

Banning tobacco price promotions, smoking-related beliefs, and behaviour: findings from the International Tobacco Control Four Country (ITC 4C) Survey

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Abstract

Background: Ecological models emphasise multilevel influences on health behaviours. While studies show that exposure to price promotions is associated with smoking behaviour and its antecedents, less is known about whether these associations differ by macro-level factors such as national price promotion policies.

Methods: Current and former smokers (N=4698) from the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project four-country cohort were included in weighted multivariate logistic regression models to examine individual-level associations between exposure to price promotions at waves 7 and 8 (conducted in 2008–2009 and 2010–2011) and beliefs (social and injunctive norms, functional value of smoking, misconceptions around smoking and beliefs of tobacco industry and its regulations) and behaviour at wave 8, stratified by whether countries allow (Australia and USA) or ban (Canada and UK) price promotions.

Results: Associations between exposure to price promotions and smoking-related beliefs and behaviour differed by national price promotion policies. In countries that allow price promotions, participants repeatedly exposed to price promotions at waves 7 and 8 were more likely to associate functional values to smoking (ie, calms down when stressed (adjusted OR (AOR) 1.83) and to be current smokers at wave 8 (AOR 1.94). In countries that ban price promotions, participants repeatedly exposed to price promotions were less likely to hold misconceptions around smoking (ie, harsher smoke is more dangerous).

Conclusions: Differential associations emerged between exposure to price promotions, smoking-related beliefs and behaviour across countries with and without a price promotions ban. Adopting price promotion bans could ameliorate the associations between exposure to price promotions and smoking beliefs and behaviours.

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