

State of the Evidence: Tourism Economy Impacts  
Following Smoke-Free Policy Implementation

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Background

Article 8 of the WHO FCTC obligates its Parties to enact policies that create 100% smoke-free (SF) enclosed workplaces, public places, and public transport.

In some jurisdictions, the tourism sector has requested exemptions, citing concerns that these policies could have negative economic impacts.

This narrative literature review identified studies that reported economic impacts of SF policies on the tourism sector, including hotels, casinos/gambling venues, and sporting events.

Methods

- Search included peer-reviewed and gray literature, published between January 1, 2004–June 18, 2024
- Scopus, Embase, and JSTOR databases were used
- Search terms included variations of “smoke-free” AND “tourism,” OR “hospitality,” OR “beach,” OR “casino,” OR “hotel,” and other related terms
- Studies included if they reported economic impacts of SF policies on a tourism sector
- Studies initially screened by title and abstract, then full text






Results

- Database searching identified 692 studies; 37 met inclusion criteria
- Nearly all identified studies (95%) focused on economic impacts in high-income countries; most (73%) reported neutral or positive economic impacts from SF policies
- Key themes included:
  - Hotels experienced stable or improved revenues, increased customer satisfaction, and enhanced employee health outcomes after going SF
  - Some casinos experienced short-term revenue declines, but these were often temporary
  - Comprehensive SF policies were more likely to yield positive economic benefits

Conclusions

This review supports the argument that comprehensive SF policies provide both health and economic benefits. Findings can help policymakers counter tobacco industry claims and build political support for stronger SF policies, especially in jurisdictions that have robust tourism sectors. It is also noted that there are few studies from low- and middle-income countries, highlighting the need for further research in these jurisdictions.

Comprehensive **smoke-free**  
policies provide both  
**health and economic benefits**  
to the tourism sector

Tourism Sector		% of Studies	Economic Impacts	% of Studies
Lodging		57% (n=21)	<b>Neutral impact or positive impact</b>	76% (n=28)
Casinos/ Gambling		38% (n=14)	Neutral impact	38% (n=14)
Sports		3% (n=1)	Positive impact	24% (n=9)
Beaches		3% (n=1)	Neutral <i>and</i> positive impact	14% (n=5)
Tourism demand		5% (n=2)	<b>Mixed impact*</b>	14% (n=5)
			<b>Negative impact</b>	11% (n=4)

\*Includes one of these combinations:

- neutral, positive, and negative (n=3)
- neutral and negative (n=1)
- positive and negative (n=1)



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**Competing Interests:**  
None. The authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this poster and they do not necessarily represent the views, decisions or policies of the institutions with which they are affiliated.

