

# Compliance with Russia's Tobacco Advertising and Product Display Ban

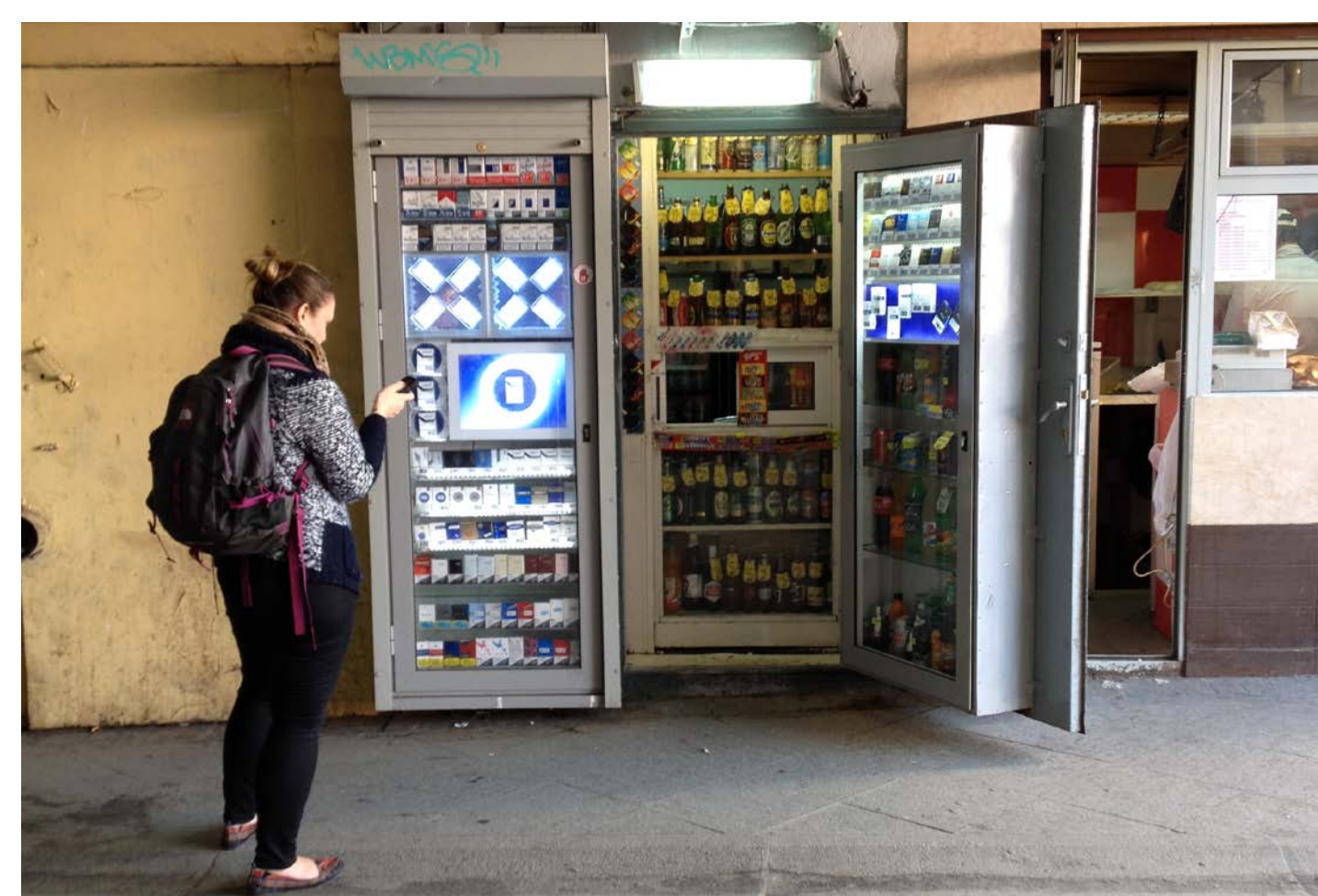
Ryan D. Kennedy, PhD, Ashley S. Grant, MPH, Mark H. Spires, MPH, Joanna E. Cohen, PhD

## Background

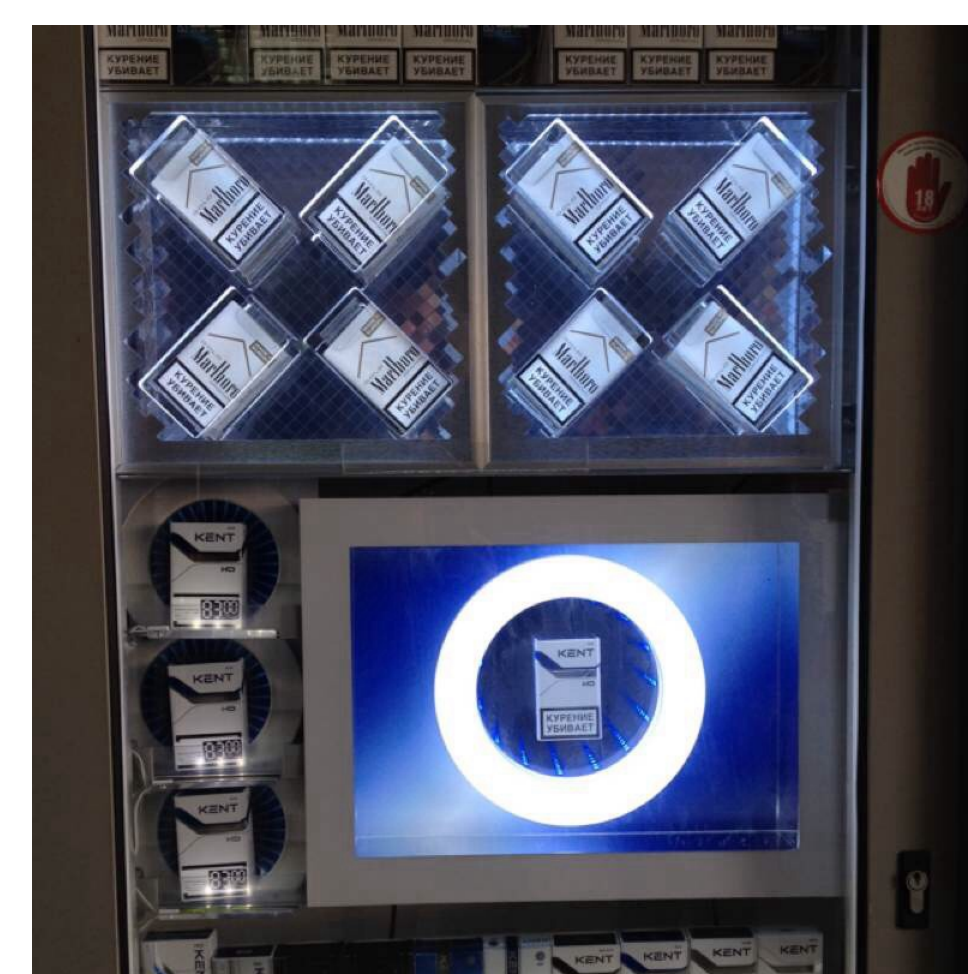
- In Russia, more than 60 percent of adult males and 22 percent of adult females smoke cigarettes.
- Point-of-sale (POS) advertising and product display are strategies used by the tobacco industry to promote their products.
- This study measured compliance with Russia's tobacco control law that banned all advertising at POS environments on November 15, 2013, and later banned all product displays and retailing of tobacco products from kiosks on June 1, 2014.

## Methods

- Observations were conducted in the populous Russian cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg and Kazan after the advertising ban took effect (April-May 2014, Wave 1), and 2-3 months after the display ban and kiosk sales ban took effect (Aug.-Sept. 2014, Wave 2). Observations were conducted in neighborhoods with high, medium and low real estate values. Retail venues included supermarkets, convenience stores and kiosks.
- Data collectors followed a protocol to record observations in the following retail environments: supermarkets, convenience stores and kiosks.
- The protocol involved noting product advertising including:
  - The presence of light boxes and enlarged tobacco packs
  - Advertised price discounts
  - Use of signs, posters, shelf liners or store backgrounds that used colors or brand images similar to tobacco brands
  - Free distribution of tobacco products
- The protocol also included noting any tobacco products on display including: packs visible from the street, in the cashier zone or on a power wall.
- Data collectors used smart phones to record observations and collect digital photos during visits to retail venues.



Data collection using mobile device  
Moscow, Wave 1.



Light boxes used to advertise cigarettes  
Moscow, Wave 1.



Example of oversized packs on display in cashier zone  
Moscow, Wave 1.

## Results

### SAMPLE

- Observations were conducted in Wave 1 at 780 locations
- The number of venues observed, by city, are reported in Table 1

**Table 1. Venues observed by city**

City	Wave 1	Wave 2
Moscow	167	150
St. Petersburg	156	148
Kazan	133	122
Ekaterinburg	162	152
Novosibirsk	162	148
<b>Total</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>720</b>

- Retail environments visited included approximately an equal number of supermarkets, convenience stores and kiosks. Retail venues were located in an approximate equal number across neighborhoods of low, medium and high real estate values.
- In Wave 2, researchers revisited the 780 venues. It was determined that 591 venues continued to be open and sell tobacco; 129 venues no longer sold tobacco; 52 venues were closed during time of second visit; data failed to upload to the cloud for seven venues; and one venue could not be found when visited in Wave 2.

### ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS

- In Wave 1 most venues were in compliance with advertising restrictions; however, approximately a third of venues were using light boxes.
- In Wave 2, almost no tobacco advertising was observed with the exception of signs, shelf liners or other brand colors/images.

**Table 2. Observed compliance by wave**

	Wave 1 (n=780)	Wave 2 (n=591)
<b>Advertising at POS</b>		
Any advertising at POS	40.3%	27.8%
Light box in use	32.2%	0%
Enlarged tobacco packs in use	5.4%	0.2%
Price discounts observed	1.4%	0%
Use of signs/posters/banners/shelf liners/ backgrounds (not in light box)	52.9%	27.2%
Free product	3.2%	0.3%
<b>Product display</b>		
Any product on display	96.4%	22.3%
Cigarette pack/product display visible from street (kiosk or storefront window)	28.7%	0.3%
Cigarette pack/product display in cashier zone	93.1%	21.3%
Cigarette pack/product display on power wall	34.7%	7.6%
Smokeless tobacco on display	5.5%	0.5%
Kiosks selling tobacco	100%	52.9%

### PRODUCT DISPLAY

- In Wave 1 almost all venues (96%) had tobacco products on display, most commonly in the cashier zone. By Wave 2, after the display ban, tobacco product displays were greatly reduced; approximately one-fifth of venues had packs visible in the cashier zone, and approximately 8 percent of venues still had packs on display on power walls.



Cashier zone in Wave 1 - tobacco products visible  
Cashier zone in Wave 2 - tobacco products covered

### KIOSK SALES OF TOBACCO

- The number of kiosks still open and selling tobacco in Wave 2 was 101. Some kiosks were closed in Wave 2 (14%); in contrast, 5.7 percent of convenience stores and 1 percent of grocery stores were closed. Most (67%) had added doors to their structure in an attempt to remain compliant with the new law.



Kiosk in Wave 1 - Displaying primarily tobacco products  
Kiosk in Wave 2 - Closed

## Conclusions

- In Wave 1, advertising tactics such as light boxes were common although these were banned; however, no light boxes were observed by the time the product display restrictions were enacted. This finding supports the implementation of comprehensive laws to ensure there are no loopholes that the industry can try to exploit.
- In Wave 2, cigarette packs were visible at about a fifth of venues in cashier zones. In some cases non-compliance was the result of staff not covering or re-covering packs fully.
- The Russian law restricting tobacco advertising and product display has been largely successful. The only form of advertising still common (27%) is the use of signs or shelf liners that include brand colors or images; this type of infraction is more difficult to enforce as inspectors need to be deeply familiar with tobacco industry products and marketing.

**Acknowledgements:** This work was supported by a grant from the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The research team acknowledges the contributions of research partner HDF including: Olga Knorre, Andrew Saitov, Alex Skatova and Julia Vyskrebentseva. **Conflicts of interest:** None