

Real-world effectiveness of national tobacco advertising bans among smokers: A comparison of six EU-countries from the EUREST-PLUS Project

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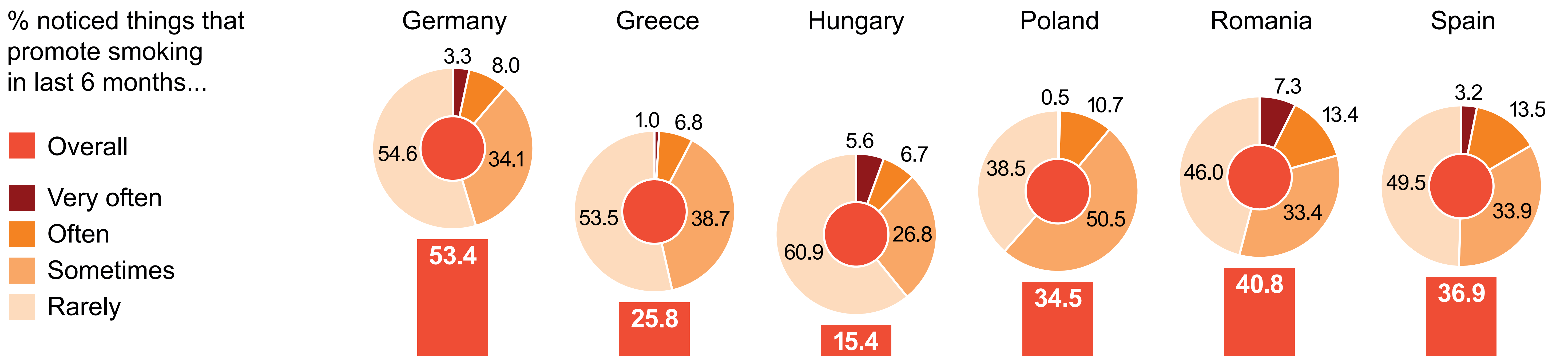
Purpose

Comprehensive tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) bans are known to effectively reduce smoking prevalence. We aimed to study country-differences in self-reported exposure to tobacco advertising in general, and in various media and localities (TV, radio, print, social media/internet, posters/billboards, bars/pubs, points of sale, events) in relation to national TAPS legislation in six EU countries.

Methods

We used data from the Wave 1 of the International Tobacco Control 6 European Country (ITC 6E) Project, comprising n=6000 adult smokers from Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Spain. Country-specific prevalence and 95 %-confidence intervals of self-reported tobacco advertising exposure were examined in relation to national TAPS legislation.

% noticed things that promote smoking in last 6 months...



	Ban	No ban	0 %	45 %
...on TV	8.5 (6.8–10.2)	2.3 (1.4–3.2)	3.7 (2.5–4.8)	10.7 (8.8–12.6)
...on radio	2.4 (1.4–3.3)	1.0 (0.4–1.6)	2.3 (1.4–3.3)	5.5 (4.1–6.9)
...in newspapers/magazines	19.1 (16.7–21.5)	3.4 (2.2–4.5)	2.6 (1.6–3.6)	6.7 (5.2–8.3)
...in social media/on internet	14.4 (12.3–16.6)	5.1 (3.8–6.5)	3.2 (2.1–4.3)	9.4 (7.6–11.3)
...on posters/billboards	38.6 (35.6–41.7)	9.3 (7.5–11.1)	1.7 (0.9–2.5)	6.0 (4.6–7.5)
...in bars/pubs	15.4 (13.1–17.6)	4.7 (3.4–6.0)	1.4 (0.7–2.1)	8.4 (6.6–10.1)
...inside POS	40.3 (37.3–43.4)	16.9 (14.6–19.3)	5.3 (3.9–6.7)	11.6 (9.6–13.6)
...at events	10.5 (8.6–12.4)	2.0 (1.1–2.8)	1.0 (0.4–1.7)	4.3 (3.0–5.5)

% support a complete ban on tobacco advertising inside POS



Figure 1: Awareness of tobacco advertising overall, and in various media and localities, and support of a complete ban on tobacco advertising inside points of sale (POS).

Results

Overall, 34.4 % (95 %-CI: 33.3–35.7) of smokers reported to have noticed things that promote smoking (including advertising) in the last 6 months, with exposure varying from 15.4 % (13.1–17.6) in Hungary to 53.4 % (50.3–56.5) in Germany. Self-reported exposure to tobacco advertising was lowest on the radio (3.5 %, 3.1–4.0), and highest at points of sale (17.9 %, 17.0–18.9), with wide variation across countries. Exposure tended to be higher in countries with less comprehensive TAPS legislation and vice versa, indicating a correlation. Support of certain bans on tobacco advertising was lowest in countries with highest percentages of smokers recalling having noticed things that promote smoking (such as Germany and Spain).

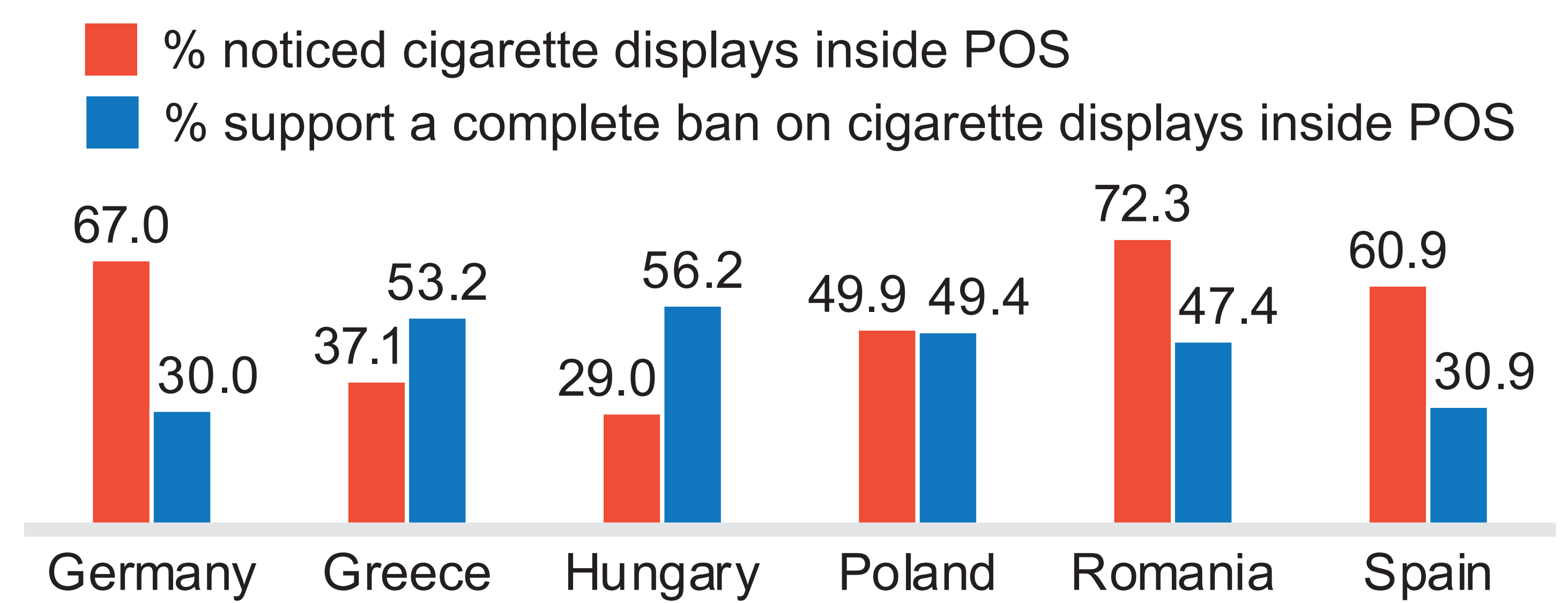


Figure 2: Awareness of cigarette displays inside points of sale (POS), and support of a complete ban on cigarette displays inside POS.

Conclusions

Exposure to tobacco advertising varied widely between countries. Despite the cross-sectional design precluding causal conclusions, the findings indicate a negative association between comprehensiveness of TAPS legislation and exposure to tobacco advertising. However, significant exposure was found even in countries with more comprehensive TAPS legislation, indicating a need for stronger enforcement and closing of loopholes.

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