

Smoking in public places in six European countries: Findings from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys

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Abstract

Introduction: Surveillance of tobacco consumption in public places is an important measure to evaluate the impact of tobacco control interventions over time. The objective of this study was to estimate the prevalence of smoking as seen by smokers and their smoking behaviour in public places, in six European countries.

Methods: We used baseline data of the International Tobacco Control Six European countries (ITC 6E) Survey, part of the EUREST-PLUS Project, conducted in 2016 in national representative samples of about 1000 adult smokers aged 18 years and older in Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Spain. For each setting (workplaces, restaurants, bars/pubs and discos) participants were asked whether they had seen someone smoking during their last visit there and whether they too had smoked there. We report the overall and by-country weighted prevalence of seeing someone smoking and the smokers' own smoking behaviour at each setting. We also assess the relationship between seeing someone smoking and smoking themselves at these settings.

Results: The prevalence of smoking as seen by smokers was 18.8% at workplaces, with high variability among countries (from 4.7% in Hungary to 40.8% in Greece). Among smokers visiting leisure facilities in the last year, during their last visit 22.7% had seen someone smoking inside restaurants and 12.2% had smoked themselves there, while for bars/pubs the corresponding prevalences were 33.9% and 20.4%, and inside discos 44.8% and 34.8%.

Conclusions: Smoking is still prevalent at leisure facilities, particularly at discos in Europe, with high variability among countries. More extensive awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement are needed to increase the compliance of smokefree regulations, especially in leisure facilities.

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