

Introduction

Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship is an important policy domain for tobacco control. There is emerging evidence that e-cigarettes are being marketed to consumers using similar techniques and strategies deployed by the tobacco industry.

Objectives

This study explores the extent to which advertising, promotion and sponsorship restrictions or bans are being applied to e-cigarette products across the globe.

Methods

National policies regulating e-cigarettes were identified primarily through direct contact with representatives of Ministries of Health or tobacco control experts in approximately 130 countries. Further, media monitoring was used to identify emerging or new e-cigarette advertising, promotion and sponsorship policies/legislation. Copies of written policies were reviewed and policies/approaches were categorized. Policy summaries and classifications were verified by in-country experts including Ministry of Health staff.

Results



These images are examples of ads run in countries prior to the implementation of their advertising restrictions

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The study identified 83 countries that enacted policies regulating e-cigarettes as of October 31, 2017.

Of these, 63 countries (from all six WHO regions) had a policy regulating any or all aspects of advertising and/or promotion and/or sponsorship.

In many cases restrictions include conforming to specific guidelines on the type of media where advertising may be permitted and locations where it is prohibited (e.g. advertising was permitted in print media directed exclusively at professionals engaged in marketing e-cigarettes).

Six countries (mostly in AMRO and WPRO regions) apply the advertising restrictions only to nicotine-containing e-cigarettes that are regulated as medicines.

Twenty-five countries have a policy restricting or banning sponsorship related to e-cigarettes (nicotine and non-nicotine).

Eleven countries (only in EURO region) prohibit cross-border sponsorship of e-cigarettes.

Conclusions

This scan found that advertising and promotion restrictions or bans are included in the policies of the majority of countries that are regulating e-cigarette products.

Fewer countries regulate the practice of sponsorship by e-cigarette companies or brands.

Monitoring the status of e-cigarette legislation will support further research to measure the impact or effect of policies.

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