

Adolescent exposure to advertisements and promotions for tobacco products on the internet

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Introduction and Aims:

Tobacco advertising bans on traditional media have been increasing world-wide, but there is limited understanding on the implications of internet advertising. We examined the prevalence of exposure to internet tobacco advertisements and promotions in adolescents.

Design and Methods:

Data was from the Global Youth Tobacco Surveys (GYTS; 2013-2018; average response rate=76.84%). Only 15 countries had data on exposure to advertising on the internet (N=11,420 adolescents aged 11-19): Region of the Americas (Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru), African (Mauritius, Zimbabwe), European (Czech Republic, Turkey) and the Western Pacific (Micronesia, Macao, Papua New Guinea, Samoa). Prevalence estimates were examined with past month cigarette use.

Key Findings:

Exposure to online advertisements for tobacco products were highest for adolescents in Czech Republic (34.31%) and lowest for Cuba (18.23%). Although when asked if the advertisements promote smoking tobacco, the highest prevalence was in Micronesia (34.37%) and lowest was in Macao (12.28%). Micronesia has one of the highest adolescent cigarette smoking rates (28.92%).

Discussions and Conclusions:

Some countries that have bans on tobacco advertising like the Czech Republic and Micronesia, still have a high prevalence of adolescents who reported seeing advertisements for tobacco products online. There needs to be more regulation around internet tobacco advertising to help prevent adolescent tobacco use and uptake world-wide.

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