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The outdoor smoking ban in Italian schools: opportunity to develop school policies for preventing smoking among young people?

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Introduction (1)

Weak effects of school programmes in reducing adolescent smoking have been explained by the strong social influence effect of smoking inside and outside school premises (Friend 2011)

44.0% of Italian students have seen teachers smoking in the school building during school hours

56.4% have seen students smoking in the school building during school hours (GYTS 2010)

Introduction (2)

School tobacco policy (STP) is intended to inform whether and where pupils can smoke, to set penalties for pupils and teachers caught smoking, and to regulate adult smoking inside school and in school premises.

STPs may affect smoking:

- **indirectly** by influencing beliefs about acceptability (approval or disapproval) of cigarette smoking by adults and by peers (Lipperman-Kreda 2009)
- **directly** limiting smoking opportunities and access to tobacco (Alesci 2003)

STPs are cheap, relatively easy to implement and have a wide reach.

Characteristics of STPs can vary between countries and inside the same country

Is this approach effective in preventing smoking uptake?

Which characteristics, if any, increase their impact?

Can STP be considered an effective stand-alone intervention?

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School-based programmes for preventing smoking (Review)

Thomas RE, McLellan J, Perera R

This is a reprint of a Cochrane review, prepared and maintained by The Cochrane Collaboration and published in *The Cochrane Library* 2013, Issue 4

http://www.thecochranelibrary.com

School policies for preventing smoking among young people (Review)

Coppo A, Galanti MR, Giordano L, Buscemi D, Bremberg S, Faggiano F

This is a reprint of a Cochrane review, prepared and maintained by The Cochrane Collaboration and published in *The Cochrane Library* 2014, Issue 10

http://www.thecochranelibrary.com

Methods

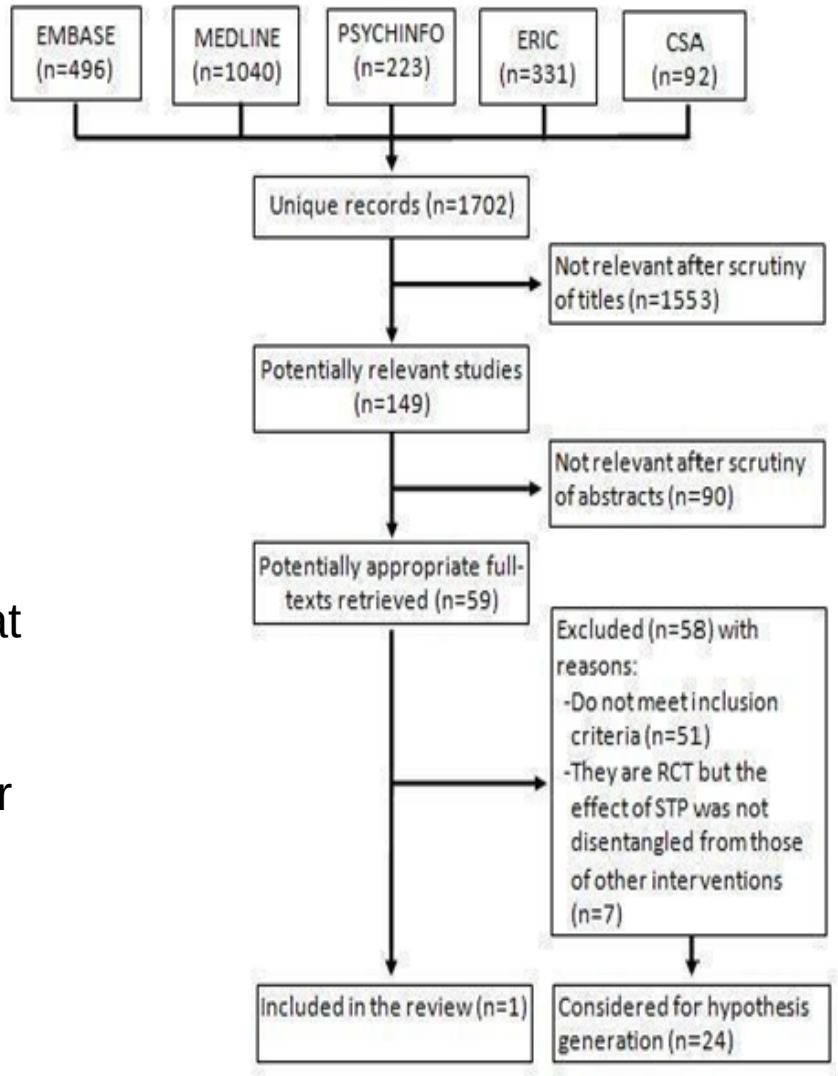
Types of studies: RCTs, non-randomised controlled trials, interrupted time series, controlled before-after studies. Cross-sectional studies in order to generate hypotheses for future studies

Participants: Students in primary and secondary schools (10 to 18 y o)

Interventions: All written policies that regulate tobacco use inside and/or outside the school or policies described by school staff members or external sources

Outcome: Smoking prevalence among students, measured by individual self-report

Results



One included study (RCT)

Chen 2014

Conducted in 2008 in 2 Chinese regions: 2 schools in the IG and 2 in the CG. Of a total of 1807 participants (13 - 15 y o), 941 students in IG and 866 in CG. Follow up: 1 year. Characteristics of the intervention were: smoking banned inside the school; peer educators trained to encourage smokers to quit; and brochures about health hazards of smoking distributed among students.

Results: RR 0.98 (IC 95% 0.71 - 1.4) in region 1 and 1.35 (IC 95% 0.57 - 3.2) in region 2

High risk of bias: 1) reporting bias, 2) selection bias

Comparison between 24 cross-sectional studies

- **formally-adopted STP** vs **no policy**
- **ban extended outdoor school premises** vs **internal ban**
- **ban extended to teachers** vs **teachers' smoking allowed in limited area**
- **STP including sanctions for transgressors** vs **including weak or no sanctions**
- **STP including assistance to quit for smokers** vs **STP without assistance**
- **STP plus prevention components** vs **STP alone**
- **STP highly enforced** vs **weakly or not enforced**

LIMITATIONS: study design, different components with different definitions, heterogeneity of exposure, heterogeneity of statistical methods employed

Anti-tobacco policy in schools: upcoming preventive strategy or prevention myth? A review of 31 studies

Maria Rosaria Galanti,[1] Alessandro Coppo,[2] Elin Jonsson,[3] Sven Bremberg,[3] Fabrizio Faggiano[2]

Tob Control. 2014 Jul;23(4):295-301

An attempt to compare definitions of policy dimensions

Table 1 Policy dimensions and components suggested for formal evaluation

Policy dimension	Components
Comprehensiveness	Targets (subjects in school to which the policy applies: students, staff, visitors/guests); type of tobacco to which rules apply (ie, smoking, smokeless); coverage of school premises (restricted areas, inside the school, outdoors); coverage of school activities and time; support of cessation facilities; combination with other smoking prevention programmes; combination with other policies (eg, other substance use)
Degree of formality	Form of statements (whether written or other); approval issued by official school organism/representative
Enforcement	Rules for surveillance; rules for referral of violation episodes; definition of the responsible person for policy evaluation and review; agenda for periodic evaluation and review of the policy
Consequences	Whether the on-site or delayed consequences of violations are defined for each target, such as: referral to principal, to school healthcare, to other healthcare or to parents; fines; suspension from school; other disciplinary (eg, some kind of extra assignment)
Communication	Communication channels identified to inform on the policy, such as: internal meetings of staff and students; meetings including visitors (eg, families); school website; school journal; posters in school premises, newsletters
Level of Implementation	Whether the policy elements are implemented at the national/regional/other local/school level

Context. Potential interactions (eg, with campaigns,preventive programmes, legislations).

CONCLUSIONS

Implications for practice

No evidence of an effect of STP on students' smoking behavior

Absence of rigorous studies

The theoretical basis of this intervention should be tested under the control of well designed studies

Implications for research

Large, possibly multi-centric studies, employing an experimental or a quasi-experimental design, are needed to assess the effectiveness of this intervention

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The intervention should be accurately and objectively described,

Italian legislation overview on school smoking ban

1975 classrooms
2005 public places (inside schools)
2013 external school premises

Impact of school smoking ban: 247 schools in 12 Italian regions (CNESPS-ISS, 2015)

- In the **outdoor areas** no-smoking **signs were found** only in the **37% of the schools**
- In **the outdoor areas (school premises) have been seen smoking**
  - students (28%)
  - teachers (11%)
  - non-teaching staff (9%)
- **Ashtrays** have been seen in the **16%** of the cases and **cigarettes butts** in the **69%**

Januar 2015: STP survey: secondary schools in Province of Novara (373.230 inhabitants)

Response rate	15/18	83%
Lyceums	7/15	
Industrial and technical schools	7/15	
Professional institutes	1/15	
Smoking prevention programmes during last year	7/15	46%
Students were informed about the extension of smoking ban in the school external premises through:		
Communication by teachers	11/15	73%
Posters	4/15	27%
School bulletin	1/15	6%
Students were involved in the dissemination	3/15	20%
New written policy	9/15	60%
Sanctions for policy infringment	0/15	0%
Activities for policy enforcement	0/15	0%

Conclusions

Outdoor smoking ban has not pushed italian schools to redifine their STPs

STP should be studied alone or as a component of a broader intervention

Monitoring smoking habits and characteristics of STPs could help to re-define appropriate strategies in school setting

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