TOBACCO ADVERTISING AT POINTS OF SALE (POS) IN SWITZERLAND

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INTRODUCTION

Switzerland has one of the weakest tobacco advertising legislations in Europe. Only tobacco advertising on radio and television and directed to minors is forbidden. Partial bans exist for cinema and exterior advertising. What is tobacco advertising at points of sale (POS)?

- Advertising materials at POS
- Promotional discounts on tobacco products
- Gifts with purchase of tobacco products
- Display of tobacco products
- Incentives to retailers to encourage them to sell tobacco products
- Hosts/esses promoting tobacco products at POS

In Switzerland, tobacco advertising at POS represents, according to some studies, more than half of tobacco industry's marketing expenditures, i.e. approximately **50 million of Euros** per year[1].

The aim of the research is to describe all the marketing strategies of the tobacco companies in the French-speaking part of Switzerland in order to make public health and tobacco prevention stakeholders more sensitive to this subject.

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL (FCTC)

Article 13: Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
1. Parties recognize that a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship would reduce the consumption of tobacco products.
2. Each Party shall, in accordance with its constitution or constitutional principles, undertake a **comprehensive ban of all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. (…)**

Switzerland signed the convention (in 2004) but has not yet ratified it.

METHODS

- Random sampling of points of sale by region (in the French-speaking part of Switzerland)
- Finale sample: 397 POS (53% grocery stores, 36% kiosks and 11% gas stations)
- Observations realized during September and October 2013
- Retailer's permission to observe obtained in 93 % of cases
- Interviews conducted with 93 POS retailers (23.4% of the POS observed)

RESULTS

MASSIVE PRESENCE OF TOBACCO PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING, ESPECIALLY IN KIOSKS AND GAS STATIONS

In total, 52.1% of the POS have advertising material and 58.9% have promotional offers (price discounts, gifts stores have little promotion and advertising, kiosks and gas-stations have a massive presence of advertising material and promotional offers. The average number of advertising items per POS was 6.7 with a variation from 1 to 27 items per POS.

Presence of advertisments at POS (n=397)
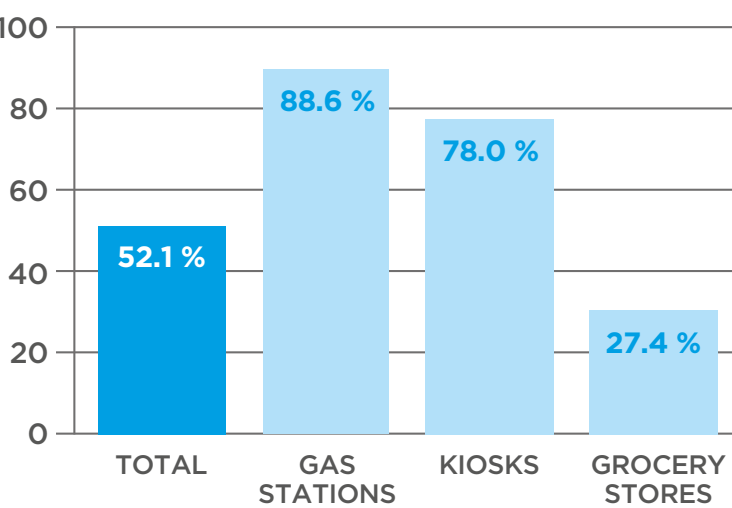
Presence of promotional offers at POS (n=397)
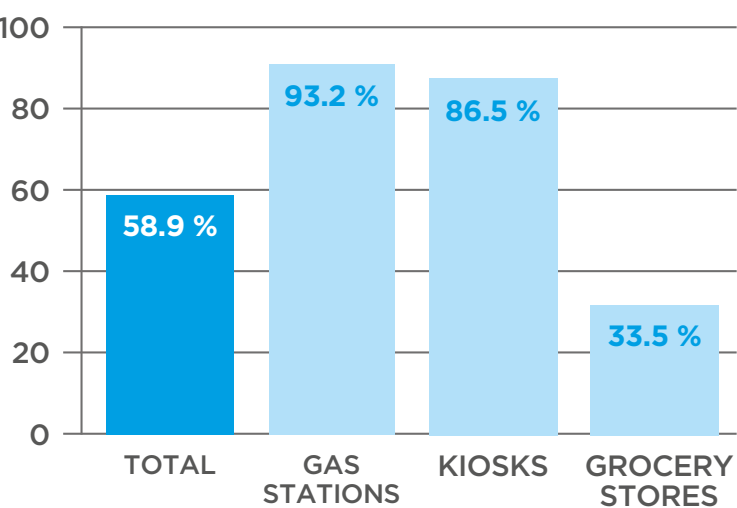
Example of advertisements in a kiosk.
Advertisements highlighted with the percentage of the total items observed (n=1400).

Screen (1) **5.2 %**
Counter display with tobacco advertisements, products and with candies and sweets (2) **7.2 %**
Neon signs (3) **17.9 %**
Cardboard displays in the middle of cigarettes (4) **7.6 %**
Posters on price screen (5) **4.5 %**
Posters **33.3 %**
Cardboard advertisements in the middle of cigarettes **7.3 %**
Change-trays **6.1 %**
Other items[2] **10.9 %**

TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS OFTEN PLACED NEAR CANDIES AND AT CHILDREN'S EYE-LEVEL OR BELOW

As already shown by many studies[3], we found that tobacco products and advertisements are often placed near candies, gums and sweets and at children eye-level or below. 44.3% of the POS have tobacco products near candies, gums or sweets and 24.6% have tobacco advertisements near candies, gums or sweets.
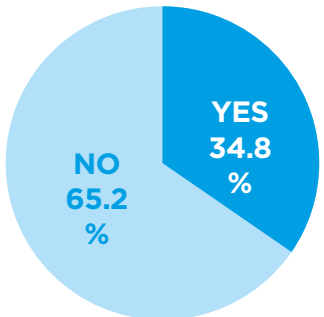
Example of cardboard advertisement placed near candies, gums and sweets.

Example of cardboard advertisment placed at children's eye-level and using a cartoon-like image that especially attracts children.

Are there advertisements at children's eye-level (approx. 1.20 m) or below ?

YES 34.8 %
NO 65.2 %

TOBACCO COMPANIES ARE BEHIND TOBACCO PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING AT POS

- Representatives of tobacco industries regularly visit POS (every month for 36.8% of the POS and every two months for 31.6% of the POS) for product placement, advertising placement and to propose promotional offers.
- Kiosks and gas stations receive visits from representatives more often than grocery stores.
- Retailers admit to receive incentives from tobacco industries as money or gifts (concert tickets, branded items, shop vouchers, etc.), especially kiosks (34.7%) and gas stations (28.6%).
- Retailer incentive programs (rewards to retailers for achieving certain sales volumes) have been reported.

CONCLUSION

- Points of sale in the French-speaking part of Switzerland are invested by tobacco companies with massive advertisements, attractive discount offers and incentives to retailers;
- Kiosks and gas stations are much more targeted than grocery stores;
- Despite the fact that advertising to children is not admitted by the Swiss law, marketing strategies seem to target children and teenagers by placing tobacco products and advertisements near candies and at children eye-level or below.

Contact and information

[1] Jeanrenaud, C., Fueglister-Dousse, S., Kohler, D. et Marti, J. (2009). *Coûts et bénéfices des mesures de prévention de la santé : Tabagisme et consommation excessive d'alcool*, Rapport final. Irene, Université de Neuchâtel.
[2] Cardboard advertisements, stickers, outdoor signs, etc.
[3] Montreuil, A., Tremblay, M., Cloutier, V. et Papineau, E. (2008). *Promotion des produits du tabac dans les points de vente du Québec au printemps 2008: état de la situation.* Institut national de la Santé publique du Québec.
Feighery C.F., Ribisl K.M., Schleicher N. et al. (2001) "Cigarette advertising and promotional strategies in retail outlets: results of a statewide survey in California", *Tobacco Control*; 10(2) : 184-188.

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