Barriers and enablers for phasing out and banning of retail tobacco sales: Scoping review evidence

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Issues
The Australian government target of daily smoking rates at <10% by 2025 and 5% or less by 2030 will impact Australian retail tobacco sales, with around 11 billion cigarette sticks sold in 2020, largely in supermarkets and smaller stores. To accelerate the goal of retail phase out of tobacco, policymakers need to consider relevant implementation factors. We reviewed research covering key enablers, barriers, and needs for phasing out retail tobacco sales.

Methods
Peer-reviewed articles from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada ,and Aotearoa were searched (2013-2023) in Scopus for studies addressing tobacco sales phase out or bans. Studies restricting product characteristics, protocols and commentaries were excluded. Two reviewers checked studies for eligibility via title and abstract and full-text screening. One reviewer extracted data on implementation barriers, enablers, needs, and opportunities, and another checked extraction.

Key Findings
From 93 full-text screened studies, 18 were eligible for inclusion, with studies from the United States (n=8), Aotearoa (n=4), United Kingdom (n=2), Germany (n=1), United Kingdom/Germany (n=1), and Australia (n=2). Studies used cross-sectional (n=7) or qualitative (n=5), experimental (n=2), review (n=2), cohort (n=1), and mixed methods (n=1) designs. Most addressed full tobacco sales bans (n=11), or partial ban or reduction (n=7), affecting multiple retailer types. Barriers included socioeconomic disparity and retailer density, low retailer policy knowledge, support differences by smoking status, business exemptions, and perceived revenue loss. Enablers included public support for bans, successful retailer and jurisdictional examples. Needs included counteracting ban indifference or opposition, examples from different jurisdictions, determining best buy retailer types, and further research with high volume tobacco retailers.

Conclusion
Findings suggested that despite sizable public support for retail tobacco sales bans, there are context dependent barriers to implementation that vary across retail environments, highlighting the need to work with different types of retailers for successfully ceasing sales.

Disclosure of Interest Statement