

Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS)

Executive Country Report: **Turkey**

May 2010



Executive summary

Tobacco use is a major preventable cause of premature death and disease, presently causing over 5 million deaths each year and expected to cause over 8 million deaths yearly by 2030. Within the European Region, tobacco is responsible for approximately 1.6 million deaths. The World Health Organization (WHO) – Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) aims to reduce the global burden of disease and death caused by tobacco, thereby protecting present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. This will be accomplished by providing global policy leadership -- promoting the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), as well as the MPOWER package of tobacco policies as a key entry point to the FCTC. Within the European Region, 46 countries and the European Community have ratified the Treaty. Turkey ratified the FCTC in 2004.

In August 2006, the WHO and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) convened an expert consultation to discuss adult tobacco surveillance and made recommendations for the development of a standard survey protocol. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) enables countries to collect data on key tobacco control measures in the adult population. The aim of the GATS is to collect data on tobacco use and tobacco control measures using a standardized questionnaire, sample design and data collection/management procedures among adults aged 15 years or over. Results from the GATS will assist countries in the formulation, tracking and implementation of effective tobacco control interventions, and countries will be able to compare results of their survey with results from other countries implementing the GATS.

Methods

The GATS survey was implemented in Turkey in November 2008. The sample design included all settlements in Turkey, except for villages with a population less than 200. Based on the results of the 2006 Turkey Time Use Survey, a sample of 11,200 households was made for the GATS. The sampling method of the survey is a three-staged stratified systematic cluster sample. In the first stage, a total of 400 primary sampling units (PSUs) were selected - 200 PSUs from urban areas and 200 PSUs from rural areas. In the second stage, 28 households were selected systematically within each selected PSU. In the last stage, one eligible individual aged 15 years and over was selected randomly within each selected household by using a listing from the household roster that constituted all eligible individuals by gender. The overall household response rate was 93.7%; 94.8% urban and 92.7% rural. In total, the household roster was completed in 9322 households. The individual response rates were 97.0% overall, 97.7% urban, and 96.3% rural. In total, 9030 persons completed the survey.

Tobacco use

A total of 31.2% of adults (approximately 16 million) aged 15 years and over were currently smoking in Turkey. Men (47.9%) were more likely to smoke tobacco than women (15.2%). Approximately 12 million men and 4 million women smoked tobacco. Almost half of men (43.8%) and 11.6% of women were current daily smokers (11 million men and 3 million women).

Over 9 in 10 current smokers smoke manufactured cigarettes (92.6% men, 98.0% women).

Almost two-thirds (66.1%) of current daily cigarette smokers consumed more than half a pack of cigarettes (11 cigarettes) per day; 15.5% consumed more than 20 cigarettes daily. On average, men consume more cigarettes per day (19.3) than women (12.2).

The minimum age for purchasing tobacco products is 18 years of age in the current legislation. Nevertheless, more than half (58.9%) of the daily smokers started smoking on daily basis before this legal age. Men (62.5%) were more likely than women (48.9%) to initiate daily smoking before age 18. The average initiation age for men was 16.6 and women 17.8.

The number of cigarettes smoked per day, and having the first cigarette within 30 minutes after awakening were possible measures of tobacco dependency included in the GATS. Nearly half (45.4%) of the men smoke a pack a day, and one in five (17.7%) smoke more than a pack of cigarettes daily (heavy smokers), 7.6% of the women smoke more than a pack a day. Overall, 41.1% of daily smokers smoked tobacco within 30 minutes of awakening – 12.8% within 5 minutes of waking. Men (42.6%) were more likely than women (35.6%) to have their first cigarette within 30 minutes after waking.

Smoking tobacco in water pipes (2.3%) is an emerging form of tobacco use in Turkey, especially among young adults. Use of water pipe was highest for men age 15-24 (8.1%) and those living in urban areas (4.9%)

Smoking cessation

Slightly more than one fourth (26.5%) of ever daily smokers have quit smoking. Almost half (44.8%) of smokers (current and former smokers who quit in the past 12 months) made a quit attempt in the past year. However, only 15.8% of those who made a quit attempt in the past 12 months were able to successfully quit.

Approximately half (46.9%) of smokers visited a health care provider in the past 12 months. Having visited a health care provider was higher among women smokers (63.9%) than men (41.0%). Nearly half (49.0%) of the smokers who visited a health care provider were asked by the provider if they smoked. Over 8 in 10 (83.1%) of those asked about their smoking status by their health care provider were advised to quit. Only 8.3% of those advised to quit were successful in their attempt to quit.

Over half (53.0%) of current cigarette smokers stated they were interested in quitting; but only 10.0% stated they planned to quit in the next month. In total, 8.4 million current cigarette smokers were interested in quitting - 6.4 million men and 2 million women.

Exposure to second hand smoking (SHS)

At the time of the GATS, November 2008, over 6 million adults (38.5%) who work indoors reported that they were exposed to SHS in indoor workplaces. An estimated 5 million men and 1 million women who work indoors were exposed to SHS at their work. Over 2.6 million (31.6%) non-smokers were exposed to SHS at their work.

For adults in Turkey, 30.5 million (59.7%) live in homes where smoking is allowed. Almost 20 million of Turkey's non smokers live in homes where smoking is allowed. Over 10 million non-smokers live in homes where someone smokes at least daily inside the home.

SHS exposure continues to be high, mostly in restaurants prior to implementation of the smoke free law. More than half of the men (57.7%) and 52.3% of the women exposed to SHS in restaurants. Despite the smoking ban that covers all public places (excluding the hospital-ity sector), one in six (16.5%) people were exposed to SHS while using public transportation and one in ten (11.3%) were exposed to SHS in public buildings and state offices. Six percent of the group stated that they were exposed to SHS in health care establishments.

Tobacco economics

Those who purchased manufactured cigarettes were most likely to make their most recent purchase in a shop (92.5%), followed by a kiosk (5.8%). On average, current manufactured cigarette smokers spent 86.7 Turkish Lira (TRL) on cigarettes in the past month and they purchased 31.3 cigarettes, on average, at their last purchase.

Advertising, sponsorship and promotion

Among adults in Turkey, 88.8% noticed an anti-cigarette smoking message during the past 30 days; with highest exposure on television (85.5%), followed by newspapers and magazines (46.3%), billboards (36.0%), and radio (23.0%). Those living in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to have noticed anti-cigarette messages in newspapers and magazines, on the radio, or on billboards.

Among current smokers of manufactured cigarettes, 95.1% noticed text health warnings on cigarette packages during the past 30 days, and almost half (46.5%) of the smokers thought about quitting because of the warning.

Although pro-cigarette marketing has been banned since 1996, 13.3% of adults in Turkey still noticed some type of pro-cigarette marketing (advertisement, sponsorship or promotion) in the past 30 days.

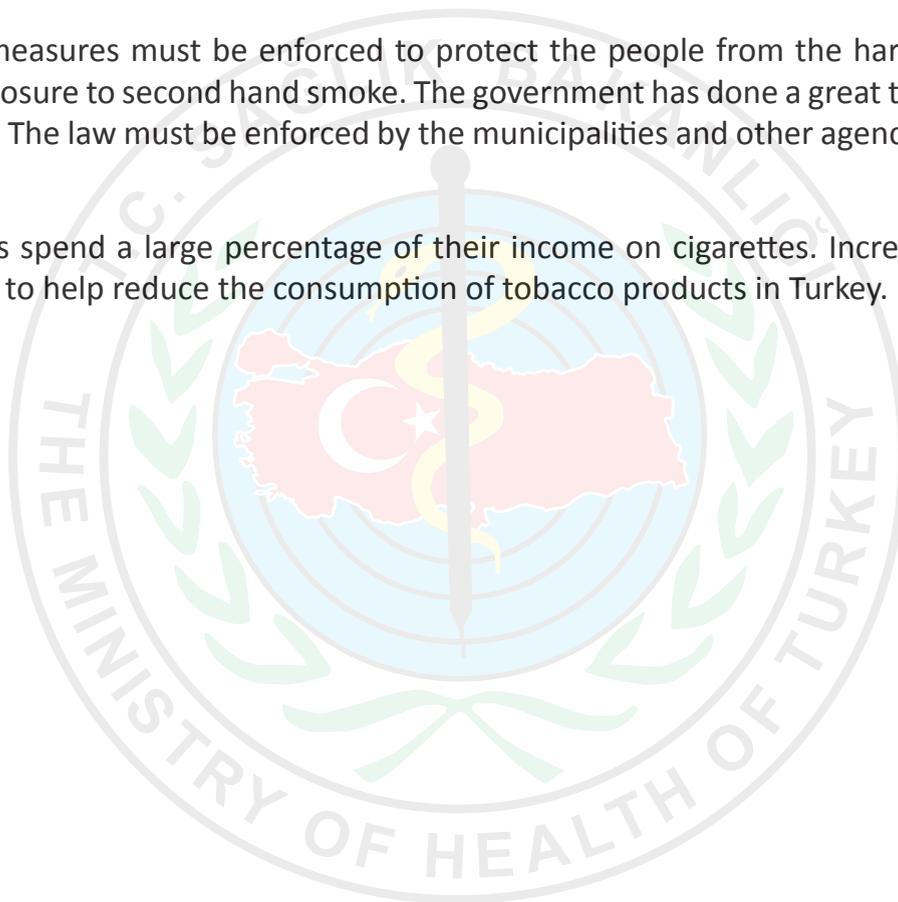
Advertising (7.1%) was the most common type of pro-cigarette marketing compared to promotions (5.3%) and sports sponsorship (3.3%). Advertising was highest on television (3.4%) and in shops (2.7%) compared to all other media. Cigarette promotions were highest on clothing items with a brand name or logo (2.8%) and receiving free samples (2.5%). The 15-24 age group (5.3%) was more than two times more likely than the 25 and over group (2.1%) to have a clothing item with a brand name or logo on it.

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions

Overall, 95.5% of adults believe breathing other people's smoke causes serious illness and 97.2% believe smoking causes serious illness. Of those believe smoking causes serious illness, 98.0% believe smoking causes lung cancer, 95.5% believe smoking causes heart attacks, and 83.7% believe smoking causes stroke.

Policy Implications

- Turkey has alarmingly high rates of cigarette smoking - 16 million adults smoke. Smoking is the leading cause of death among men in Turkey, and Turkey has one of the highest male smoking rates in the WHO European Region.
- Adult smokers in Turkey want to quit: Over half said they wanted to quit and 45% made a quit attempt.
- Tobacco control policies measuring banning advertising, promotion and sponsorship have been successfully implemented in Turkey. Only 7% of adults are exposed to tobacco industry advertising (one of lowest in the world) (Turkey has strong penalties and they are enforced)
- Policy measures must be enforced to protect the people from the harms of tobacco and exposure to second hand smoke. The government has done a great thing in passing the law. The law must be enforced by the municipalities and other agencies at the local level.
- Smokers spend a large percentage of their income on cigarettes. Increased taxes are needed to help reduce the consumption of tobacco products in Turkey.





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