



POLICY BRIEF

Raising Tobacco



Most Effective Policy to Deter Kids, Young Adults, Women and the Poor from Smoking

Executive Summary

Tobacco smoking throughout youth and childhood is huge health trouble amongst young people, leading to severe respiration ailments, reduced bodily fitness, and capability consequences on lung growth and function. Tobacco use is also regarded to be the most popular addictive behaviour initiated and set up in the course of adolescence however, a critical chance for public health. Early smoking behaviour ends in a greater likelihood of laying low with tobacco-related illnesses later in life, including lung, kidney, and bladder cancers and coronary health illnesses. Young people in their daily activities are faced with immersed stress by smoke. In Ghana, kids and young ones are exposed to seeing role models smoking in films, and music videos portraying tobacco use as a social norm thereby inspiring children to smoke. Additionally, whilst their parents or friends use tobacco, the opportunity for them also experimenting and becoming regular smokers is very excessive. This may be attributed to the shortage of effective policy enforcement and implementation of tobacco control laws as a result needs on the spot but appropriate intervention to prevent the trouble.

Description of the problem

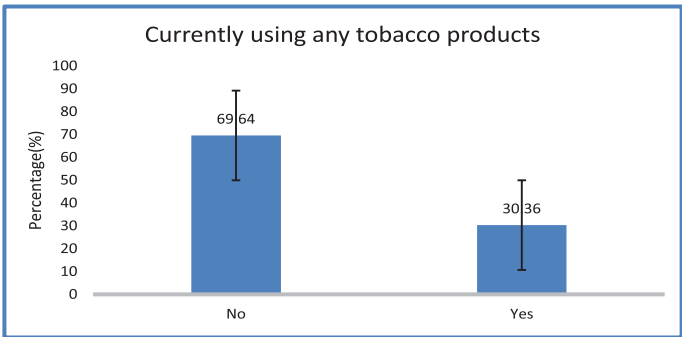
Tobacco use is a primary risk factor for non-communicable illnesses (NCDs) and the purpose of most preventable diseases, disabilities, and loss of life globally. Currently, there are more than 41 million humans who die out of NCDs every 12 months, accounting for 71 % of all global deaths. Subsequently, the latest survey conducted by United Nations Development Programme-Ghana (UNDP) pronounced that more than 6,700 Ghanaians die annually because of tobacco use and exposure, accounting for 3% of all death in Ghana (UNDP Unpublished). Additionally, current studies are concerned about the rapid new emerging tobacco

products which will eventually worsen and increase most NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, lung diseases, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Children, teenagers, young adults, and women are especially vulnerable to these health issues. Around the world, 13 million youth (ages 13 to 15) and close to 25 million smokers use smokeless tobacco, respectively. Additionally, 9 out of 10 adult smokers now developed the habit when they were teenagers, which implies that 5.6 million current-day children and teenagers will eventually pass away too soon from smoking-related illnesses if current tobacco usage trends continue.

Smoke-free regulations in wealthy countries have reduced the prevalence of tobacco use and the diseases it causes, but the Sub-Saharan region is still experiencing an increase. This is due to the tobacco industry's aggressive and dishonest marketing techniques that attract new smokers by focusing on African adolescents who are susceptible to tobacco addiction.

In Africa, 12.2% of children are at risk of smoking tobacco because of their exposure, while 19.1% of them currently use tobacco products. '. The prevalence of tobacco usage among Ghanaian teens was observed to be 8.9%. In addition, retailers readily sell cigarettes to young people who already smoke (71.5%) without asking them about their age. However, the study also discovered that, currently, 1.3% and 4.9% of people use electronic cigarettes and shisha, respectively. Most critically, girls were significantly more likely than boys to use these new tobacco products today . Significantly, the current rate of tobacco use among teenagers and young people is twice that of adults (4.9%), which poses a serious risk to the general public's health. It is particularly essential since these data show that children and teens and women are currently exposed to these new emerging tobacco products, necessitating prompt governmental direction for efficient regulation.

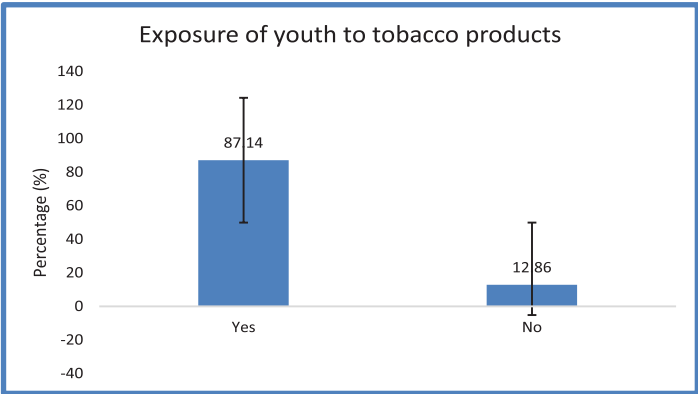
(Shisha, Electronic Cigarettes, Smokeless tobacco, and Cigarette)



Additionally, a Greater Accra poll found that more than 30% of participants were smokers at the time of the survey, with the majority having started as young as age 9. The study linked three primary misleading marketing tactics used by the tobacco industry to the high incidence of tobacco use among young people:

- (1) facilitating teenage access to tobacco products;
- (2) making cigarettes extremely affordable; and
- (3) selling cigarettes in single sticks.

This is important because the industry's actions are in violation of and weaken our country's tobacco control legislation. These are also signs of how poorly the government is implementing and enforcing the law to safeguard its citizens. As a result of the tobacco industry's misleading marketing tactics, it is also believed that 90% of children and teens are exposed to tobacco products in their communities, highlighting the need for strong laws to prevent youth from starting to smoke.



More specifically, smoking has been connected to a higher likelihood of a worse disease prognosis since the current COVID-19 pandemic began. This highlights the need for immediate action, such as the outright prohibition of some new emerging tobacco products, such as shisha, as done by some African nations including Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania on the grounds of public health.

Opinion poll on tobacco Taxation

Will you support a tax increase on tobacco (cigarette) products in Ghana?

Response	Percentage	Count
Yes	72%	2741
No	28%	1066

Will increase in taxes on tobacco products increase government revenue?

Response	Percentage	Count
Yes	82%	1695
No	18%	371

As part of efforts to ascertain the level of support or otherwise for tobacco taxation, the Vision for Alternative Development (VALD) conducted an online opinion poll.

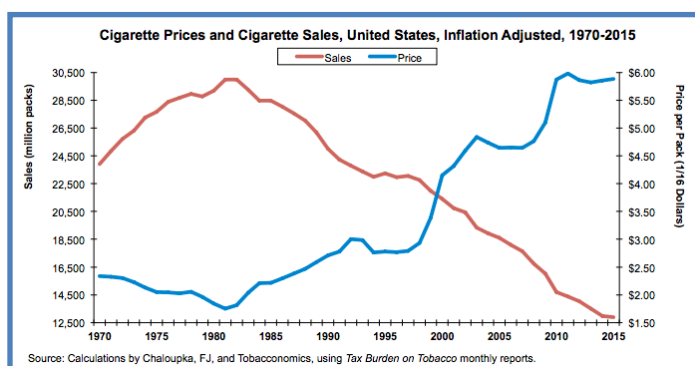
Respondents reacted to two separate questions, and the outcomes are clear indication that Ghanaians are in full support of tax measure on tobacco products. Out of the 3807 respondents, 2741 (72%) will support a tax increase on tobacco (cigarette) products while 1066 (28%) says no. Out of the 2066 respondents, 1695 (82%) indicated that taxes on tobacco will increase government revenue while 371 (18%) responded no.

Current Policies in Place

To safeguard the general population, especially children, the Public Health Act 851 was passed, including its section on "Tobacco Control Measures." Sub-sections (1) "prohibit the sale to and by minors," (2) "public education on the detrimental consequences of tobacco smoking," and (3) "cessation services to smokers who want to quit", are designed to protect the kids. Although the present rules have been in place and have been upheld for more than ten years, the country's teenage tobacco usage is continuously increasing . This may be partly ascribed to ineffective implementation and enforcement, as well as the government's inability to commit funds for tobacco control initiatives due to competing health priorities.

What Can be done differently?

Increased cigarette taxes have been demonstrated to discourage young people from starting to smoke. Because they save lives, fight disease, and provide money for the government to fund public health services, these levies are regarded as win-win measures. This is significant since it is clear from decades of studies conducted around the world that boosting cigarette costs is one of the most successful tobacco control measures. It has been shown to lower smoking, particularly among children, adolescents, women and the poor in society.



The tobacco industry continues to fight against measures that are known to best practices, such as raising cigarette taxes, which are the greatest approaches to preventing and lessening smoking. This is vital for the tobacco business because, as their internal documents below demonstrate, if proper tax rules are enforced, there will be a significant decline in their profit or result in the collapse of their fatal products:

The overwhelming body of evidence indicates that the tobacco industry's main objective is to undermine public health policies for its lethal products to prosper and to generate money at the expense of public health.

1. "Of all the concerns, there is one - taxation - that alarms us the most. While marketing restrictions and public and passive smoking [restrictions] do reduce volume, in our experience taxation reduces it much more severely. Our concern for taxation is, therefore, central to our thinking"

.....Philip Morris

2. "A high cigarette price, more than any other cigarette attribute, has the most dramatic impact on the share of the quitting population...price, not tar level, is the main driving force for quitting"

.....Philip Morris (11)

3. "It is clear that price has a pronounced effect on the smoking prevalence of teenagers, and that the goals of reducing teenage smoking"

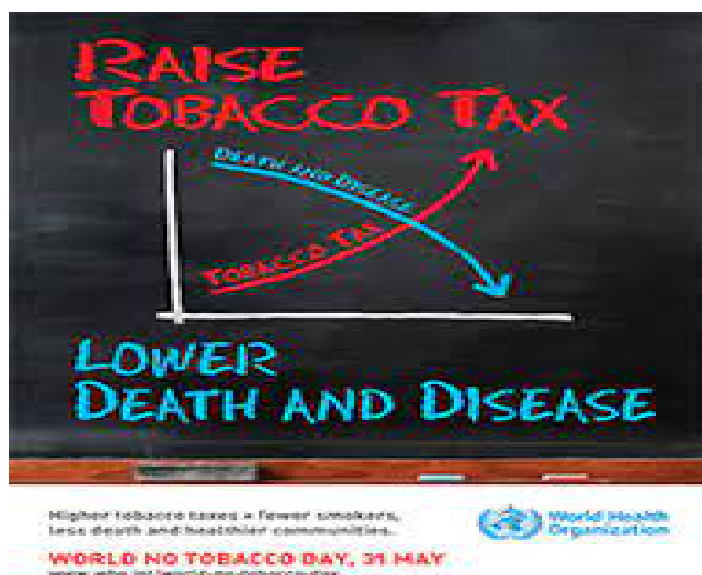
.....Philip Morris

The story is significantly different in nations with comprehensive tobacco control legislation, which is important for Ghana because its current partial tobacco control law leaves openings for the tobacco business to exploit.

Give one country that implemented major tobacco tax increases that reduced use and raised government revenue as an example: In 2013, the Philippines passed the historic Sin Tax law, one of the biggest increases in cigarette taxes ever passed, to improve public health. Strong political will and popular support were acquired for the law to bring in new tax income for the government to pay for a universal health insurance scheme.

Only the tobacco sin tax brought in US\$ 1.6 billion for the nation, 85% of which went toward funding its Universal Health Care Program. Additionally, it allowed the government to pay for the health insurance premiums of 14.7 million low-income participants in 2014.⁷

Ghana and other African countries are far behind in terms of tobacco taxation with only two countries (Madagascar and Mauritius) complying with the WHO recommended share of excise tax in the retail price of at least 70%.



Conclusion

A significant price rise on cigarettes presents a "win-win" policy choice for the government, will boost income, and will decrease use. Evidence from numerous nations demonstrates that effective tax hikes result in a decrease in tobacco smoking prevalence, consumption, initiation, and inequities. Most significantly, it gives the government financial room to undertake public health initiatives like programs for universal health coverage.

As a vital policy tool to support the current tobacco control efforts, it is therefore advised that the government consider significantly raising the cigarette tax Ghana can follow President Obama's bright example by achieving a historic victory for the well-being of American children by raising federal tobacco taxes by \$1 and expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program. By lowering cigarette usage, the new law hopes to provide millions of youngsters with a healthier future.

Recommendation

1. Review current Tobacco control laws to comprehensive Smoke-free laws by eliminating the Designated Smoking Areas (DSA)
2. Review the current tax regime from Advalerom to Specific to allow effective price increases on tobacco products to protect, children, youth, young adults, women and the poor
3. Perform regular adjustments of prices on tobacco products and other sinful products to take care of inflation.
4. Restricted marketing and sales: Banning point-of-sale displays, advertising to minors, and the sponsorship of public events by tobacco companies.
5. Enforcement of smoking bans in public places such as schools, sport event centres, workplaces, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, and parks, as well as in public transportation and cars transporting minors.
6. Enforce the law on the sale to and by minors and the sale of cigarette single sticks
7. Educate students and families on the negative health consequences of tobacco use as part school curriculum.

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