

Compliance with Smoke-free Law in Hospitality Venues: An Observational Study in Turkey

Background: In 2008, Turkey passed a law banning smoking in all indoor public places, including bars, cafés, and restaurants.¹ A compliance study from 2012 showed that secondhand smoke remained a serious burden for Turkey's public health.²



The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) secondhand smoke indicators showed no improvement for hospitality venues in 2016 when compared to 2012.³ More efforts are needed to fully implement the legislation to improve or even to maintain compliance. Between 2019 and 2020, the Ministry of Health of Turkey undertook cross-provincial inspections in three cities (Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir) in order to enhance compliance.

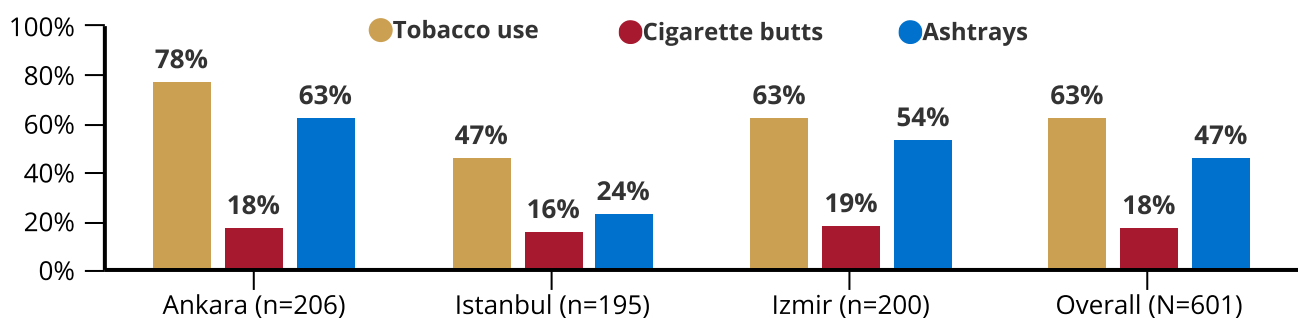
Objective: This study assessed the level of compliance in hospitality venues with Turkey's smoke-free law in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir after the implementation of the cross-provincial inspections.

METHODS:

An observational study was undertaken in the three largest cities of Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, between June and July 2021. Data collectors used smartphones equipped with the survey application to support observational data collection, which was conducted during business hours. A sample of 601 venues was observed across the three cities: Ankara (n=206), Istanbul (n=195), and Izmir (n=200). The following was the distribution in terms of venue-types: restaurants (n=303), European style cafés (n=247), traditional teahouses (n=30), and waterpipe venues (n=21).

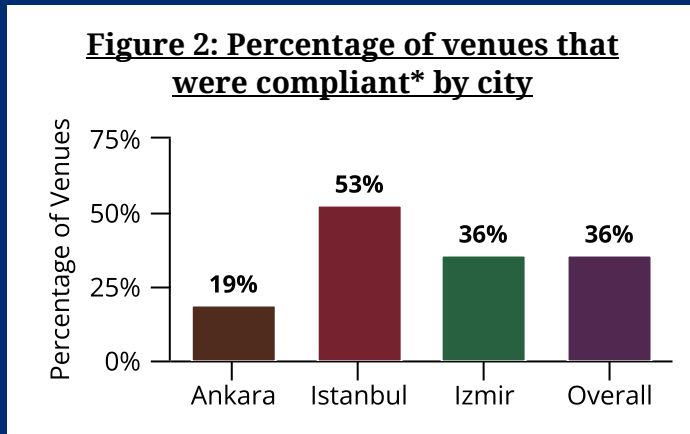
KEY FINDINGS:

Figure 1. Percentage of venues with observed tobacco use, cigarette butts, and ashtrays inside, by city



- Overall, 63% (n=377) of the venues had people smoking tobacco products inside, while 84% (n=504) of the venues observed had people smoking immediately outside the venue.
- Ankara had the highest number of venues observed with people smoking tobacco products inside the venue (78%; n=161), while Istanbul had the lowest (47%; n=90).
- Cigarettes were the most common products observed being consumed. 63% of the venues (n=377) had at least one person smoking cigarettes inside. Among these venues, nearly one-third (32%; n=121) had more than 10 people smoking cigarettes during the time of observation.
- Forty percent of the people (n=240) smoking tobacco products inside smoked near the main entrance of the venue.

- Eighteen percent of the venues had cigarette butts observed inside the venue, of which 40% had at least 10 butts counted. In terms of the cities, 18% of venues in Ankara, 16% of venues in Istanbul, and 19% of venues in Izmir had cigarette butts observed inside.
- Approximately half (47%; n=285) of the venues had an ashtray placed inside the venue. Among the three cities, Istanbul had the lowest percentage of venues with ashtrays (n=24%; n=47), while Ankara had the highest (63%; n=130).
- Almost none (1%) of the venue managers tried to warn the people that were seen smoking inside the venue during the time of observation.



*Venue was considered compliant with the composite indicator assessing “no evidence of smoking” if it met the following criteria:

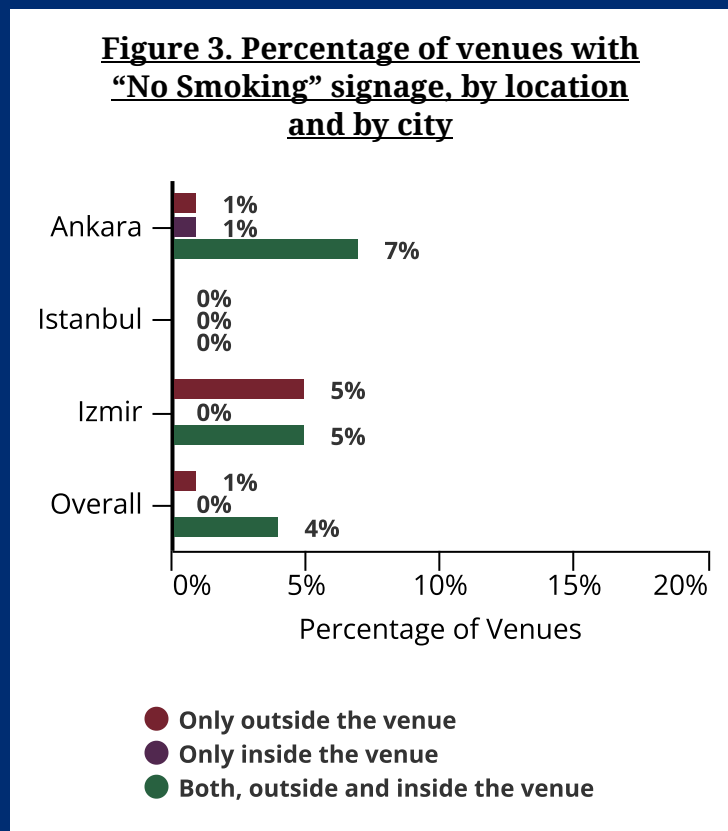
1. No one observed smoking inside;
2. No cigarette butts found inside;
3. No ashtrays or other instruments used to hold cigarette ash found inside.

- Overall, approximately 19% of venues in Ankara, 53% of venues observed in Istanbul, and 36% of venues in Izmir were compliant with the composite indicator.

“NO SMOKING” SIGNAGE:

Overall, 4% of the venues (n=26) had “No Smoking” signage visibly posted at the main entrance as well as inside the venue. Six venues were non-compliant with the signage specifications required by the law.

- In Ankara, 7% of the venues had a “No Smoking” sign displayed both outside and inside; 1% had signage displayed either outside or inside only.
- In Izmir, 5% of the venues had a “No Smoking” sign displayed both outside and inside, and also 5% of the venues had signage just on the outside; none of the venues (0%) had “No Smoking” signage posted only on the inside.
- None of the venues in Istanbul had “No Smoking” signage visibly displayed anywhere.
- In terms of the venue-type, waterpipe venues had the highest percentage of visible “No Smoking” signage (outside: 14%; inside: 14%), followed by European-style cafés (outside: 7%; inside: 6%)”



WATERPIPE:

A total of 19 venues were observed that had people smoking waterpipes inside the venue; of which, 10 were observed in venues in Izmir, followed by six venues in Istanbul, and three in Ankara. Of these 19 venues:

- All 19 venues had a health warning illustrated on the waterpipe bottle.
- All 19 venues had special mouthpieces distributed to each user.
- 17 venues did not have special hoses distributed to each user.

DESIGNATED SMOKING AREAS:

A total of 22 Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) were observed across all venues, of which 91% (n=20) were found in Ankara. In terms of venue-type, 12 were found in European-style cafés and 10 were found in restaurants. Three (14%) venues had a DSA sign posted indicating that the space was a DSA.

DISCUSSION:

These findings suggest that, despite cross-provincial inspections in these three cities, compliance with the current smoke-free law remains low. Only 36% of the venues were compliant with the composite indicator assessing “no evidence of smoking.” Compliance with no-smoking signage varied by city, with “No Smoking” signage absent in all venues observed in Istanbul.

Achieving compliance with national tobacco control policy is crucial due to the serious health risks associated with tobacco smoke. Enhanced smoke-free enforcement is needed in these hospitality venues across all three cities. This includes enforcement efforts concerning the display of no-smoking signs.

Further, despite the fact that designated smoking areas are prohibited under the current policy, a total of 22 such areas were observed during the study. The findings from this study underscore the need to also launch social marketing campaigns.

References:

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2. Navas-Acien A, Çarkoğlu A, Ergör G, Hayran M, Ergüder T, Kaplan B, Susan J, Magid H, Pollak J, Cohen JE. Compliance with smoke-free legislation within public buildings: a cross-sectional study in Turkey. Bull World Health Organ. 2016 Feb 1;94(2):92-102. doi: 10.2471/BLT.15.158238. Epub 2015 Nov 23. PMID: 26908959; PMCID: PMC4750436.
3. Global Adult Tobacco Survey Turkey 2016. Retrieved July 18, 2022, from https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/GATS_Turkey_2016_FactSheet.pdf

Funding source: This work was supported by the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use.



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