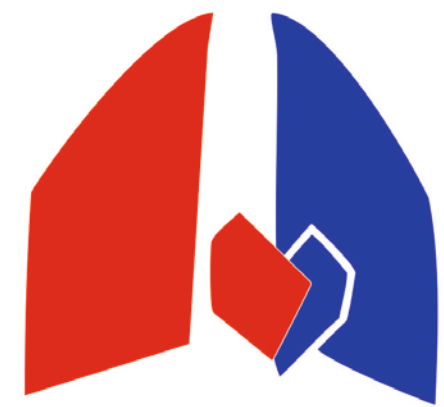


Shadow reporting on compliance to tobacco advertisement bans at points of sale in Turkey



TURKISH THORACIC SOCIETY

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Introduction

Display and visibility of tobacco products at points of sale (PoS) constitute advertisement and promotion of tobacco use. The tobacco industry targets young people and smokers through commercial display of products as one of the final resorts for tobacco advertisement.

The WHO FCTC recommends that Parties should introduce a total ban on any display and on the visibility of tobacco products at PoS. Turkey has adopted legislation that partially bans PoS displays and does not have an enforcement system in implementation.

AIM: Due to the concerns about the recent sudden increase in tobacco consumption in Turkey, tobacco product displays at PoS are identified as a critical tobacco control policy question that lies between liberal production trade policies concerning tobacco companies and demand control policies aiming at individuals.

On this basis, the Turkish Thoracic Society and the Health Institute of Turkey joined forces to assume watchdog responsibilities and to investigate tobacco product displays at PoS in order to assess the effectiveness of the partial ban and lack of enforcement, and the results were analyzed in terms of the urgency for comprehensive tobacco control policies.



Methods

Shadow reporting techniques developed by the FCA were utilized to survey compliance in 7 cities during Jan-Feb 2013.

The shadow reporting techniques developed by the Framework Convention Alliance identifying PoS in walking tours in central urban areas were utilized, and the compliance issues stated in the Turkish legislation were recorded and documented with photographs in seven cities during the two months period of January and February of 2013. In addition, a major daily newspaper was monitored for the period of January 2009 – January 2013 for retailer reactions toward tobacco product display ban at PoS.

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Results

Out of 58 retailer shops investigated, tobacco product displays of

- 56 % were visible from outside the shops,
- 28 % were located in more than one area,
- 20 % were directly accessible by customers,
- 22 % featured advertisement and promotional elements on display units and elsewhere in the shop,
- 13 % displayed packs by way of hiding their pictorial warnings, and
- 60 % the price tags did not comply with the legislation.
- 1.5 % of shops featured display units with opaque front covers.

Throughout the 36 newspaper articles on tobacco product retailing sourced from retailer unions, the coverage of the display ban was negative.



Conclusions

Noncompliance increased in comparison to a 2011 study which found visibility of products from outside as 44%.

Partial bans cause ambiguity in implementation and are difficult to enforce. Given these problems and lack of official data, shadow reporting is a beneficial independent assessment method and advocacy tool.

The policy area of display of tobacco products at PoS is situated at the juncture where demand control policies aiming at individuals meet liberal production and trade policies that are wide open to industry interference.

In this connection, a complete ban is an essential tobacco control policy as it obliterates tobacco industry's ability to use PoS as advertisement and promotion venues and has a direct bearing on increasing the effectiveness of demand side policies.