

Health Promotion Strategies to Strengthen Anti-Smoking Policies: From Picture Warnings to Smoke-Free Area

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Abstract

One of the primary factors contributing to Indonesia's rising non-communicable disease burden is cigarette smoking. Government anti-smoking policies include the establishment of smoke-free areas (KTR), the ban on cigarette advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, and the use of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packaging in an effort to lower the number of smokers and shield the public from the risks associated with cigarette smoke exposure. However, effective health promotion measures that are implemented widely, methodically, and on target are crucial to the success of these initiatives. The objective of this paper is to determine the way health promotion strategies promote Indonesia's anti-smoking regulations. This article employs a literature review method to investigate various health promotion media, including visual advertising, social media, and community participation in raising awareness about the risks of cigarettes and the significance of a smoke-free environment. The findings of the study indicate that integrated and evidence-based promotional techniques can raise public knowledge of the dangers of smoking and enhance acceptance of laws such as KTR and cigarette advertising bans. Furthermore, cross-sector cooperation, which includes educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the media, is critical to the achievement of developing a healthy culture and environment that promotes a smoke-free lifestyle. To broaden and sustain the impact of promotion, risk communication policies must be strengthened, and health message delivery must be innovative. Effective health promotion initiatives serve as a link between policy and changes in community behavior.

Keywords: Health Promotion, Anti-Smoking Policy, Pictorial Warnings, Smoke-Free Areas, Risk Communication, Cigarette Advertising Ban.

Introduction

Cigarettes have become an inseparable part of human life. Cigarettes are often seen as a symbol of masculinity, courage, strength, and resilience. However, smoking is extremely harmful to health because they contain dangerous addictive substances, such as nicotine. Diseases caused by smoking are a global health problem. One in ten adult deaths is caused by cigarette smoking. The latest WHO data shows that approximately 5 million deaths occur annually due to smoking, with 70% of these occurring in developing countries, including Indonesia. Without tobacco control efforts, the number of smokers worldwide is expected to continue to increase. The WHO estimates that approximately 10 million deaths per year will be caused by smoking. Smoking is a highly detrimental activity for both active and passive smokers. Every cigarette smoke contains harmful substances, and the more people who smoke, the greater the risk. Cigarette packs clearly state that

smoking can cause death. However, active smokers seem to ignore this warning (Trisnowati et al., 2021).

The increasing number of non-communicable diseases has impacted the changing burden of disease in Indonesia. Those refer to cardiovascular diseases including heart disease and stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and others (Rahayu et al., 2024). Cases of catastrophic diseases, namely diseases that require specialized treatment and specific therapies, the use of sophisticated medical equipment, and long-term care continue to increase. This is evident in the high number of health fund claims for the treatment of catastrophic diseases in Indonesia. Each year, approximately 17–19% of total health care costs are allocated to these types of diseases. The BPJS Kesehatan report on the use of funds for catastrophic diseases shows that the total costs incurred reached IDR 55.41 trillion, or approximately 18.58% of total health care costs from 2018 to 2020. The disease with the highest number of cases and costs was heart disease, with 13,041,463 cases and expenditures reaching IDR 10.2 trillion. In second place is cancer, with 2,452,749 cases and costs of IDR 3.5 trillion, followed by stroke in third place with 2,127,609 cases and costs of IDR 2.5 trillion (Martini et al., 2022).

Indonesia has a number of regulations to control tobacco, such as the ban on Cigarette Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS), as well as the obligation to include pictorial health warnings on tobacco product packaging. One of the Indonesian government's efforts to prevent and reduce the negative impacts of cigarette smoke is the implementation of Smoke-Free Areas, also known as *Kawasan Tanpa Rokok* (KTR) in Indonesian, as regulated in Law Number 36 of 2009 concerning Health, which requires regional governments to designate areas as KTR. A Smoke-Free Area (KTR) is a room or area where smoking is prohibited, as well as the production, sale, advertising, and promotion of tobacco products. Based on this regulation, KTR includes health care facilities, teaching and learning places, children's play areas, places of worship, public transportation, workplaces, and other designated public spaces and locations. The main objective of implementing KTR is to protect the public from the risk of health problems caused by an environment polluted by cigarette smoke. Therefore, regional governments throughout Indonesia are required to designate and implement smoke-free areas in their respective regions. As a form of policy relaxation, especially for workplaces, public spaces, and other locations, it is permitted to provide special areas for smoking, commonly referred to as smoking rooms. However, anyone who intentionally violates the Smoke-Free Area (KTR) regulations as stipulated in the law can be subject to sanctions in the form of a maximum fine of IDR 50,000,000.00 (fifty million rupiah). Tobacco control regulations implemented in various countries have proven effective in protecting non-smokers, encouraging people to quit smoking, and reducing cigarette consumption rates (Sufri et al., 2023).

Method

This study used a literature review to analyze health promotion strategies to support the strengthening of anti-smoking policies in Indonesia. The study focused on health communication efforts related to pictorial warnings, the ban on cigarette advertising and promotion, and the implementation of smoke-free areas (KTR). Data sources were

obtained from various secondary sources, such as scientific journals, research reports, government regulations (e.g., Government Regulation No. 109 of 2012), WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) guidelines, and documents from non-governmental organizations working in the field of tobacco control. Data were analyzed qualitatively by using a content analysis to identify key themes, trends, and the effectiveness of implemented health promotion strategies. Literature inclusion criteria included publications within the last five years and relevance to the context of tobacco control in Indonesia and globally. This study aims to develop a comprehensive synthesis of ideas as a basis for formulating strategic recommendations for improving the effectiveness of risk communication and health promotion in supporting sustainable anti-smoking policies.

Findings and Discussion

As implied in the previous part, the data of current study were obtained by analyzing various sources regarding the health promotion strategies for supporting anti-smoking campaign in Indonesia. There were four sources selected. The results of the data analysis show that different strategies were employed in relation with the issue being discussed. Those cover conventional cigarettes and e-cigarettes.

As seen in the following table, there were various strategies used in different countries such as Poland, India, Mexico, and Indonesia to promote anti-smoking campaigns. Unfortunately, based on the reports, the campaign faces challenges especially due to the existence of social media in which cigarettes and e-cigarettes producers promote or advertise their products. In this case, regulation, education, and responsibility of the industry and civil society are so much expected to support the campaign. The following table describes briefly the results of the data analysis followed by detailed explanations in the next part.

Table 1. Health Promotion Strategies in Various Contexts.

No	Author, Year	Title	Methodology	Research result
1	(Polanska & Kaleta, 2021)	Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Point of Sale Advertising—Assessing Compliance with Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship Bans in Poland	observations based on the TAPS compliance assessment guidelines by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health	Poor enforcement of the ban on tobacco and e-cigarette advertising at the point of sale (PO), provides an opportunity for the tobacco industry to promote its products illegally. Education is needed for the public, retailers, and civil society regarding their legal responsibilities and roles.

No	Author, Year	Title	Methodology	Research result
2	(Kong et al., 2024)	Tobacco promotion restriction policies on social media	Literatur review	While most platform policies prohibit paid tobacco advertising, few address newer strategies, such as sponsored/influenced content, and few have age restrictions to prevent access for young people. There is an urgent need to regulate tobacco promotion on social media platforms.
3	(Wulan et al., 2022)	Is Exposure to Social Media Advertising and Promotion Associated with E-cigarette Use? Evidence from Indonesia	mixed-method	There were high rates of e-cigarette use (29%) and current use (13%) among study participants. There was high exposure to e-cigarette advertising and promotions on social media, with the majority of participants (84%) reporting seeing e-cigarette ads or promotions on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other platforms. High rates of e-cigarette use and exposure to social media advertising were significantly associated. Participants who reported seeing ads and promotions were 2.91 and 2.82 times more likely to have ever used and currently used e-cigarettes, respectively, after controlling for socioeconomic factors, region, and smoking status.
4	(Murukutla et al., 2022)	A content analysis of e-cigarette marketing on social media: Findings from the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement	Quantitative	In India, where e-cigarettes are completely banned, researchers identified 90 (6%) posts; in Mexico, where e-cigarettes are partially restricted, 318 (22%) posts were observed; and in Indonesia, where there are no restrictions, 1,029 (72%) posts were observed. In both India and Mexico, marketing came from

No	Author, Year	Title	Methodology	Research result
		(TERM) in India, Indonesia and Mexico		retailer accounts (100%), while in Indonesia, marketing primarily came from product brand accounts (86%). Across countries, e-cigarettes were primarily marketed directly to sell the product (India: 99%, Indonesia: 69%, and Mexico: 93%), although sales channels varied.

Strengthening Anti-Smoking Policies

The Indonesian government, through Minister of Health Regulation No. 28 of 2013, established regulations regarding the inclusion of health warnings on tobacco product packaging as an effort to protect public health. This regulation stipulates that every cigarette package must display a prominent and clear health warning image depicting the negative effects of smoking on the body, such as oral cancer, lung damage, and heart disease. This image must be printed on the front and back of the package, occupying a minimum of 40% of each side of the packaging, to ensure easy visibility for consumers. Furthermore, this Minister of Health Regulation prohibits the use of words or symbols that could mislead consumers, such as "light" or "low tar," and prohibits visual elements appealing to children or adolescents. This regulation affirms the government's commitment to reducing the number of active smokers, especially among young people, through visual education directly on product packaging. Violations of this provision can result in administrative sanctions, up to and including the revocation of the cigarette product's distribution permit.

Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) refers to all forms of marketing activities undertaken by the tobacco industry to promote tobacco products, including advertising, sales promotions, and event sponsorships. TAPS encompasses print and electronic media, point-of-sale promotions, discounts or prizes for tobacco product purchases, and financial or material support for activities or events aimed at building a positive brand image. In Indonesia, various regulations have been established to limit TAPS, particularly to prevent targeting children and adolescents and to limit its exposure in public spaces.

A study (Kong et al., 2024) found that one possible strategy to prevent tobacco promotion is to adhere to flexible and up-to-date regulations. Currently, the Tobacco Control Act (TCA) grants the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) broad jurisdiction to control tobacco promotion, including on social media; however, the TCA does not specifically mention social media, suggesting that more action could be taken. To this end, the FDA could specifically prohibit tobacco advertising in youth-friendly media and events, such as social media. The FDA may also require tobacco businesses to

maintain a regularly updated public database of all their social media content uploaded from their official social media accounts (e.g., shared paid reviews, cross-promotions). A similar situation exists in Indonesia, where tobacco control regulations cover various aspects, but specific provisions regarding cigarette promotion on social media are still limited and not explicitly regulated. Indonesia has several important regulations, such as Government Regulation No. 109 of 2012 concerning the Protection of Materials Containing Addictive Substances in the Form of Tobacco Products for Health, which prohibits cigarette advertising, promotion, and sponsorship in conventional media and public places, including the requirement to include pictorial health warnings. However, this regulation does not specifically regulate promotion on digital media or social media, which are currently one of the main marketing channels, especially targeting the younger generation (Siswanto & Yusuf, 2024).

Unlike the Tobacco Control Act (TCA) in the United States, which grants broad jurisdiction to the FDA, in Indonesia, oversight of cigarette promotion on social media has not been carried out comprehensively by a single authority. Many cigarette promotional activities on social media occur covertly, such as through influencers, indirect creative content, or sponsorship of online events, which are difficult to address under existing regulations. This situation suggests that, like the United States, Indonesia also needs to strengthen policies and update regulations to better reflect developments in information technology, particularly regarding tobacco promotion on social media. A cross-sectoral approach and strengthening the role of regulatory bodies are crucial to closing this legal loophole and protecting vulnerable groups, especially youth, from exposure to digital cigarette promotions.

Health Promotion Strategies to Support Strengthening Anti-Smoking Policies in Indonesia

Prioritizing restrictions on tobacco product marketing and enforcement of related regulations on social media is crucial. Unlike traditional, one-way media such as television, radio, or newspapers, social media provides the tobacco industry with a powerful interactive communication tool. This allows them to attract the attention of young people, including those who have never smoked, and reshape the image of tobacco use as part of youth culture. Evidence shows that tobacco marketing activities are extensive on various social media platforms. This is a serious public health concern given the high rate of social media use among adolescents. Exposure to cigarette advertising and promotions on social media has also been linked to an increased likelihood of tobacco product use by adolescents and young adults later in life (Clendennen et al., 2020).

Health promotion is a crucial component of tobacco control efforts, playing a role in raising awareness, shaping attitudes, and encouraging behavioral change. In Indonesia, health promotion strategies are directed at supporting the implementation of anti-smoking policies such as pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs, bans on cigarette advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, and the implementation of Smoke-Free Areas (KTR). Health promotion strategies in support of anti-smoking policies in Indonesia are carried out through various complementary approaches.

First, mass media campaigns are being utilized to disseminate anti-smoking messages through public service announcements on television, radio, print, and outdoor media such as billboards and banners. Second, utilizing social media is an effective strategy for reaching the younger generation, by disseminating creative, interactive, and data-driven content that educates about the dangers of smoking. Third, health education in schools is being implemented by integrating tobacco control issues into the curriculum and through student activities that support a healthy lifestyle. Fourth, the involvement of community leaders and influencers plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and encouraging behavior change by voicing the importance of a smoke-free lifestyle. Fifth, cross-sector advocacy is a crucial pillar, involving collaboration between local governments, civil society organizations, and health workers in strengthening regulations and oversight of the implementation of anti-smoking policies. This combination of strategies aims to create a social environment conducive to sustainable tobacco control efforts. However, the main challenge currently remains the lack of firm regulations regarding cigarette promotion in digital media and weak enforcement. Therefore, health promotion strategies must be adaptive to developments in media and technology, and supported by strong political commitment (Pradnyana & Ekaputra, 2025).

Conclusion

Health promotion strategies play a central role in strengthening the implementation of anti-smoking policies in Indonesia, ranging from pictorial health warnings, bans on cigarette advertising and promotion, to the implementation of smoke-free areas (KTR). Through a planned and structured communication approach, health promotion can raise public awareness of the dangers of smoking and encourage changes in attitudes and behavior toward a healthy, smoke-free lifestyle. Strategies include mass media campaigns, social media utilization, health education in schools, the involvement of community leaders, and cross-sector advocacy.

Consistently implemented campaigns have been proven to build negative perceptions of cigarettes and reduce social acceptance of smoking. Social media is a strategic channel for reaching adolescents and young adults, the primary targets of the tobacco industry. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in oversight of cigarette promotion in the digital space, which is not yet clearly regulated by national regulations.

Therefore, strengthening regulations and law enforcement, particularly in the context of social media, as well as increasing the capacity of resources at the regional level to implement effective health promotion. The success of this strategy depends heavily on the synergy of various parties—government, civil society, education, and the media. With a strong and integrated health promotion strategy, it is hoped that anti-smoking policies in Indonesia can be more effective in reducing the number of smokers and creating a smoke-free generation.

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