pouches, so obviously these are a gateway to smoking, not a gateway from smoking.

2. ASSESSMENT OF TOBACCO AND ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES USE AMONG YOUTH: EXAMPLES FROM ROMANIA WITHIN EUROPEAN CONTEXT

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Tania Tudor

Darius Lotrean

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BACKGROUND

Performing studies to assess tobacco and electronic cigarettes use among youth is important in guiding and evaluating measures in the field of tobacco control.

OBJECTIVES

This study will review the studies performed in Romania in the last 20 years with regard to assessment of smoking and electronic cigarette use among different groups of adolescents and young people, giving a special attention to the methodological aspects regarding instruments for data collection and comparability with data from other European studies.

METHODS

The data are based on literature review, such as scientific articles, reports as well as gray literature.

RESULTS

In Romania there were performed periodically international studies such as Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Global Adult Tobacco Survey (it included several age groups of adults, including one group of young people), Health behaviour of school-aged children, European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), giving possibility to compare the data obtained for Romania with data from other countries or comparing the data obtained in different time period. An existing questionnaire based on the The I-Change model used for The European Smoking Prevention Framework was translated, adapted and used in Romania to assess smoking among junior and senior high school students, including in longitudinal studies as well as evaluation of educational school

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based programs for smoking prevention. In 2016 and 2018 EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys was also performed and assessed longitudinally a cohort of adult smokers, including one youth age group. Several studies developed a questionnaire based on data from literature and investigated tobacco use or/and electronic cigarettes only or as part of a wider assessment of health risk behaviours. Some studies focused on smoking or use of electronic cigarettes related habits, while others included also aspects regarding knowledge/attitudes, social influences, self-efficacy and intentions with regard to the investigated aspects to better understand the behaviour and associated factors. Moreover, a questionnaire was developed to cover the use of different tobacco products named Lifestyle hygiene- Assessment of use of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes and nicotine pouches among youth and is currently used to assess behaviors among university students in Romania and Albania.

CONCLUSIONS

The presentation underlines several implications for research and practice in the field of tobacco control.

3. GOOGLE TREND ANALYSIS ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS FOR TÜRKİYE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2024

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BACKGROUND

Tobacco use remains a global public health threat. Monitoring tools are essential for tobacco control. Beyond traditional surveillance, digital platforms such as Google Trends provide insights into public interest.

OBJECTIVES

This research analyses Google Trends data on tobacco products in Türkiye over the past decade to examine patterns of public interest and their potential implications for policy and health research.

METHODS

Monthly Google Trends data for Türkiye between January 2015 and December 2024 were analyzed for the terms “cigarette” and “e-cigarette”. Relative search volume data were filtered, and structural breaks were assessed (Chow, Bai-Perron, CUSUM, Zivot-Andrews, Pettitt). Univariate analyses explored anomalies and seasonality, with stationarity tested using KPSS, ADF, PP, and HEGY. Forecasting models (SARIMA, NNETAR, Prophet and others) were compared by error metrics, and interdependencies were examined using VAR models.

RESULTS

Cigarette searches exhibited strong seasonality with several anomalies. On average, searches peaked in January and reached their lowest in March. An anomaly was observed in August 2019, when the number of searches sharply increased. The structural break tests consistently identified a lasting regime

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shift in November 2021. Compared to traditional cigarette, e-cigarette searches were generally low, with occasional spikes observed. The model identified key breakpoints: a surge in 2016, stabilization in 2018, pandemic effects in 2020, and notable shifts in 2021 and 2023. Cigarette-related searches are forecasted to stabilize at elevated levels through 2024. VAR analysis indicated that cigarette searches positively influenced e-cigarettes.

CONCLUSIONS

Google Trends analysis revealed sharp anomalies and a structural break in tobacco-related searches. Searches for cigarettes surged during the pandemic, suggesting increased interest. Forecasts showed sustained interest. E-cigarettes showed episodic rises. The findings highlight both the pandemic's impact and the potential of Google Trends in guiding evidence-based tobacco control.

Keywords: *Google trends, tobacco products, Türkiye.*

4. ZERO BUDGET SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE FOR TOBACCO CESSATION & PREVENTION: (5 MINUTES ARE ENOUGH)

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Tobacco Control Program, Northern Borders Health Cluster, K.S.A., SaudiArabia

MBBS

Aimed at raising awareness among students (boys and girls) at various educational levels (intermediate, secondary schools, technical colleges & university) about tobacco use disorder. Encourage smokers to quit, provide cessation services, motivate the unwilling to quit by creating ambivalence, protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke & promote the concept of tobacco-free indoor environments. Utilizing Bloom's cognitive domain as an educational framework, in a bio-psycho-social approach a short, conveying a simple message in 5-minutes.

The zero-budget campaign was implemented within 26 days in 3 sectors in Northern Borders region, K.S.A., 26 over 12 working days relied on 3 pillars:

- A well-trained team of 26 CTTS, 11 M & 15 F, 336 class & lecture rooms were entered to deliver the brief message
- Effective communication
- Formal support and endorsement

Implementation: Conveying message to students, encouraging them to take the initiative to talk about their tobacco use and make the decision to quit.

The initial target was 3000 students, the achievement was 11185 feed back was assessed by the increase in number of clients who asked for help to quit, visiting the exhibition & the number of messages & enquiries through our business WhatsApp

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5. HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY PLANET: HOW TO PROTECT OUR HEALTH AND NATURE FROM CIGARETTES AND VAPES. THE FIRST EDUCATIONAL BOOK FOR CHILDREN (7–10) ADDRESSING TOBACCO AND ENVIRONMENTAL BURDENS.

Marília Breite

Bin Your Butts Leuven, Belgium

Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable mortality in the WHO European Region, responsible for over 1.2 million deaths annually (WHO, 2023). Almost all smokers start before the age of 18, and early initiation is associated with stronger nicotine dependence and poorer cessation outcomes (U.S. Surgeon General, 2012). Despite this, early primary school is rarely addressed in European prevention strategies. In parallel, cigarette butts are the most commonly littered item in Europe and a major source of microplastics (European Commission, 2023), creating a persistent environmental and social burden. This project introduces a new educational tool that addresses both the health and environmental harms of tobacco from early childhood.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Planet: How to Protect Our Health and Nature from Cigarettes and Vapes (Breite, 2024) is the first children’s book worldwide for ages 7–10 that integrates tobacco prevention with environmental sustainability and social justice. Authored by political scientist Marília Breite, coordinator of the grassroots project Bin Your Butts Leuven, it applies constructivist pedagogy (Piaget, 1952), guiding children from concrete experiences (breath, lungs, play) to systemic issues (pollution, deforestation, child labour). The book was piloted in a classroom at Zevensprong Primary School (Leuven) and during the Cleanup & Reflection event at the UNESCO-listed Groot Begijnhof.

Pilots demonstrated strong engagement: children and participants created drawings, poems, and reflections on Big Tobacco. These are being compiled into a zine/artbook extending the intervention. The book has received endorsements from Prof. Guido Van Hal (University of Antwerp), the UZ Leuven Smoking Cessation Team, and Dr. Tânia M. Cavalcante (National Cancer Institute, Brazil; Executive Secretary of Brazil’s FCTC Commission).

CONCLUSIONS

This project shows that grassroots, low-cost educational tools can complement taxation and regulatory measures. Embedding early prevention in schools has the potential to: reduce long-term health burdens, lower environmental costs

of tobacco waste, and narrow inequalities by reaching children across social groups. Scaled across Europe, such interventions can strengthen WHO FCTC Article 12 implementation and accelerate progress toward the EU Tobacco-Free Generation 2040.

CO-AUTHORS: BACKGROUND / OBJECTIVES

Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable mortality in the WHO European Region, with more than 1.2 million deaths annually (WHO, 2023). Nearly all smokers start before 18, and early initiation is linked to stronger nicotine dependence and poorer cessation outcomes. Despite this, early primary school is rarely addressed in European prevention strategies. At the same time, cigarette butts are the most common litter item in Europe and a major source of microplastics (European Commission, 2023), representing an environmental and social burden for cities and communities. This project introduces a new educational tool designed to address both the health and environmental harms of tobacco from early childhood.

METHODS

"Healthy Kids, Healthy Planet: How to Protect Our Health and Nature from Cigarettes and Vapes" (Breite, 2024) is the first children's book worldwide for ages 7–10 that integrates tobacco prevention with environmental sustainability and social justice. Authored by political scientist Marília Breite, coordinator of the grassroots project Bin Your Butts Leuven, it applies constructivist pedagogy (Piaget, 1952), guiding children from concrete experiences (breath, lungs, play) to systemic challenges (pollution, deforestation, child labour). The book was piloted in a classroom at a primary school (Leuven) and during the community event "Cleanup & Reflection" at the UNESCO-listed Groot Begijnhof.

RESULTS

Pilots demonstrated strong engagement, as children produced drawings, poems, and reflections on tobacco litter. These outputs are being compiled in a zine that extends the intervention and documents the participants' perspectives. The book has received endorsements from Prof. Guido Van Hal (University of Antwerp), the UZ Leuven Smoking Cessation Team, and Dr Tânia M. Cavalcante (National Cancer Institute, Brazil; Executive Secretary of Brazil's FCTC Commission).

CONCLUSIONS

By embedding tobacco prevention at an early age and linking it to visible environmental externalities, "Healthy Kids, Healthy Planet" demonstrates how grassroots educational tools can complement regulation and taxation. Such interventions are scalable across Europe, strengthening youth resilience,

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reducing long-term health burdens, and addressing tobacco's environmental footprint in line with WHO FCTC Article 12 and EU goals for a Tobacco-Free Generation by 2040.



OTHER TOBACCO CONTROL TOPICS

1. TOBACCO FREE ADVENT CALENDAR: REPORTING AND EVALUATING 3-YEARS OF YOUTH DRIVEN TOBACCO CONTROL ADVOCACY

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Marine, Lara

Marine Lara Magali Alexandre

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BACKGROUND

Tobacco control guidelines on advocacy campaigns to prevent smoking or promote smoking cessation underscore the critical role of considering cultural factors and identifying appropriate communication channels. Advent calendars are increasingly innovative, finding application in various industries, recently becoming of interest in public health and science advocacy.

OBJECTIVES

This study reports and evaluates a youth-driven project: Tobacco Free Advent Calendar (TFAC).

METHODS

This paper follows a prospective quantitative study design. Campaign effectiveness was evaluated using three indicators: overall campaign reach, advent calendar reach (daily link clicks over 30 days since the publication of the advent calendar), and user engagement (door clicks tracked daily for 30 days since the publication of the advent calendar). Estimates are based on digital analytics of the MyAdvent platform and Social Media Analytics. IBM SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel were used for statistical analysis.

RESULTS

During three editions (2022, 2023 and 2024) TFAC combined the efforts of 10 organisations, 60 team members (15 experts, 25 youth, 17 mentees) and

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Other Tobacco Control Topics

resulted in 5 translations of TFAC 2022, 2 translations for TFAC 2023 and 1 translation for TFAC 2024.

Overall, the initiative achieved a total estimated reach 75,000 views through digital channels. Posters and self- Christmas baubles were disseminated at a medical university campus. Activities included online workshops and participation in student meetings.

Total calendar accesses reached 10,088 with median daily visits of 19 (IQR: 11-31) in 2024, 95 (IQR: 37-148) in 2023, and 72 (IQR: 38-120) in 2022. Door clicks totalled 8,104, showing median of 18.5 (IQR: 9.25-35.75; 2024), 54 (IQR: 18.25-77.5; 2023), and 44 (IQR: 34.5-60.75; 2022) respectively.

CONCLUSION

This paper establishes TFAC as an example for the applicability of advent calendars to reach and engage users with trusted health information. Furthermore the project established a novel model for supporting youth leaders in tobacco control.

2. A NEED TO FOCUS ON TRACKING AND TRACING OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

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FCTC article 15 mentions a tracking and tracing regime in assisting in the investigation of illicit trade in tobacco products. The Protocol to the FCTC aims to secure the supply chain of tobacco products by the establishment of a global tracking and tracing regime, a measure stated to be the “heart” of the Protocol. Tracking and tracing has been implemented in the EU through the tobacco product directive and subsequent regulations. The Public Health Agency of Sweden is the competent authority with full access to the traceability database.

If the full potential of the traceability system is utilised it can be a useful tool for several different purposes of tobacco control. First and foremost it can be used in supply chain control and to counter illicit trade, tax and customs avoidance or fraud. But it can also be used for health purposes, for example to focus tobacco prevention measures where there are high prevalence of tobacco use. Tracking and tracing spans a wide area and have the potential to fall under several governmental authorities; for example health, police, customs and tax. There is a need for cooperation between different governmental authorities and raising the awareness of the traceability system. There is very little research on the subject of tracking and tracing of tobacco products and more research is needed on the subject.

3. SMOKING AND LUNG CANCER RISK ASSOCIATION: A COMPARISON OF DOSE-RESPONSE CURVES BETWEEN ASIAN AND NON-ASIAN COUNTRIES

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BACKGROUND

Tobacco smoking is the leading preventable cause of lung cancer worldwide, but the magnitude of the associated risk varies across regions. Asian populations are characterized by a higher prevalence of environmental and occupational co-exposures—such as radon, asbestos, biomass combustion, and air pollution—that can affect the contribution of smoking to lung cancer incidence.

METHODS

We conducted a meta-analysis using data from the Burden of Proof tool of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) to estimate dose–response relationships between cumulative smoking exposure (pack-years) and lung cancer risk. We retrieved all the 73 studies (1985–2022) that compared ever vs never smokers (n=52 studies) or current vs never smokers (n=21 studies). A one-stage random-effects dose-response model with restricted cubic splines was applied, stratified by geographic macro-region (Asia vs. non-Asia). Relative risks (RR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) were estimated across the exposure distribution.

RESULTS

The spline models confirmed a clear dose–response relationship between smoking exposure and lung cancer risk in both macro-regions. However, RRs were consistently lower in Asian compared with non-Asian populations at equivalent exposure levels. The RRs for ever vs. never smokers for 30 pack-years were 4.77 (95% CI: 3.21–7.08) in Asia and 9.80 (95% CI: 8.10–11.86) in

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non-Asia; the corresponding estimates for current vs. never smokers were 5.52 (95% CI: 3.57–8.54) in Asia and 17.62 (95% CI: 13.09–23.71) in non-Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

The strength of the association between smoking and lung cancer differs markedly between Asia and non-Asia. The apparent attenuation of risk in Asian populations likely reflects the higher baseline incidence of lung cancer among never smokers, driven by prevalent environmental and occupational carcinogens, which reduces the relative contrast between smokers and non-smokers. These findings underscore the importance of accounting for regional context when estimating the global health impact of smoking.

4. THE FUTURE OF CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASES AND NICOTINE CONSUMPTION - BEYOND SMOKE AND MIRRORS

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Áron Szpisjak

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BACKGROUND

Chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs) place a heavy burden on populations worldwide yet remain under-resourced and under-prioritised. Nicotine use, through both combustible tobacco and emerging products, contributes to disease, widens health inequalities, and strains health systems. Although the harms of tobacco are well documented, changing consumption patterns, industry strategies, and uneven regulation make the issue increasingly complex, highlighting the need for longer-term perspectives and proactive action.

OBJECTIVES

This study applies strategic foresight to the intersection of CRDs and nicotine use. The aim is to explore plausible futures, strengthen preparedness, and inform decision-makers on ways to address future shifts.

METHODS

The study combined desk research, literature review, interviews, and workshops with researchers, health professionals, and tobacco control advocates. A scenario framework was constructed around two critical uncertainties: the ambition of tobacco endgame strategies and the trajectory of global smoking prevalence. Additional factors, including policy divergence, dual use, and public attitudes, were incorporated. To show how systemic changes affect individuals, three personas were developed: Eileen, an older adult with COPD; Minh, a young person with nicotine addiction; and Mila, a child who develops asthma. Their experiences were illustrated across scenarios.

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RESULTS

Four scenarios emerged: Scenario A: strong policies with weak implementation; Scenario B: comprehensive endgame strategies; Scenario C: grassroots-led decline alongside regulatory gaps; and Scenario D: collapse of tobacco control with normalisation of nicotine use. Across these, recurring risks included inequities in access to prevention and care, youth uptake, and misinformation. The personas illustrated how individual outcomes varied under contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

Using foresight with personas provides a structured way of examining possible directions for tobacco control and respiratory health. The scenarios allow strategy-testing under both desirable and undesirable conditions. Signals to monitor and strategic actions were identified, offering practical entry points for decision-makers to shape a pathway towards more equitable, long-term impact.



TOBACCO TAXATION

1. ESTIMATING TOBACCO AND NICOTINE PRODUCTS ELASTICITIES USING SCANNER DATA – CASE STUDY FOR SLOVAKIA

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BACKGROUND

The smoking (nicotine) products market is undergoing significant changes in its structuring, driven by the rapid growth of alternative products such as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco, and nicotine pouches pushed by aggressive marketing. While traditional factory-made cigarettes (FMCs) continue to dominate, the rising popularity of alternatives has implications for public health and tobacco taxation. In Slovakia, retail scanner data indicate that between January 2022 and June 2025, sales of e-cigarettes increased by more than 300% year-on-year and nicotine pouches rose by almost 120%, while FMCs dropped by more than 15%. These dynamics highlight need to analyse the structure of the nicotine market and the relationships between product categories, particularly given recent legislative decisions to extend excise taxation to alternative products in Slovakia. The proposed research aims to estimate own- and cross-price elasticities of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other alternative nicotine products in Slovakia. A central question is whether these products act as substitutes or complements. Answering this has direct policy relevance: substitution could imply shifts in excise revenue bases, while complementarity could amplify consumption risks.

METHODS

In addition, robust elasticity estimates will complement survey-based findings and provide evidence grounded in actual consumer transactions. The estimates leverage individual retail scanner data collected from electronic cash registers, accessible through the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic. Covering at least the period 2022–mid-2025, this data comprises monthly entries across 73 regional areas. To account for spatial differences the analysis uses demographic and socioeconomic indicators (e.g., unemployment, wages, educational structure) as additional controls.

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Tobacco Taxation

The main specification apply fixed-effects panel model, where the dependent variable is the county/district-level sales and the key explanatory variables are average retail prices of own and other nicotine products. The estimated coefficients yield own-price elasticities and cross-price elasticities. Model variants test alternative sales measures (absolute vs. per capita) and price definitions (inflation- or wage-adjusted).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Preliminary results support the applicability of the methodology and expected patterns of the elasticities estimates. Own-price elasticities are in general confirming the inverse relationship between price changes and consumer demand. However, in case of the growing segments of the alternative products suggests that the market is still immature and even during the price increases do not affect the consumption growing trend. In case of cross-price elasticities the results are inconclusive.

2. TAXATION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS IN SWITZERLAND: A LOSE-LOSE SITUATION

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OxySuisse / Transparency & Truth, Switzerland

BACKGROUND

In Switzerland, tobacco taxation has remained frozen since April 2013 at a low level, some 15 percentage points below the WHO recommendation of 75%. This situation is clearly influenced by the tobacco industry's strong presence in Switzerland and its ability to shape public health policy when its commercial interests are at stake. The tobacco industry has succeeded in forging solid alliances among Swiss economic circles, where certain politically influential economic organizations act as proxies for the industry to lobby political parties and policymakers. The result is a typical lose-lose situation: on the one hand, the government loses revenue that it could easily obtain, giving the tobacco industry a huge tax break every year, and on the other hand, it deprives public health authorities of the most effective measure to accelerate the reduction in smoking prevalence, which has remained stagnant for many years. It is proposed that Switzerland aligns its taxation of tobacco products, including heated tobacco, with the WHO recommendation of a 75% tax rate.

3. IMPACT OF TOBACCO CONTROL POLICIES ON YOUTH INITIATION IN SERBIA

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Jovan Zubović

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BACKGROUND

Smoking remains one of the main causes of preventable morbidity and mortality worldwide. Starting to smoke as a young person significantly increases the likelihood of long-term addiction and health consequences. Serbia is an important country for studying youth smoking initiation, as the smoking rate among adolescents (aged 13-15) remains high (15.1%) and tobacco control policies are poorly enforced. Although international evidence suggests that non-price and price tobacco control interventions can delay or prevent smoking initiation, their specific impact on adolescents in Serbia has so far been studied only to a limited extent. This paper aims to analyze the determinants that influence youth initiation of tobacco to provide evidence for more effective public health interventions.

METHODS

We used data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) conducted in Serbia in 2008, 2013, and 2017. The nationally representative sample includes adolescents aged 13-15 years. We applied a split-population model, suitable for modelling initiation processes in which a proportion of individuals never start smoking. The independent variables included cigarette prices, non-price tobacco control policy variables, tobacco control policy index, gender, family smoking status, teachers smoke indoors, smoking education, and friends' smoking behaviour.

RESULTS

Results indicate that higher cigarette prices were associated with a reduction in the likelihood of smoking initiation, with estimated price elasticity ranging between -0.089 and -0.107. Peer smoking was identified as the strongest determinant of initiation, followed by parental smoking, especially maternal and sibling smoking behaviors. Adolescents exposed to teachers' smoking or

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friends offering cigarettes were significantly more likely to start smoking. Implementing non-price measures (advertisement bans, smoke-free policies) will discourage youth smoking initiation by 5.1% to 7.8%.

CONCLUSION

Peer and parental smoking are the strongest drivers of youth smoking initiation in Serbia, followed by price. Results from the study can support the development of a new national Tobacco Control Strategy, given that the previous one expired in 2015. Weak enforcement of existing tobacco control policies and current gaps in the strategic legislative framework highlight the urgent need for changes

4. IMPACT OF CIGARETTE PRICES ON YOUTH SMOKING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (2012-2023)

Ayaka Teshima

Spain

BACKGROUND

Reducing tobacco consumption and preventing smoking uptake among young people remain key objectives in public health policy. This study evaluates how cigarette prices influence youth smoking prevalence within the European Union (EU).

METHODS

Using an ecological design, we analysed data from 26 EU Member States across five Eurobarometer survey waves (2012–2023; $n = 12,087$), focusing on individuals aged 15–24 years. Fixed-effects panel regression models were applied to examine the relationship between inflation-adjusted cigarette prices and changes in youth smoking prevalence, while controlling for temporal trends and tobacco control policy implementation.

RESULTS

Across the EU, the prevalence of smoking among young people declined from 28.4% in 2012 to 22.2% in 2023, though the pattern was not uniformly downward. A €1 increase in inflation-adjusted cigarette price per pack corresponded to a 3.6 percentage point decrease in smoking among young men (95% CI: -6.5 to -0.7), whereas no significant association was found for young women or at the overall EU level. Regional disparities were also observed: higher cigarette prices were linked to significant reductions in smoking among both sexes in Southern Europe and among males in Northern Europe, while no associations were observed in Western or Eastern regions.

CONCLUSIONS

Current taxation appears insufficient, and its impact differs across sexes and regions. Progress toward a tobacco endgame will require more coherent EU-wide actions and stricter policy implementation, particularly through strengthening taxation, alignment of product affordability between countries, and comprehensive regulation covering all nicotine-containing products.

KEYNOTE
**THE ECONOMIC BURDEN OF ADDICTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM
TURKEY AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS FOR TOBACCO CONTROL**

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BACKGROUND

Addictions—spanning tobacco, alcohol, gambling, and illicit drugs—impose a massive economic and social burden that extends far beyond individual health. The Turkish Green Crescent Society (Yeşilay) conducted a comprehensive study in 2025 quantifying the national economic costs of these addictions, revealing a staggering annual burden of USD 78 billion. This cost surpasses Turkey's annual energy import expenditures, underscoring the urgent need for integrated economic and public health responses.

OBJECTIVES

This presentation aims to (i) highlight the measurable economic burden of addictions with a focus on tobacco, (ii) explore the cross-sectoral impacts on healthcare, labor productivity, and social welfare, and (iii) provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers to strengthen tobacco taxation and control measures.

METHODS

The analysis was based on a mixed-method approach combining national statistics, health expenditure data, and institutional reports. Direct costs such as household spending, healthcare expenditures, fire damages, and crime-related costs were calculated. Indirect costs—such as productivity losses and premature deaths—were acknowledged but conservatively excluded, meaning the total burden is likely underestimated.

RESULTS

Findings show that tobacco addiction alone generates an annual economic cost of USD 24 billion in Turkey, primarily through healthcare expenditures, household spending, and fire-related damages. Alcohol contributes USD 9 billion, illicit drugs USD 5 billion, and gambling USD 40 billion annually. The cumulative cost of USD 78 billion represents a critical drag on national development, equivalent to major infrastructure, energy, or education investments foregone.

CONCLUSIONS

Tobacco control, particularly through taxation and regulation, is not only a public health priority but also a powerful economic policy tool. Recognizing addiction as a cross-cutting development challenge strengthens the case for integrating fiscal and health policies. The Turkish experience provides compelling evidence for global policymakers to act decisively, using economic arguments to advance tobacco control and broader addiction prevention strategies.

KEYNOTE
**BIG TOBACCO'S EXPLOITATION OF HARM REDUCTION PRINCIPLES:
THE KEYSTONE OF A NEW BUSINESS MODEL FOR THE TOBACCO
INDUSTRY AND A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE TO THE TOBACCO
CONTROL COMMUNITY**

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As part of the ENSP's 10th European Conference on Tobacco Control, the French coalition ACT-Alliance Contre le Tabac is organizing a 45-minute symposium. The results of two recent initiatives and studies will be presented, highlighting the new strategies deployed by the tobacco industry to renew its nicotine addiction market.

During this session, we will first present two PR and digital campaigns conducted by ACT. The aim is to expose the manipulation of consumers by the tobacco industry through misleading claims extolling the virtues of 'smoke-free products' to the general public and decision-makers. These two initiatives will then be contextualized by presenting the results of our annual survey conducted in September 2025 with the BVA-IPSOS polling institute on the consumption and perception of tobacco and nicotine products among young French people aged 13 to 16.

Finally, we will discuss how the tobacco industry's new narrative enables it to attract new sources of funding conducive to its development. We will present the results of a study commissioned from the NGO Profundo in 2024 and updated in 2025, which show an increase of more than 270% in investments by French financial institution in the tobacco industry in less than two years.

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POSTER SESSION

1. CORRELATES OF SMOKING AMONG BULGARIAN 13-16-YEAR-OLD ADOLESCENTS

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BACKGROUND

Bulgaria has alarmingly high smoking prevalence, especially among female adolescents.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to explore the correlates of being a current smoker (smoked all 30 days during the past month) separately for males and females.

METHODS

Publicly available data from the 2023 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) among Bulgarian 13-16 years-old pupils was used. The question "During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?" was recorded as binary (0=0-29 days; 1=30 days). This variable was treated as an outcome.

RESULTS

Current smokers among females are 12.2%, compared to 7.3% of males, with a similar age distribution. Females have 1.35-fold higher odds of being smokers. The amount of weekly spent money among boys that increases the odds of being a smoker is >20 BGN, whilst among girls it is > 40 BGN. Parents' unemployment (any or both parents) increases the odds of being a smoker among boys, whilst among girls, it decreases the odds. The lower cost of a cigarette pack influences only the boys' chances of being smokers. Experience with other tobacco products in general increases the odds of being a smoker 15.5-fold for boys, and 10-fold for girls. If it is a hookah, the odds are 10.4-fold greater for boys and 14-fold for girls; for smokeless tobacco, the odds are 8.2-fold and 4.6-fold greater, respectively; for electronic cigarettes, 10.8-fold and 29.6-fold, respectively; for heated tobacco products 15.3-fold and 16.4-fold,

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respectively. Both sexes experience the negative influence of smokers in their homes, enclosed, and open public spaces, but girls have greater odds of becoming current smokers due to this factor. The presence of other smokers in the school, however, is a risk factor only for boys. Both sexes have greater odds of being smokers if any or both of their parents smoke. The more close friends smoke, the greater the odds of both sexes becoming current smokers; however, girls have almost twice as high odds.

CONCLUSION

Differences in smoking prevalence among both sexes are driven by different mechanisms. Further studies are needed to explore in depth the social and psychological motivation of smoking in both sexes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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2. PERINATAL SMOKING AND THE COST OF HOSPITALIZATION IN A NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

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BACKGROUND

Parental tobacco product use during pregnancy and lactation poses serious health risks to the fetus and neonate. Smoking has been implicated in miscarriage, placental abruption, low birth weight, developmental delay, prematurity, respiratory distress, and respiratory infections, conditions that increase neonatal morbidity and mortality. Due to the smoking status of parents, there is a need for their neonates to receive specialized care and often be admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) immediately after birth, financially burdening both the healthcare system and families.

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OBJECTIVE

This review refers to the financial cost of neonatal hospitalization in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, resulting from smoking during the perinatal period.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A search for scientific articles was conducted in electronic databases (Pubmed, Scopus, Google Scholar, Research Gate) using keywords such as perinatal smoking/tobacco, pregnancy, neonatal health care costs, NICU.

RESULTS

Toxic substances from cigarette smoke cause a plethora of serious complications in neonates that require prolonged hospitalization in the NICU. Neonatal hospitalization in the NICU, in addition to the separation of the mother-infant dyad with all its consequences (separation anxiety leading to effects on the neonate's and mother's psyche, difficulty in developing bonding, difficulty in initiating, establishing, and continuing breastfeeding, etc.), increases the healthcare cost of neonatal care. Smoking incurs financial costs for insurance funds and, by extension, for society. NICU hospitalization requires the administration of medications, the use of medical devices, and the recruitment of specialized personnel to staff the NICU.

CONCLUSIONS

Tobacco use during pregnancy and lactation is a significant threat to the health of fetuses and neonates and imposes significant financial costs on the healthcare system. It is necessary to design and implement smoking cessation programs aimed at definitively stopping the use of tobacco products during pregnancy and lactation. Smoking cessation will reduce the cost of hospitalization for neonatal care, as fewer and fewer neonates will be hospitalized in NICUs due to parental smoking.

3. SPECIALISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON A GENERATIVE AI-POWERED VIRTUAL PATIENT FOR TRAINING IN BRIEF SMOKING CESSATION ADVICE

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BACKGROUND

Generative AI-powered virtual patient (VP) applications can expand experiential training in brief advice for smoking cessation.

OBJECTIVES

To assess experts' opinions on using a VP application to support smoking cessation counseling training among healthcare professionals and to identify preferred features, content, target users, and evaluation methods.

METHODS

A cross-sectional online survey was conducted during August-September 2025 among members of the Romanian Society of Pulmonology. Perceptions were captured with Likert-type items (1-5) and summarized with descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

The sample comprised 120 respondents from Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Mean age was 43.8 years (SD=11.6); 85.0% were female; 88.3% reported pulmonology as their specialty; and 35.8% had more than one year of university teaching experience. Perceived usefulness of a VP app for brief-advice training was high (mean=4.4; SD=0.8) and perceived learner receptivity was similarly favorable (mean=4.5; SD=0.7). The preferred interface was video (70.0%), followed by virtual reality (VR) (17.5%). Anticipated benefits included realistic counseling simulation and broad device accessibility (both 74.2%),

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case variety (57.5%), reduced teaching time (50.0%), standardization (49.2%), improved learner confidence (46.7%), clinical safety (45.0%), and automated feedback (42.5%). The 5A framework was the preferred model (79.2%). A set of 5–10 scenarios was most preferred (53.3%). High-priority scenarios included active smokers with prior quit attempts (91.7%), pregnant smokers (90.0%), young, poorly informed smokers (89.2%), smokers with comorbidities (85.8%), and smokers resistant to quitting (81.7%). Observation of in-app behavior (56.7%) and self-assessment (45.8%) were the preferred evaluation methods, with lower support for oral (35.0%), OSCE-type (27.5%), and written (26.7%) examinations.

CONCLUSIONS

Specialists reported high perceived usefulness and learner receptivity for a VP app focused on brief advice for smoking cessation. Preferences supported a video interface, emphasis on the 5A framework, and a concise set of 5–10 realistic scenarios spanning key smoker profiles.

Keywords: *virtual patient, smoking cessation, brief advice, 5A framework, artificial intelligence, expert opinion*

FUNDING

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4. SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY AND THE PUERPERIUM: A SINGLE-CENTER STUDY ON STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING THE RISK OF SUPC AND SIDS RELATED TO PARENTAL SMOKING

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BACKGROUND

Smoking—whether through traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or heated tobacco products (HTPs)—represents a major risk factor during pregnancy and puerperium. Maternal and paternal smoking is associated with adverse outcomes as: spontaneous abortion, intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR), preterm birth, low birth weight, Sudden Unexpected Postnatal Collapse (SUPC), which can lead to severe cardio-respiratory failure, hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

OBJECTIVE

To assess smoking habits and dependence levels among pregnant and postpartum women and their partners/relatives, focusing on attitudes toward e-cigarettes and cessation strategies.

METHODS

Between February-September 2025, an online questionnaire (Google Forms) was administered within the Local Health Unit 1 (Rome, Italy - ASL Roma 1) to pregnant or postpartum women, and family members. The survey included 56 items (multiple-choice and open-ended), covering socio-demographic data, smoking habits during pregnancy/puerperium, and Fagerström Test for Nicotine-Dependence.

RESULTS

A total of 115 individuals completed the questionnaire and 47 were smokers (24 partners, 9 pregnant/postpartum women, 14 relatives); 41% of

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fetuses/newborns were exposed to smoke/vape. Smoking prevalence seemed associated with education level: traditional cigarettes were more frequent among high school graduates (36.2%), while HTPs among those with a master's degree (6.4%). Exposure to parental smoking in childhood was reported by 40.4% of partners and 19.1% of pregnant/postpartum smokers. Among smokers, 57.4% reported modifying their habits during pregnancy/puerperium, and 14.8% quit completely. Notably, 100% of smoking partners also consumed alcohol. No significant statistically association was reported. Limitations: single center and small sample size.

CONCLUSIONS

Partners are the main source of smoking exposure for mothers, fetuses, and newborns. In line with national and international recommendations for SUPC and SIDS prevention, a pilot project in ASL Roma 1 has proposed to introduce a "smoke alert" in maternal and neonatal records to enhance preventive care when couples are identified as at risk during pregnancy.

