

Studying Tobacco users Of Pakistan (STOP)

STOP survey facts

10 most populous cities in Pakistan were surveyed

346 union councils were randomly selected

97,345 households were approached

6,014 smokers were randomly selected and interviewed

8,589 cigarette packs were analyzed

7 months were spent surveying between September 2019 and March 2020

Inside:

Background	2
Objectives	2
Methods	3
Recommendations	4

Factsheet | Pakistan

2019-20

Smoking Behaviours - key findings

◆ The STOP survey interviewed regular smokers, of whom **98%** were male.

◆ The average age was 44.5 years. **31%** were aged 35 years or under.

◆ **34%** had no formal education. **23%** had completed primary education and **26%** completed secondary education.

◆ Smokers reported an average consumption of **13** cigarettes per day, and an average

spending of PKR **1813** on cigarettes per month (10% of average monthly income).

◆ **66%** reported a desire to quit, with 10% having an intention to quit in the near future. **28%** had attempted to quit at least once in the past 12 months.

◆ Quit attempts were often short-lived and unsuccessful. In their most recent attempt, **30%** went back to smoking within one day and **58%** went back to

smoking within a week.

◆ **98%** were in support of tobacco control measures, with at least **94%** indicating strong support for at least one of the proposed measures (ban, taxation, smoke-free cars, increasing legal age to 21).



Illicit Tobacco Trade - key findings

◆ **16%** of cigarette packs were illicit (met at least one illicit criterion*)

◆ **30%** of smokers purchased loose cigarettes from the market.

* Absence of retail price; text health warning; graphic health warning; text prohibiting sale to minors; and manufacturer's details on the pack. The first four criteria were applied to packs collected from recycle markets and all five to those collected from smokers.



Background

In Pakistan, 19.1% of adults consume tobacco contributing to around 160,000 deaths/year. The tobacco industry constantly interferes in policy making – a key reason for ineffectual tobacco control. For example, a recent move to impose higher taxes on cigarettes was blocked on the basis of a fictitious industry 'report' (never made

public), which asserted that illicit trade constitutes 41% of the cigarette market share and an increase in taxes will lead to more smuggling – a claim often made by the industry and constantly refuted by independent research in other countries. The Ministry of Health is keen to propose higher taxes again in

the next budget but will need to be supported by unbiased evidence of the scope and magnitude of the illicit tobacco trade in Pakistan.



*“In Pakistan, tobacco causes 160,000 deaths per year”
(Tobacco Atlas)*

STOP survey - Aims

The STOP survey has a long-term aim to provide objective, regular and timely information on tobacco users of Pakistan to help key policy decisions.



STOP survey - Objectives

The specific objectives for the current study are to assess the:

1. Proportion of cigarette smokers who use illicit cigarettes
2. Nicotine dependence and motivation to quit among smokers
3. Triggers to, methods used, and success of quit

- attempts
4. Attitude of smokers towards tobacco control policies and cessation aides (including willingness to pay) e.g. counseling, medication.



Methods

The STOP survey is a cross-sectional face-to-face household survey. It was conducted in the ten most populous cities of Pakistan representing 55% of the total urban population (Fig 1). Participants were people aged 15+ who smoke on a regular basis i.e. at least 25 out of the last 30 days for at least six months. We recruited one participant per household.

Figure 1: Smokers recruited in STOP survey within 10 cities



Sampling strategy

Households were identified using a two-stage random probability sampling. At the first stage, we used stratified random sampling to select Union Councils (PSUs) from the ten cities proportional to their population size. We assessed which households were

eligible (at least one regular smoker aged 15+) in these PSUs and then randomly selected 20 households at the second stage. One participant per household was identified using the Kish Grid method. All eligible households were offered written study infor-

mation and those selected were asked for consent to participate in the survey.

The STOP survey will

provide objective, regular and timely information on tobacco users of Pakistan to help key policy decisions

Data collection

Data were collected using a digital application in password-protected tablets by a team of field investigators in real time. The participants were asked about their: socio-demographic and household characteristics; nicotine dependence and the strength of urges to smoke; their

attitude (including willingness to pay) towards cessation and previous quit attempts; use of cessation aids and attitude towards tobacco control policies. In addition, our team also took photographs of the participants' cigarette packs, where available.

In each city, we also col-

lected used cigarette packs available from the recycling markets. All cigarette packs were analyzed for signs of illicit tobacco trade. These included absence of retail price, manufacturers' details, text health warnings, graphic health warnings and text prohibiting sale to minors.



Recommendations

STOP survey Pakistan

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- Introduce a health levy on cigarettes. It will be supported by the majority of smokers. A health levy will raise revenue which can be spent on priorities such as COVID-19 and is unlikely to increase illicit tobacco trade.
- Offer smoking cessation support. Most smokers are willing to quit and with the right support many can turn their quit attempts into success.
- Consider introducing a ban on smoking in private cars and increasing the age of purchasing and selling cigarettes to 21; the vast majority of smokers support these policies.
- Enforce the ban on selling loose cigarettes and introduce heavy penalties for vendors violating this provision.



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