

RESEARCH SAYS:

“Doctors and other health-care workers are most effective in assisting patients to quit when they serve as role models by not smoking themselves. Their effectiveness increases further if they are visibly involved in local and national tobacco control activities.”

World Health Organization, 2011

Proportion of Countries Providing Cessation Support Services in the Offices of Health Professionals 2010

in data for 216 of countries



Worldwide, health professionals are respected and trusted as opinion leaders and trendsetters. They have the ability to affect social norms and have led the change for smoking cessation in high-income countries. It is important that this also happens in low- and middle-income countries, since overall smoking rates are unlikely to decline until physician rates decrease.

All health professionals have the responsibility to advise patients about life-changing decisions and health matters, such as the importance of quitting smoking and how to quit. Even brief smoking cessation interventions are effective, and cessation support can double quit rates. But health professionals must be educated about how to conduct these conversations. Training and education build confidence among health professionals and increase their ability to discuss smoking cessation with patients, which in turn leads to more cessation success.

Health professionals who are smokers are less likely to advise their patients to quit smoking. The smoking status of health professionals varies throughout the world based on socio-demographic patterns and the stages of the tobacco epidemic.

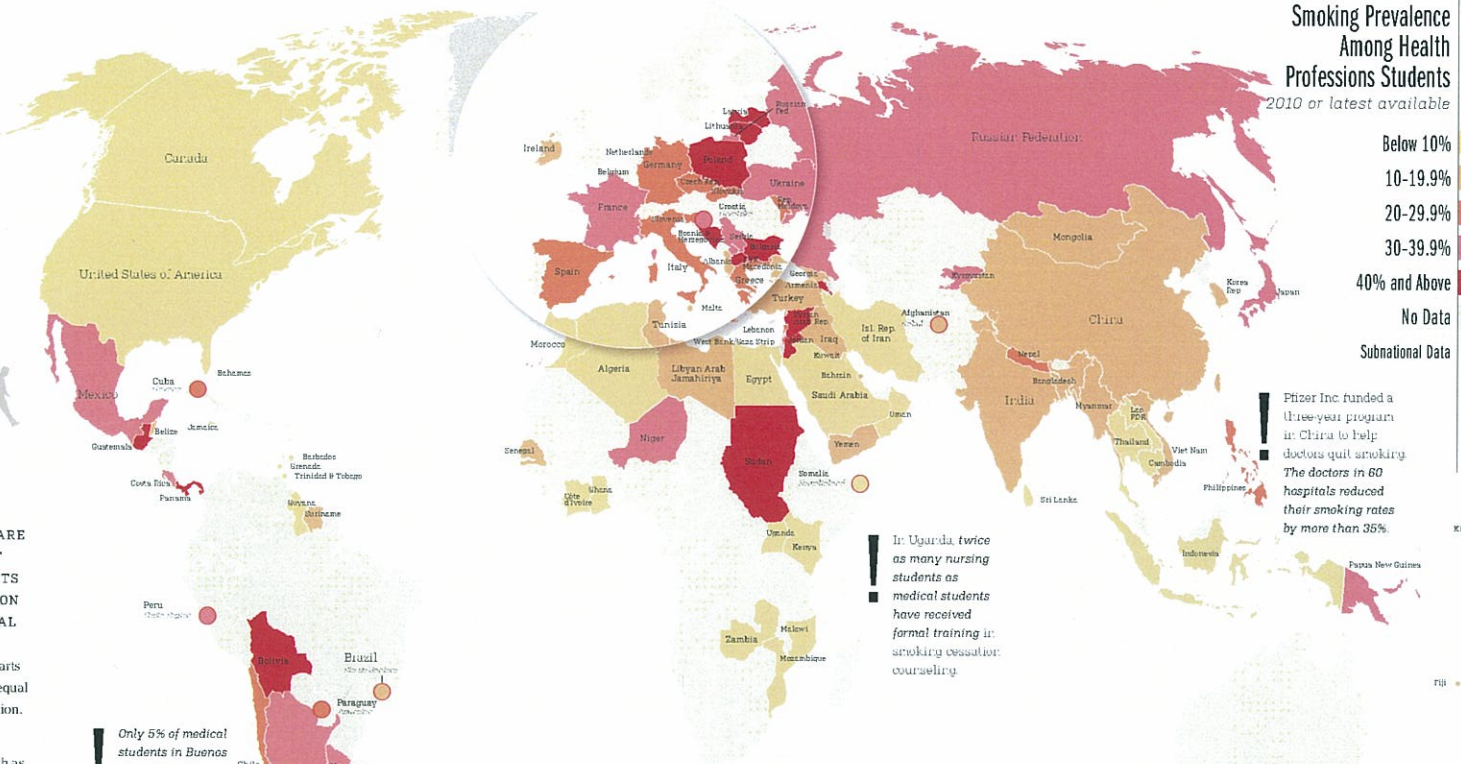
THE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF TODAY ARE THE DOCTORS OF TOMORROW, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE STUDENTS RECEIVE FORMAL SMOKING CESSATION TRAINING AS PART OF THEIR MEDICAL CURRICULUM. Unfortunately, this formal training does not always occur, and in many parts of the world, medical students smoke at rates equal to or higher than those of the general population.

In addition to educating health professionals about tobacco cessation, health facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices, must adopt smoke-free policies to protect against secondhand smoke exposure. Smoke-free policies should also be adopted in medical schools. In some countries, smoking rates among medical students increase during their schooling, a circumstance that proper policies can help prevent.

While over 93% of medical students in Hong Kong believe that health professionals should receive training in smoking cessation, only 38% of students have received formal training.

Only 5% of medical students in Buenos Aires, Argentina, received formal training in smoking cessation counseling.

“20,679 physicians say ‘Luckies are less irritating.’”
American Tobacco Company, US, 1931



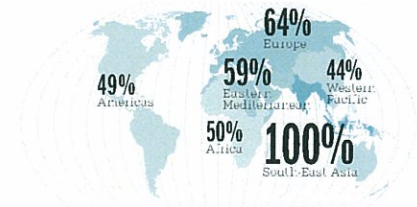
Smoking Prevalence Among Health Professions Students 2010 or latest available

Below 10%
10-19.9%
20-29.9%
30-39.9%
40% and Above
No Data
Subnational Data

In Uganda twice as many nursing students as medical students have received formal training in smoking cessation counseling.

Pfizer Inc. funded a three-year program in China to help doctors quit smoking. The doctors in 60 hospitals reduced their smoking rates by more than 35%.

Percent of Countries With Smoke-Free Health Facilities 2010 or latest available



Even Brief Tobacco Cessation Interventions Are Effective

All health professionals should screen patients for tobacco use and follow the five steps below:

1. ASK about tobacco use
2. ADVISE to quit
3. ASSESS interest in quitting
4. ASSIST in quitting
5. ARRANGE follow-up