Impact of anti-smoking advertising on health-risk knowledge and quit attempts across 6 European countries from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Survey


Abstract
Introduction: Exposure to anti-smoking advertising and its effects differ across countries. This study examines the reported exposure to anti-smoking advertising among smokers and its relation to knowledge of smoking harms and quit attempts in six European countries.

Methods: Data come from Wave 1 of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) 6 European Country (6E) Survey (Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain) carried out among smokers between June and September 2016 (n=6011). Key measures included whether participants had noticed anti-smoking advertising in the last six months in 6 different channels, their knowledge of 13 adverse smoking/second-hand smoking health effects and if they had made at least one quit attempt in the last 12 months. Multivariate logistic regression models were used in the analysis.

Results: Across the six countries, only 35.2% of smokers reported being exposed to any anti-smoking advertising. Television was the most common channel identified (25.7%), followed by newspapers and magazines (13.8%), while social media were the least reported (9.5%). Participants 18–24 years old were significantly more likely to have noticed advertisements on the Internet than participants >55 years old (24.3% vs 4.9%; OR=5.15). Participants exposed to anti-smoking advertising in all six channels were twice more likely to have a higher knowledge of smoking risks than those not exposed (2.4% vs 97.6%, respectively; OR=2.49). The likelihood of making a quit attempt was increased by 10% for each additional channel through which smokers were exposed to anti-smoking advertising.

Conclusions: Knowledge of health risks of smoking tended to be higher in countries that aired a campaign in recent years. Exposure to anti-smoking advertising, in the six channels combined, was related to higher smoking knowledge of risks and to more quit attempts. Future anti-smoking mass media campaigns should consider advertising in all dissemination channels to increase the awareness of the dangers of smoking.

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