

Trends in the Retail Tobacco Marketplace, 1999-2012

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Background

Bridging the Gap (BTG) is a nationally recognized research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation dedicated to improving the understanding of how policies and environmental factors influence diet, physical activity, obesity and tobacco use among youth.

The retail tobacco marketplace, as one of the least regulated marketing channels in the U.S. after the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, continues to evolve as new products are introduced, and federal and state regulatory efforts to protect the public's health remain vulnerable to constitutional challenges.

Aim

To describe differences in product availability, promotion, price and placement of various tobacco products in the point-of-sale environment across time.

Methods

Cross-sectional tobacco product data was collected annually in a national sample of tobacco retail stores located in communities where students attending public middle and high schools in the continental U.S. lived from 1999-2002, and then again from 2010-2012 as part of the Bridging the Gap Study.

Year	# Sites	# Tobacco Retail Stores
1999	163	2,990
2000	173	3,002
2001	185	2,832
2002	178	2,879
2010	152	2,278
2011	157	2,402
2012	160	2,272

From 1999-2002, field staff observed up to 30 tobacco retail stores in each community; these stores were identified from a list of potential tobacco retailers identified from retailer-reported standard industry classification codes using yearly Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) business lists, and screened to verify tobacco sales. If more than 30 outlets sold tobacco, a random sample was selected; if fewer than 30 outlets were identified from the list, field staff were instructed to observe additional stores selling tobacco while in the field. From 2010-2012, field staff observed food retail stores selling tobacco (i.e., supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores and gas stations, pharmacies, and small discount stores) randomly selected from two commercial business lists, D&B and InfoUSA and then screened by telephone, as well as a sample of stores "discovered" while in the field, based on the expected number of stores in the site (using a half-interval sampling approach).

Preliminary Results

Price and Price Promotions:

- Data indicate an increase in average cigarette prices over time, likely reflecting overall increases in tobacco excise taxes.
- The % of tobacco retail stores offering price discounts for Marlboro and Newport cigarettes declined over time.
- The % of tobacco retail stores offering cents-off discounts increased for Marlboro Snus and Camel filter cigarettes between 2010 and 2012 (data not shown).

Placement:

- The % of tobacco retail stores with self-service access to non-menthol cigarettes decreased from 35% in 1999 to 0.4% in 2012.
- Self-service access to little cigars/cigarillos appears to have increased recently, as the % of tobacco retail stores providing self-service access to these products significantly increased from 4% of stores in 2010 and 2011 to 6-7% of stores in 2012.

Ads:

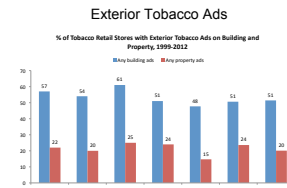
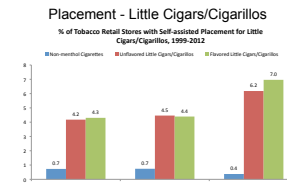
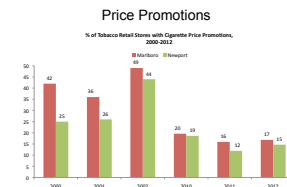
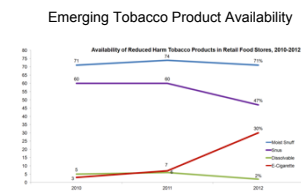
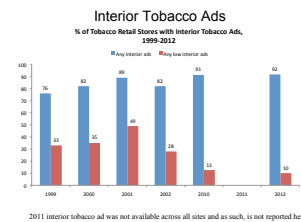
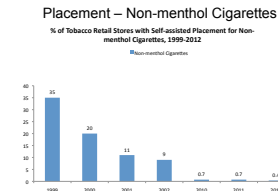
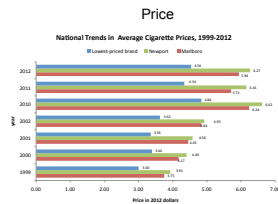
- The presence of interior advertising increased from 76% of all stores in 1999 to 92% of stores in 2012.
- Advertising at child's eye level (≤ 3.5 feet) decreased from 33% of all stores in 1999 to 10% of stores in 2012.
- Exterior building advertising appears to have declined since 1999, although property advertising, in general, remains relatively stable.

Emerging Tobacco Product Availability:

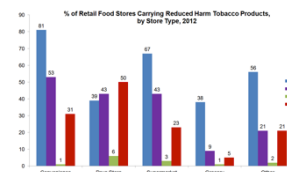
- Compared to 2010, the percent of stores selling e-cigarettes in 2012 increased, while other emerging products (i.e., snus and dissolvable products) declined.

In 2012:

- The majority of drug stores (50%) sold e-cigs; 43% sold snus; 39% sold moist snuff and 6% sold dissolvables.
- About one-third of convenience stores (31%) sold e-cigs, but most (81%) sold moist snuff and a majority sold snus (53%). Few (1%) sold dissolvables.
- Supermarkets also were major retailers of alternative tobacco products, with almost one-quarter (23%) selling e-cigs, 43% selling snus, and 67% selling moist snuff. Only 3% sold dissolvable products.



Emerging Tobacco Product Availability by Store Type*



* Confirmed in separate logistic regression models for each product controlling for store type, locale, neighborhood income, racial/ethnic composition, and cigarette price.

Conclusions

Data indicate that when tobacco control policies (excise taxes, self-service placements) are targeted at the retail environment, changes aimed at protecting the health of the public will be implemented. The tobacco industry continues to exploit opportunities to advertise its products where unregulated, as seen in the increase in discounts for new snus products, the placement of little cigars/cigarillos, the rise in interior advertising, and the increase in emerging product availability (i.e., e-cigarettes) across all outlets.

Implications for State and Community Tobacco Control

- Ongoing surveillance of the tobacco retail marketplace is important to monitor because of the causal association between marketing and tobacco usage among both adolescents and adults.
- As new alternative tobacco products emerge and existing product lines such as little cigars/cigarillos evolve, new point-of-sale tobacco control policies should be explored.

Acknowledgments

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