



Cigarette Prices and Smoking Among Youth in 16 African Countries:

Evidence from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey

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BACKGROUND

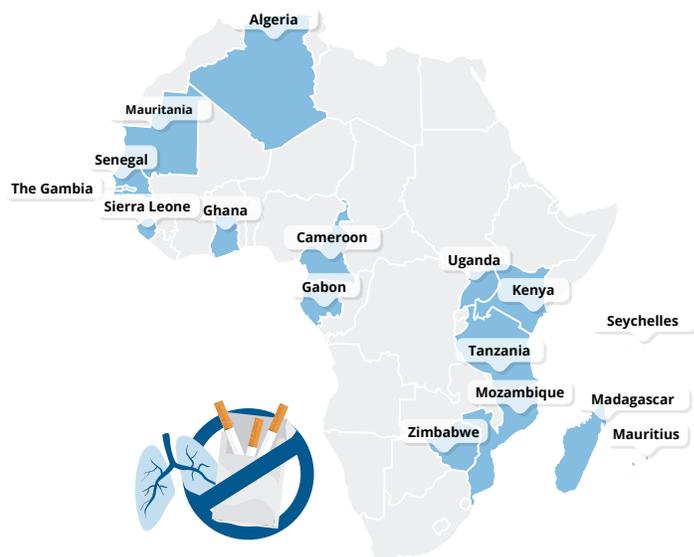
The number of people who smoke in Africa is projected to increase with the rapid population growth so expansively that scholars have flagged the continent as the future epicentre of the tobacco epidemic [1]. Since most people who start smoking initiate smoking during their adolescent years [2], tobacco control strategies targeting youth will be essential to prevent a future tobacco epidemic in Africa. While a growing body of evidence from Africa shows that the demand for cigarettes is price inelastic among adults [3], only a handful of studies examine the association between cigarette prices and youth smoking outcomes.

When the price of cigarettes increases, the consumption of cigarettes is expected to decrease for two reasons:

1. Some of the people who smoke quit, meaning that the number of people who smoke (also referred to as smoking participation) decreases.
2. Some of the people who smoke but do not quit will reduce the number of cigarettes smoked, causing a decrease in smoking intensity.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to provide new evidence on the association between cigarette prices, smoking prevalence (smoking participation) and the number of cigarettes smoked (conditional cigarette demand/smoking intensity) among youth living in 16 African countries.



DATA

This study uses publicly available, individual-level data on smoking behaviour, environments and attitudes from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) to study the association between cigarette prices, smoking participation and smoking intensity in selected African countries. The 16 countries included in the analysis are: Algeria, Cameroon, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

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RESULTS

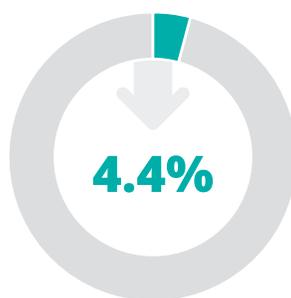
Higher cigarette prices are associated with lower cigarette demand across African countries, for both smoking prevalence and the intensity of cigarette consumption by people who smoke.

Data revealed that a **10% INCREASE** in cigarette price will:

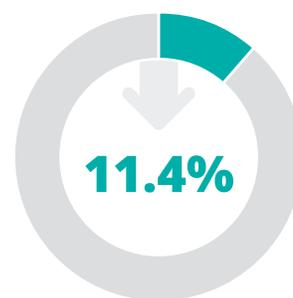
... decrease youth smoking prevalence by 7.0%;



... decrease the number of cigarettes smoked by youths who continue smoking by 4.4%; and



... decrease overall cigarette consumption by 11.4%.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Increasing tobacco taxation can serve as a particularly effective tool for reducing youth tobacco use in the 16 sub-Saharan African countries included in this study.

Increased taxation can decrease teenage smoking directly through the effect of price increases on smoking behaviour and indirectly through altering parents' smoking behaviour. There is substantial literature that indicates that adult smoking prevalence and smoking intensity decrease when cigarette prices increase [3].

The price elasticity estimates for youth in this study are higher (more elastic) than price elasticity estimates for adults on the African continent [4-7]. This means that youth are more sensitive to price changes than adults, making tobacco taxation a particularly effective intervention to reduce youth cigarette use on the continent.

Since governments can influence the retail price of cigarettes through increased excise taxation, this study suggests that increasing excise taxes may discourage youth smoking and, ultimately, prevent the continent from becoming the future epicenter of the tobacco epidemic.

The full paper:



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