The impact of tobacco control policies on the illicit tobacco market: A scoping review

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Introduction and Aims: Australia's recently-released National Preventive Health Strategy includes a policy goal of 5% or less smoking prevalence by 2030. Achieving this ambitious target will require innovative policies that accelerate Australia's current slow rate of decline in smoking prevalence. There are concerns that these policies, especially large tobacco tax increases, will cause an increase in the illicit tobacco market. In response, we aimed to conduct a scoping review of studies reporting the impacts of tobacco control policies on illicit tobacco use.

Design and Methods: Guided by JBI scoping review methodology, we searched six databases (PubMed, CINAHL, Scopus, Embase, PSYCInfo and Web of Science) for articles published in English between January 2000 and March 2022 that reported research describing the impact of tobacco control policies on the illicit tobacco market. Two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts. Results are reported according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews checklist.

Results: 54 studies were included. The majority focused on the impacts of tobacco tax increases; other policies examined in included studies include tobacco plain packaging and tobacco sales bans. Detailed results will be presented.

Discussions and Conclusions: As Australia moves towards a tobacco endgame, it is important to ensure that the impact of Australia's tobacco control policies is not undermined by a growing illicit tobacco market.

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