

WOMEN AND TOBACCO

Essential Facts

Tobacco use among women is rising while use among men is falling.¹ Increases in tobacco use are the result of changes in the role and economic status of women as economies grow, as well as changes in social and cultural factors as nations modernize.² However, the direct, aggressive marketing of tobacco targeted to women is the driving factor behind increases in tobacco use by women seen around the world.³

Tobacco Use Among Women

- Women comprise 20% of the world's more than 1 billion smokers.⁴
- On average 22% of women in developed countries and 9% of women in developing nations are daily smokers.⁵
- Smoking rates among women continue to rise while smoking rates among men have peaked and are declining.¹
- Data collected from 151 countries show that about 7% of adolescent girls smoke cigarettes, compared to 12% of adolescent boys. In some countries, almost as many girls smoke as boys.⁶
 - In Russia, 24% of girls (age 13-15) and 27% of boys smoke cigarettes.⁷
 - In Argentina, 27% of girls (age 13-15) and 21% of boys smoke cigarettes.⁸
- Rates of tobacco use among women vary considerably around the world. In some countries the rate of tobacco use among women is similar to men, while in others, female use rates are much lower.
 - In the United Kingdom, 23% of women and 25% of men smoke.⁹
 - In the Philippines, 9% of women and 48% of men smoke.¹⁰
- Types of tobacco use by women also vary by country, with cigarettes the tobacco of choice in some parts of the world and smokeless tobacco heavily used in other parts.
 - In India, bidis comprise 48% of the tobacco market, chewing tobacco 38% and cigarettes 14%.¹¹
 - In Ukraine, almost 100% of tobacco is consumed in the form of manufactured cigarettes.¹²

Tobacco Industry Activity

- The tobacco industry targets women and girls with aggressive and seductive advertising that exploits ideas of independence, emancipation, sex appeal, slimness, glamour and beauty.¹³⁻¹⁵
 - In 2007, RJ Reynolds launched a new cigarette for women, Camel No. 9, backed by a major advertising campaign.¹⁶ Advertising in fashion magazines like Vogue with large youth readership featured slim cigarettes in colorful and fashionable packaging.
 - In 2009, BAT launched Pall Mall Scarlet Aromatic cigarettes in attractive bright cherry- and silvercolored packaging designed to appeal to young girls. Pall Mall Scarlet Aromatic was exclusively developed for pilot launch in Russia for a maximum retail price of 1 USD17 —an affordable price for young girls.
 - In 2010, Imperial Tobacco redesigned Davidoff cigarettes with sleek red, white and silver packaging to project a cosmopolitan feel and create “the ultimate fashion accessory.”¹⁸
- Research shows that targeted marketing affects smoking rates among young women.
 - In Spain after 1970, the prevalence of cigarette smoking increased rapidly in Spanish women under age 50. The rapid increase in female smoking coincided with massive increases in television advertising targeting women.¹⁹
 - Smoking rates among women in Japan increased dramatically, from 8.6% in 1986 to 18.2% in 1991, after an aggressive promotional campaign targeting women and girls.²⁰



Advertisement for Camel No. 9 cigarettes by RJ Reynolds (US)



Pall Mall Scarlet Aromatic cigarettes by BAT (Russia)



Davidoff cigarettes by Imperial Tobacco

Health Harms

- Deaths among women aged 20 years and over may rise from 1.5 million in 2004 to 2.5 million by 2030; almost 75% of these projected deaths will occur in low-income and middle-income countries.⁴
- All forms of tobacco are both addictive and deadly. The scientific evidence is conclusive that tobacco use causes a wide variety of cancers, including cancer of the lung, mouth, esophagus, larynx, pharynx, stomach, and pancreas.²¹
- Women smokers are at greater risk of developing cervical cancer, osteoporosis,²² and other conditions of the reproductive system, including spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, infertility, having children with low birth weights, and painful menstruation and premature menopause.²³
- Women smokers also have an elevated risk of stroke, hemorrhage in the membranes that surround the brain, hardening of the arteries, and death from aortic aneurysm.²³



Advertisement for Virginia Slims Uno cigarettes by JTI (Russia)

Dangers of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke for Women

- Globally, an estimated one-third of adults are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke alone causes approximately 600,000 premature deaths per year worldwide.²⁴
- Because the prevalence of smoking is much higher in men than in women, secondhand smoke disproportionately harms women. Of all deaths attributable to secondhand smoke, 47% occur among women.²⁴
- A 2002 report by the World Health Organization conclusively confirmed that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease and other health problems.²⁵
- While women smoke less than men, many non-smoking women still suffer increased risk of lung cancer and death because their husbands or partners smoke.²⁶

Key Messages

- Tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke are a leading cause of death for women.
- Because the prevalence of smoking is much higher in men than in women, secondhand smoke disproportionately harms women.
- The tobacco industry views the female population as an opportunity for growth and aggressively markets products towards them.
- The number of women smokers in the developing world will increase if no action is taken to stop tobacco companies from targeting women and girls.
- Strong action must be taken to protect women from the harms of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. Tobacco control policies, such as smoke-free environments, tobacco marketing bans, graphic warning labels and increased tobacco taxes reduce tobacco use and will save the lives of women around the world.



Virginia Slims Noire cigarettes by JTI (Japan)

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