

Extent and correlates of self-reported exposure to tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship in smokers: findings from the EUREST-PLUS ITC Europe Surveys

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Abstract

Introduction: Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) are known to promote tobacco consumption and to discourage smoking cessation. Consequently, comprehensive TAPS bans are effective measures to reduce smoking. The objective of this study was to investigate to what extent smokers are exposed to TAPS in general, and in various media and localities, in different European countries.

Methods: A cross-sectional analysis of national representative samples of adult smokers in 2016 from Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Spain (EUREST-PLUS Project, n=6011), as well as England (n=3503) and the Netherlands (n=1213) (ITC Europe Surveys) was conducted. Prevalence of self-reported TAPS exposure is reported by country, and socioeconomic correlates were investigated using logistic regression models.

Results: Self-reported exposure to TAPS varied widely among the countries, from 15.4 % in Hungary to 69.2 % in the Netherlands. In most countries, tobacco advertising was most commonly seen at the point of sale, and rarely noticed in mass media. The multivariate analysis revealed some variation in exposure to TAPS by sociodemographic factors. Age showed the greatest consistency across countries with younger smokers (18–24 years) being more likely to notice TAPS than older smokers.

Conclusions: TAPS exposure tended to be higher in countries with less restrictive regulation but was also reported in countries with more comprehensive bans, although at lower levels. The findings indicate the need for a comprehensive ban on TAPS to avoid a shift of marketing efforts to less regulated channels, and for stronger enforcement of existing bans.

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