

RESEARCH SAYS:

**“Kids who see others smoking are more likely to take up the habit because they don't perceive cigarettes as unhealthy.”**

*Simon Racoic, Concordia University, US, 2011*

While there are large differences in smoking rates among adults by gender, smoking rates among boys and girls (ages 13–15) vary minimally in many regions of the world. Smoking rates between boys and girls differ by less than five percentage points in almost half of the world's countries. Tobacco companies view youth smoking as an opportunity to secure new smokers at a young age. **THE MAJORITY OF SMOKERS BEGIN SMOKING IN THEIR YOUTH.** For example, 83% of smokers in the US begin smoking before the age of 18. Even the tobacco industry understands the importance of youth smoking, and a 1984 R.J. Reynolds document stated that “younger adults are the only source of replacement smokers.”

Boys begin smoking during their youth in response to peer pressure, misconceptions that smoking is cool or enhances popularity, easy access to tobacco products, cigarette pricing, and tobacco marketing. Both marketing and pricing of cigarettes are proven to encourage youth initiation of smoking, because marketing makes smoking appealing to youth, and low pricing makes smoking affordable.

Smoking has an immediate harmful impact on boys' health, such as a reduction in stamina, and an increase in respiratory symptoms, mental health visits, and school absenteeism. Smoking endangers health, and the longer an individual smokes, the more severe the repercussions. Youth smokers are entering into an addiction that shortens their life span and increases the likelihood they will die early from diseases caused by smoking.

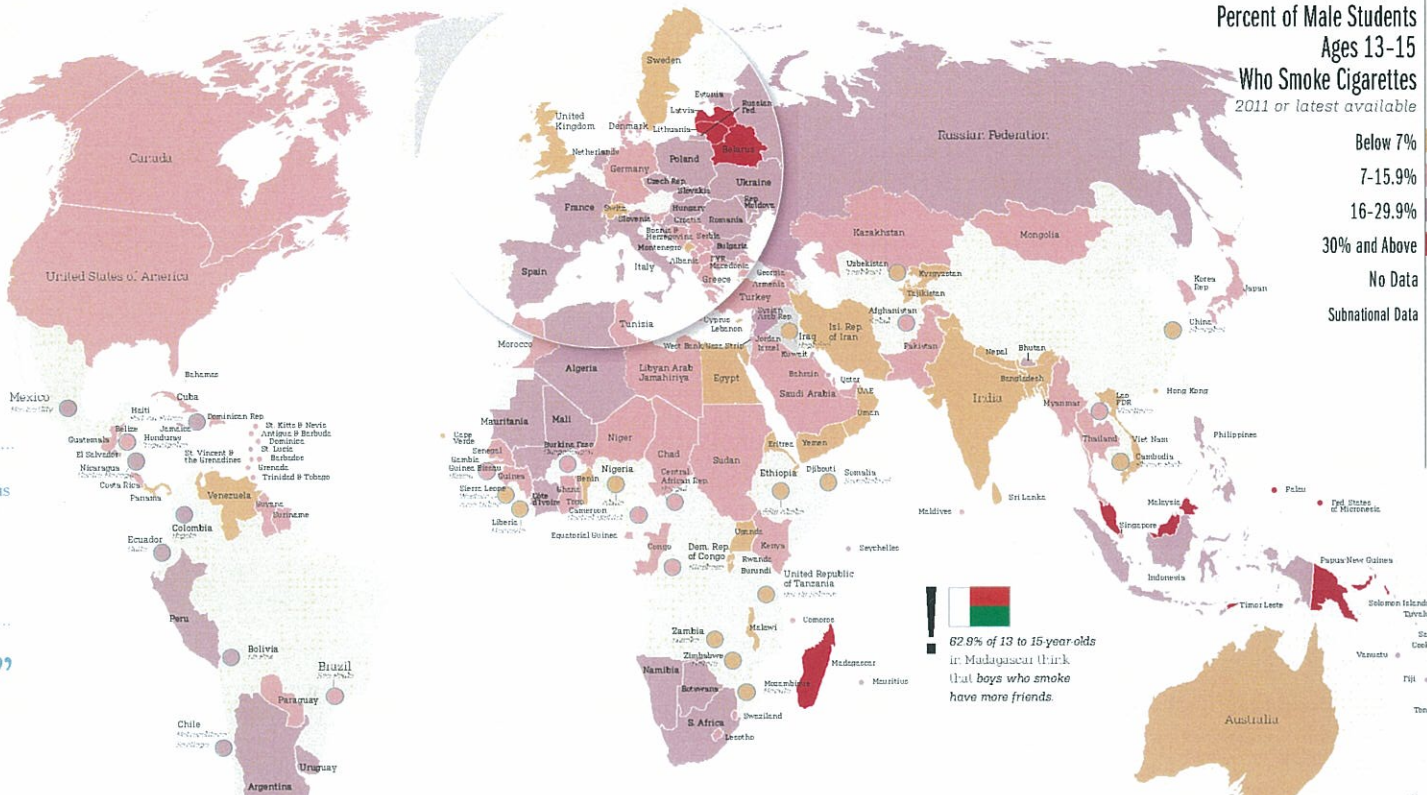
THE INDUSTRY SAYS:

**“It is important to know as much as possible about teenage smoking patterns and attributes. Today's teenager is tomorrow's potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens.... The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris.”**

*Philip Morris USA, 1981*

Countries With the Highest Smoking Rates Among Boys

*Ages 13–15, 2011 or latest available*



62.9% of 13 to 15-year olds in Madagascar think that boys who smoke have more friends.



Around one half of persistent lifetime smokers will eventually die from tobacco-related illness and disease.

Boys Who Have Never Smoked But Are Susceptible to Smoking in the Next Year

*Percentage of boys by region 2005 or latest available*

