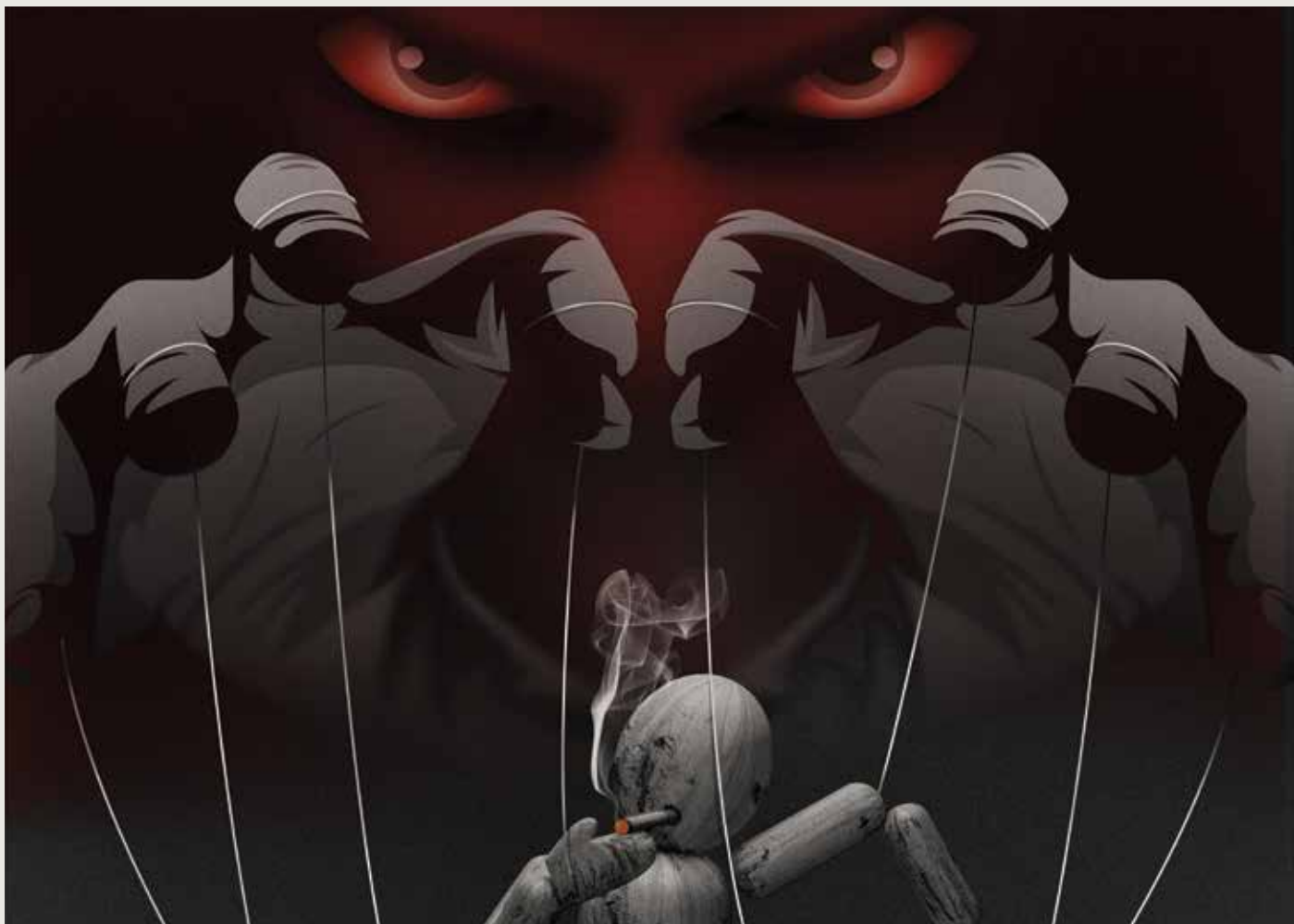


Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

31 MAY



The impact of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

With millions of customers dying from tobacco-related illnesses or quitting each year, the tobacco industry needs to recruit thousands of new smokers

every day. Tobacco advertising and promotion is the main way the tobacco industry increases tobacco use. It encourages new users, stimulates current users to consume more, tempts former users to relapse and discourages current users from quitting.

How is it possible for tobacco companies to market a product

that kills up to half of all its users? It does this by spending billions of US dollars each year on promoting tobacco use as socially acceptable and misleadingly associating it with glamour, health, beauty and well-being. This draws attention away from the real damage to health caused by tobacco use, which is far from glamorous.



World Health
Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

Tobacco marketing in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

As tobacco use decreases in many countries, partly due to restrictions on tobacco marketing and use, the tobacco industry is switching its efforts to the developing world where there are large and growing markets and fewer restrictions on tobacco marketing. In particular, as potential customers, young people and women present a major marketing opportunity for the tobacco industry.

In recent years, the industry has stepped up its efforts to market its products to women and youth through campaigns designed to appeal particularly to these groups. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) found high levels of exposure in the Region to advertising on billboards and in newspapers and magazines (Figure 1).

The GYTS also found that 15% of 13–15 year olds in the Region own an object with a tobacco company logo or other cigarette branding, while 9% have been offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company representative (Figure 2).

Direct and indirect tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

Tobacco marketing includes direct and indirect advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products and brands. Direct advertising utilizes:

- print, broadcast (television, cinema and radio) and electronic (internet) media
- billboards and transportation (on trains and buses, at stations, etc.)
- direct and electronic mail.

As the use of some direct advertising is becoming restricted in more and more countries, tobacco companies are switching increasingly to the use of indirect advertising as a way to circumvent bans. Forms of indirect advertising include the following.

- Point of sale promotions, including displays at tobacco vendors and vending machines, that stimulate impulse purchases, make tobacco use appear socially-acceptable and quitting harder and have a strong impact on young people.
- Tobacco product packaging and product design that make the product more attractive to consumers and promote brand identity through the use of logos, colours, fonts, shapes and other features.
- Product placement in television programmes, films and games (online, and computer), and celebrity endorsement.
- Promotion of tobacco company brand name, logo, emblem, trademark or other distinctive features (such as combinations of colours), including on non-tobacco products such as clothing and gifts.

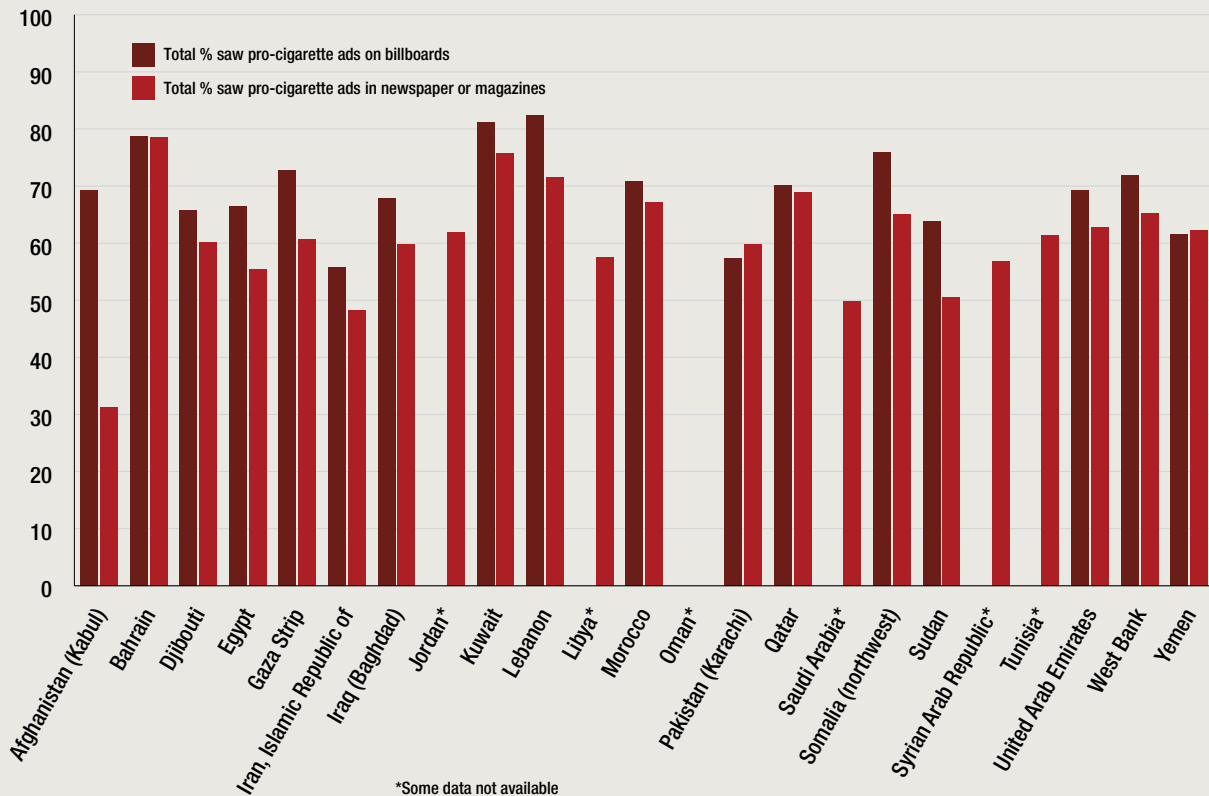


FIGURE 1.

Students (13–15 years) who reported exposure to advertising on billboards and in newspapers and magazines, Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Eastern Mediterranean Region, 1999–2010

- Price-discounts and free product giveaways.
- Sponsorship of sports, music and cultural events.
- Corporate social responsibility activities by which tobacco companies portray themselves as good corporate citizens through contributions to good causes and promotion of “socially responsible” aspects of their business practices.

With new forms of media rapidly evolving, new platforms for tobacco promotion appear, such as through social media on the internet and mobile telephones. With increasing regulation on tobacco advertising and promotion in traditional print and television media, the tobacco industry has shown itself quick to migrate to mediums with less restriction. It is therefore very important that tobacco control policy and legislation evolve to face these new challenges.

Gaps in legislation banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The public have a right to be protected from tobacco marketing. Article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) requires Parties to implement measures to allow for a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

Since the WHO FCTC entered into force in 2005, 19 countries of the Region have adopted new legislation to meet their obligations under the Convention. However, not all countries have managed full adoption or enforcement of a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.



Common gaps continue to exist in legislation banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, where bans do not cover indirect advertising, promotional activities, sponsorship of events and point of sale material.

Despite the effectiveness of comprehensive bans, only 6 out of 23 countries in the Region are fully protected from exposure to the tobacco industry advertising, promotion and sponsorship tactics).

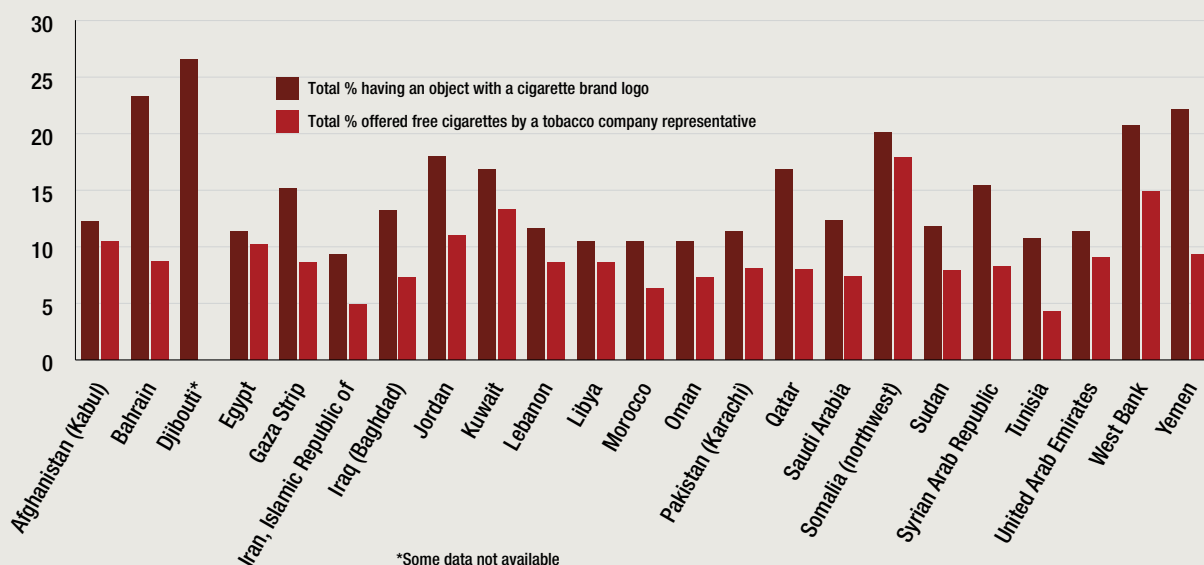


FIGURE 2.

Students (13–15 years) who reported owning an object with a tobacco company logo or other cigarette branding, or having been offered free cigarettes by a tobacco company representative, Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Eastern Mediterranean Region, 1999–2010

Bridging the gaps in the legislative process

Data being collected for the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic* on a regular basis has allowed WHO to monitor the progress of tobacco control at global and regional levels as well as to identify common legal gaps across all countries. As such, cooperation at national level among the relevant authorities is needed to bridge these gaps.

Often, such gaps arise when ministries of health are excluded from the different stages of the development of tobacco control legislation. Ministries of health are most commonly the lead technical agency at national level for initiating the development of legislation. It is crucial that legislators continue to involve them and all other relevant partners in all stages of the development process to ensure that all necessary measures are included and that countries fully meet their obligations under the WHO FCTC, without compromises.

Best practices and the way forward

The public have a right to be protected from tobacco marketing. Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship must be banned in accordance with the WHO FCTC. Article 13 of the FCTC requires Parties to implement measures to allow for a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

Comprehensive bans reduce tobacco use. They protect people who have not started to use tobacco, particularly young people, and help current users to quit. Partial bans do not work. They have been shown to have little or no impact on consumption. Tobacco companies tend to switch their marketing to unregulated methods, such as sport sponsorship and point of sale displays.

Guidelines for implementing Article 13 have been adopted that support governments in developing and implementing comprehensive legislation. The guidelines recommend the following.

- Comprehensive bans on all direct and indirect forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, covering all media platforms.
- Effective implementation of strong and well-drafted legislation, monitoring of compliance and enforcement with substantial penalties, supported by public education.
- Banning commercial displays of product packaging at points of sale.
- Large health warnings, including pictures, on product packaging to reduce the impact of advertising, and plain packaging requirements, including prescribed and standardized design features (shape, size, font, colours), to eliminate advertising and promotional features.
- Discarding unenforceable voluntary self-regulation proposed by the tobacco industry.
- Ensuring bans cover cross-border promotion originating in and entering a country.
- Updating bans as required in response to innovations in industry tactics and media technology.

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