

Smoke-free Views of School Principals and Hospitality Venue Owners and Employees in Turkey

Fact Sheet

Understanding levels of compliance with smoke-free legislation, as well as factors related to compliance, is key to reducing secondhand smoke exposure. To identify barriers to compliance and opportunities to improve implementation of the law in Turkey, we conducted a survey of school principals and hospitality owners and employees.

Implications for public health

Improve implementation of the law in hospitality venues, as venue owners and employees openly acknowledge that smoking occurs in indoor areas of hospitality venues.

Maintain all school spaces smoke-free, including outdoor areas. These efforts are particularly important to protect children from secondhand smoke and exposure to smoking behavior.

Increase knowledge of the seriousness of the health effects of secondhand smoke among hospitality venue owners and employees, as well as school principals.

Background

In 2013, we measured compliance with smoke-free legislation in public buildings in 12 cities in Turkey, finding that compliance was generally high across all of the cities except in hospitality venues, especially bars/nightclubs and traditional coffee houses, and in various dining areas.

For this research, fieldworkers visited seven of the original cities between May and September 2014. They conducted interviews with school principals and hospitality venue owners/managers and employees of a subset of schools and venues previously observed.

All results

Participant characteristics

We interviewed 30 school principals (mean age 45 years, 80% men), 100 venue owners (mean age 40 years, 94% men) and 300 hospitality venue employees (mean age 28 years, 90% men).

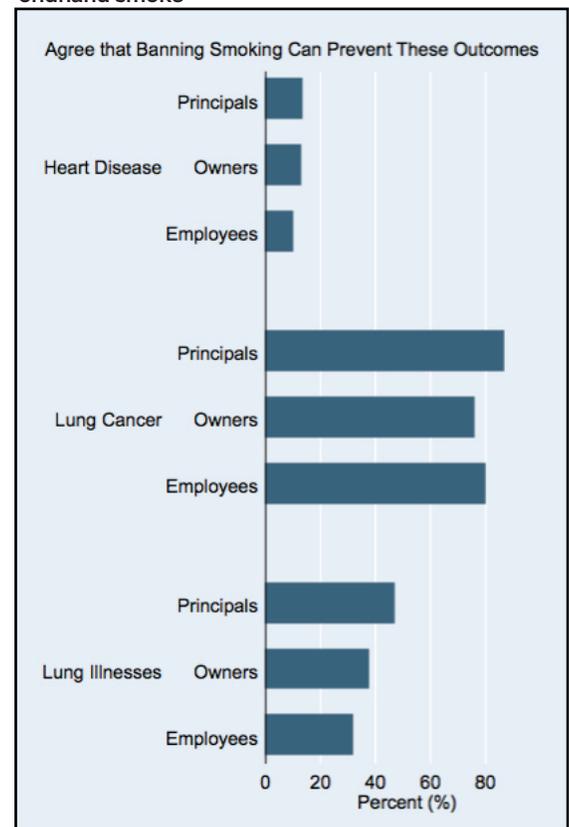
The majority of hospitality venue owners and employees were current smokers (66% and 69%, respectively), whereas just over a quarter of school principals reported being current smokers (27%).

Smoke-free knowledge

School principals (100%) and venue owners and employees (99%) had excellent knowledge of the extent of the smoke-free legislation in Turkey.

However, very few respondents believed that banning smoking can prevent heart disease—only 13 percent of school principals and venue owners and 10 percent of venue employees (Figure 1). Knowledge was better for the prevention of lung cancer but it was also low for lung illnesses in general. Overall, 60 percent of school principals and less than 30 percent of venue owners and employees strongly agreed that cigarette smoke is dangerous for non-smokers' health (data not shown).

Figure 1. Opinions about the health effects of secondhand smoke



Compliance levels

Hospitality venues

Seventeen percent of owners and 15 percent of employees reported that smoking occurred most days in indoor places at their venues. By type of venue, 50 percent of bar/nightclub owners acknowledged that smoking indoors occurred most days, followed by 17 percent of coffee house owners and 6 percent of restaurant/cafe owners. The majority of hospitality venue owners (90%) and employees (95%) reported that smoking in outdoor areas, near entrances or in patios/gardens also occurred most days.

Schools

All principals indicated that there was no smoking in indoor places, but 24 percent said they personally smoked in outdoor areas and 27 percent said teachers smoked in outdoor areas.

Opinions and perceptions of smoke-free public places

Indoor areas

Most participants indicated that smoking should not be allowed in schools, universities, hospitals, government buildings, shopping malls and taxis (Figure 2). At least 40 percent of school principals, venue owners and employees said that smoking should be allowed in some areas of restaurants, cafes, coffee houses and bars. More school principals than hospitality venue owners and employees indicated that smoking should be allowed in some indoor areas in schools, universities, hospitals and government buildings.

Outdoor areas

Support for smoke-free outdoor areas ranged from more than 30 percent for parks to more than 60 percent for playgrounds.

Inspections and enforcement

Inspections of the hospitality venues were reported as very low by employees (10%) but very high by venue owners (88%). Inspections of smoking in schools were low. School principals reported that smoking inspections were conducted by the Ministry of Health (27%) or the Ministry of Education (33%).

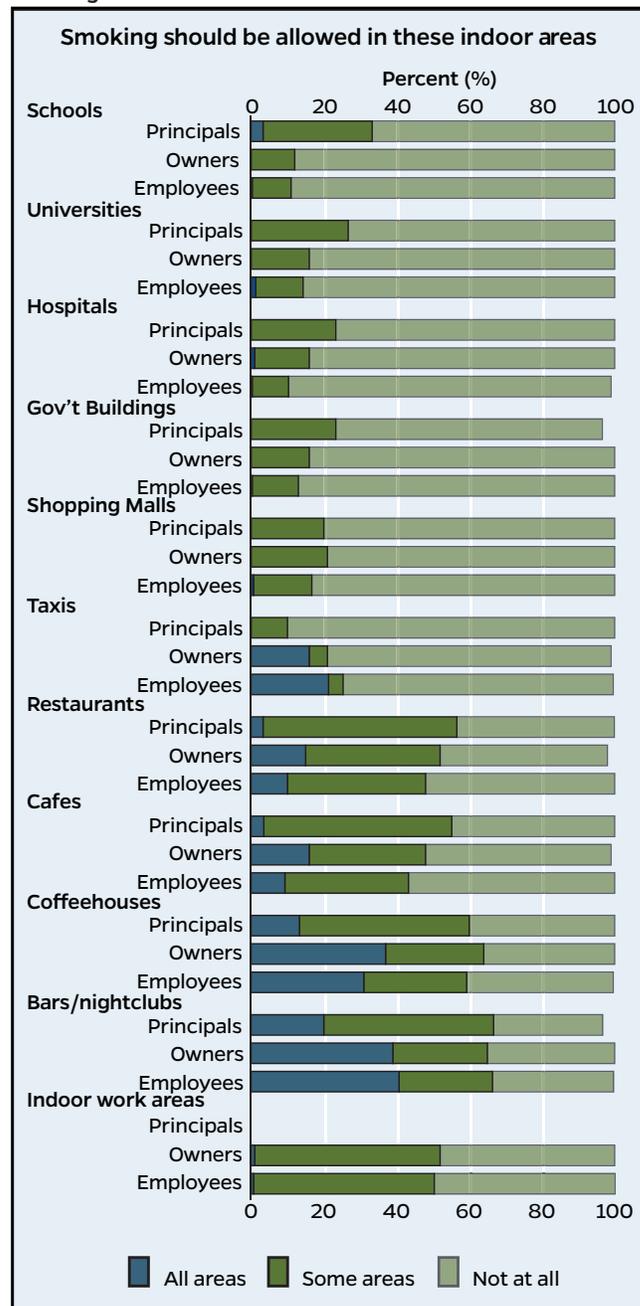
Only 5 percent of venue owners and 1 percent of venue employees said they would ask employees to stop smoking in hospitality venues. By comparison, 21 percent of owners and 19 percent of employees would ask customers to stop.

School principals who were former or never smokers indicated that they enforced the smoke-free law very well among school personnel and students (more than 85%), compared with 75 percent of current smokers.

The study was conducted in collaboration between investigators at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Kadir Has University, Hacettepe University and Izmir Dokuz Eylül School of Medicine.



Figure 2: Opinions regarding types of places where indoor smoking should be allowed*



* Percentages sometimes do not add up to 100, due to some participants refusing to answer the question or answering with "don't know or not sure."

This work was supported by an award from the Institute for Global Tobacco Control at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health with funding from the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use.