

# The Effectiveness of Tobacco Marketing Regulations on Reducing Smokers' Exposure to Advertising and Promotion: Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Four Country Survey

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## **Abstract**

Exposure to tobacco product marketing promotes the initiation, continuation, and reuptake of cigarette smoking and as a result the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) has called upon member Parties to enact comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising and promotion. This study examines the immediate and long term effectiveness of advertising restrictions enacted in different countries on exposure to different forms of product marketing, and examines differences in exposure across different socioeconomic status (SES) groups. Nationally representative data from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the United States, collected from adult smokers between 2002 and 2008 using the International Tobacco Control Four Country Survey (ITC-4), were used in this study (N = 21,615). In light of the specific marketing regulation changes that occurred during the course of this study period, changes in awareness of tobacco marketing via various channels were assessed for each country, and for different SES groups within countries. Tobacco marketing regulations, once implemented, were associated with significant reductions in smokers' reported awareness of pro-smoking cues, and the observed reductions were greatest immediately following the enactment of regulations. Changes in reported awareness were generally the same across different SES groups, although some exceptions were noted. While tobacco marketing regulations have been effective in reducing exposure to certain types of product marketing there still remain gaps, especially with regard to in-store marketing and price promotions.

**Keywords:** tobacco control; marketing regulation; socioeconomic differences; public policy

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