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Protecting Jordanian School Children from Tobacco Advertising Tactics Report

Tobacco Free Jordan



This study was conducted by Tobacco Free Jordan in collaboration with the Cancer Control Office at King Hussein Cancer Center through a grant from the international Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) on behalf of STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

66.1% of Jordanian men are smokers, one of the highest percentages globally, and 15.9 % smoke electronic nicotine delivery devices (ENDs). Smoking between women also is on the rise: 17.4% smoke and regular products while 2.6% use ENDs.

Preventing the initiation of tobacco and electronic nicotine requires a focus on youth, because the majority of smokers start smoking before the age of 18 years. In Jordan, approximately 35% of current smokers started smoking before the age of 16. Among Jordanian youth aged 13-15y, 33.9% and 13.8% of boys and girls (respectively) smoke; and 52.9% of them bought their own cigarettes. Specifically among young females aged 15 to 19 years, between 2002 and 2012, cigarette and waterpipe use approximately doubled.

To address youth vulnerability to tobacco, the Tobacco Products Sales and Display regulations 73/2013 and its 2015 amendment prohibit the sale of tobacco products within a 250m radius of the outer walls of kindergartens, schools, and universities (as well as health clinics and hospitals); and regulate how these products can be displayed. The Jordanian FDA's 2019 regulations for "display, sale, and storage of electronic vaping products, electronic liquid products, and electronically heated tobacco products" also prohibit the sales of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products within a 500m radius of educational [and healthcare] facilities. This is because certain practices if left unchecked – such as displays of tobacco or electronic nicotine products near youth-appealing snacks in stores; placing tobacco and electronic nicotine advertisements near the eye-level of children; advertising and displaying flavored tobacco and electronic nicotine products; and selling single cigarette sticks –increase the likelihood of vulnerable youth experimenting with tobacco and becoming smokers. To date, there are no publicly available data documenting tobacco or electronic nicotine advertising and product availability in high-risk areas such as schools.

This study was conducted to provide decision makers with preliminary data on violations of sales and displays of tobacco products and electronic nicotine delivery devices (ENDs) around schools. 94 schools in 2 districts of Amman were included, and 213 shops within a 150m radius of these schools were inspected. Key findings included:

- ◆ Tobacco and nicotine products availability in shops proximate to schools is high. Increased exposure to tobacco and nicotine products predisposes youth to use. The government must act now to enforce the law, to prevent a new generation of Jordanian children from becoming addicted to tobacco and nicotine.
 - *In the 213 shops inspected within the 150m radius of schools, 69.0% (147) sold at least one tobacco or electronic nicotine product in direct violation of the Jordanian law (14.3% were tobacco specialty stores).*
- ◆ Weak existence of MOH's age restriction signs found. Most (86.4%) shops that sold a tobacco or electronic nicotine product did not have any signs indicating that sales to minors is prohibited.
- ◆ Unpackaged tobacco products were sold to minors.
 - *In 20% of store visits, children were seen buying single stick cigarettes or loose molasses.*
- ◆ Eye-level displays of tobacco and electronic nicotine products were observed.
 - *In 23.1% of the 147 Point of Sales (POSs), tobacco and electronic nicotine products were accessible within one meter from floor (which increases product visibility to children).*
- ◆ Flavored tobacco and electronic nicotine products, which appeal to children, are prevalent in shops near schools.
 - *All molasses are available in flavored versions and come in attractive packaging. 86.4% of e-liquids, 55.6% of Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) and 49.6% of cigarettes are available in different flavors.*
- ◆ Other forms of advertising of tobacco and electronic nicotine products were observed and included displays with illumination and printed signs and price discounts.
 - *Approximately 43% of shops selling cigarettes displayed them in a way to be visible from outside the shop.*

Despite laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco and electronic nicotine products in the vicinity of schools, a substantial number of stores in our sample in Amman display and sell these products, leaving impressionable vulnerable youth unprotected.

BACKGROUND

Jordan, a country with a largely young population, has one of the highest rates of smoking globally. 66.1% of males and 17.4% of females use tobacco (1); these [2019] statistics do not capture the timeframe when e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) legally entered the market in 2021 and 2020, respectively.

Preventing the initiation of tobacco and electronic nicotine use requires a focus on youth, because the majority of smokers start smoking before the age of 18 years. In Jordan, approximately 35% of current smokers started smoking before the age of 16 (1). Specifically among young females aged 15 to 19 years, the growing prevalence of tobacco use has been documented: in 2002, 5.5% and 7.9% smoked cigarettes and waterpipe, respectively. By 2012, these values had increased to 8.2 and 14.1% (2). Among Jordanian youth aged 13-15y, 33.9% and 13.8% of boys and girls (respectively) are smokers; and 52.9% of them bought their own cigarettes (3).

That approximately 53% of youth who smoke buy their own cigarettes is not surprising (3). Tobacco and electronic nicotine products are cheap and accessible in Jordan; and although no data has directly documented the matter, displays of tobacco and electronic nicotine products that violate national and international tobacco control regulations are frequently observed, and tobacco and electronic nicotine products can be widely viewed in shops by younger generations, thus normalizing such products and attracting young potential users. The 2019 STEPS survey, although targeting adults (18-69y) clearly reflected two things (1): first, the age of initiation of tobacco use initiation is young in both sexes. Specifically, the average age of initiation in young adult smokers was 17.6 years for both sexes in the 18-44y age group, but 16.6y for males alone in the same age group category; and second, both shisha (molasses) and e cigarette use is higher in the younger age group category(18-44y).

To address the vulnerability of youth to tobacco and electronic nicotine, the Jordanian Tobacco Products Sales and Display regulations (bylaw 73/2013 and article 3 of its 2015 amendment) prohibit the sale of tobacco products within a 250m radius of the outer walls of the outer walls of kindergartens, schools, and universities (as well as health clinics and hospitals); and regulate how these products can be displayed. The Jordanian FDA's 2019 regulations for "display, sale, and storage of electronic vaping products, electronic liquid products, and electronically heated tobacco products" also prohibit the sales of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products within a 500m radius of educational [and healthcare] facilities. This is because certain practices if left unchecked – such as displays of tobacco or electronic nicotine products near youth-appealing snacks in stores; placing tobacco and electronic nicotine advertisements near the eye-level of children; advertising and displaying flavored tobacco and electronic nicotine products; and selling single cigarette sticks –increase the likelihood of vulnerable youth experimenting with tobacco and becoming smokers. To date, there are no publicly available data documenting tobacco or electronic nicotine advertising and product availability in high-risk areas such as schools.

This objective of this project was to evaluate deficiencies in the enactment of the Jordanian Tobacco Products Sales and Display regulations (tobacco as well as new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products display regulations). The project specifically sought to generate data about the presence of tobacco and nicotine product advertising and sales around a selection of schools in Amman, thereby providing the evidence needed to effectively advocate for increased tobacco industry regulation in the context of child protection.

METHODOLOGY

SCHOOL SAMPLING

Two densely populated districts were chosen in the capital of Jordan, Amman: the University District, and Amman Qasabah District, which had 917 schools in them. Kindergarten only schools (n=367) were excluded, resulting in a total of 550 public and private schools, covering all ages from 6y to 18y. A random sample of 100 schools was then selected (from which 76 qualified to enter the study and 24 did not have

nearby shops). The sample was subsequently supplemented with 18 additional schools that were selected deliberately based on their location in densely populated areas.

SOFTWARE USED

The study methodology was adapted from similar studies done under Johns Hopkins University and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids Tiny Target Project (4). The Kobo toolbox used was adapted to the Jordanian setting for data entry.

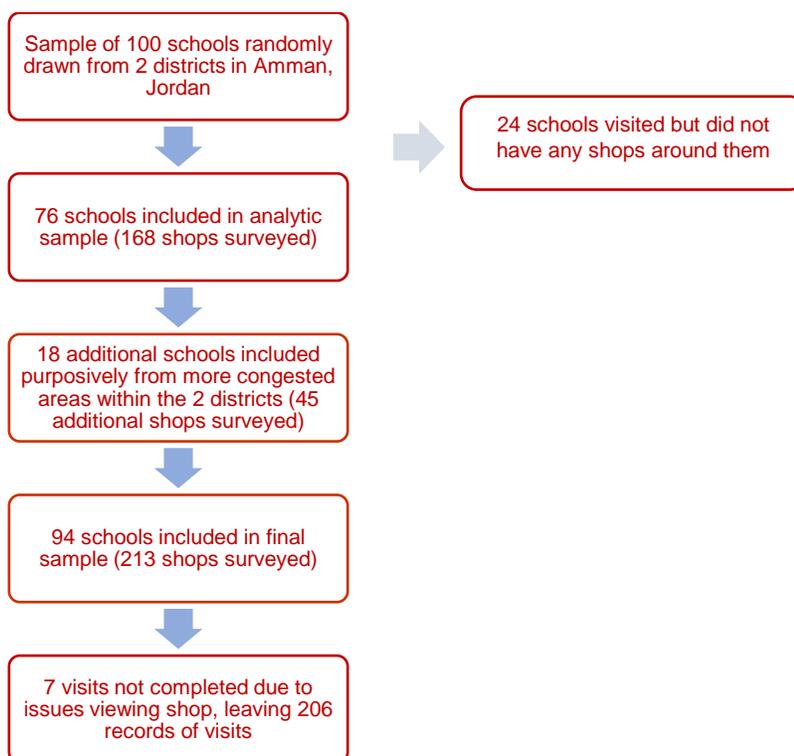
DATA COLLECTION

Twenty college students and recent graduates were recruited and trained to conduct data collection. Training involved a first half-day orientation session, followed by a pilot trip to collect data, and completed with a feedback session. Data collection was between February 6 and April 18, 2023. Data collectors were instructed to scope the 150m radius of each school they were assigned.

RESULTS

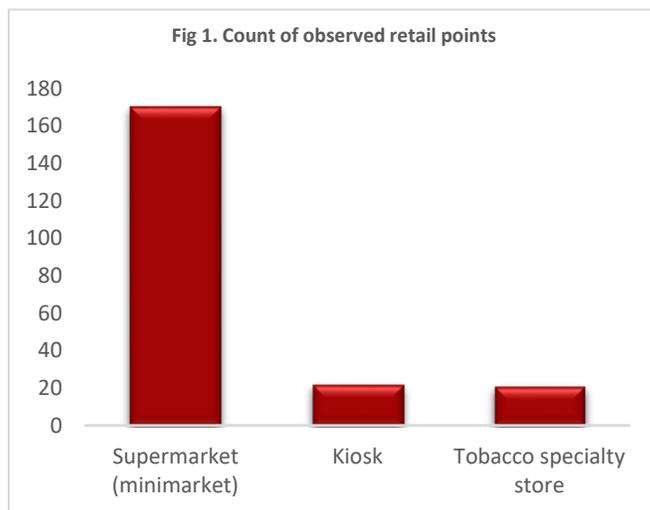
OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE

A total of 94 schools were included and resulted in surveying of 213 shops within 150 meters. The number of shops around schools ranged from 1 to 9 per school, and averaged 2.3 shops per school. Half the sample had 2 or fewer stores (i.e. median count of shops per school was 2).



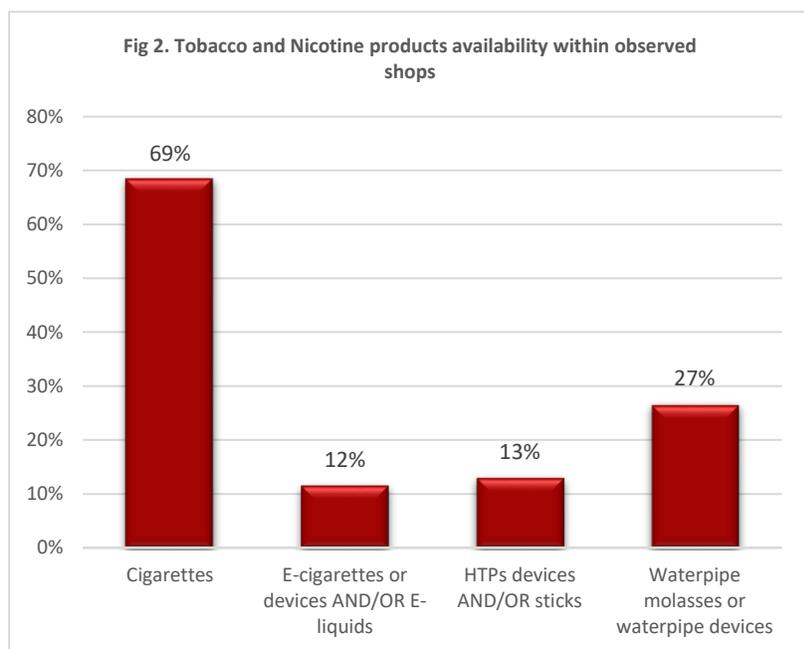
CATEGORIZATION OF RETAILERS AND PRODUCTS AVAILABILITY

- ◆ The majority of the 213 surveyed shops (points of sale, POS) were supermarkets. Approximately 10% were tobacco specialty stores (Fig. 1). Data collectors were able to access most of the stores (200 stores were accessible, and in 6 of the stores that were not, data collectors could see inside the store).



Type of store	Findings
Supermarket (minimarket)	170 (79.8%)
Kiosk	22 (10.3%)
Tobacco specialty store	21 (9.9%)
All tobacco	15
Heated tobacco products (HTPs)	4
Vape shop	2

- ◆ In 69.0% of shops surveyed (i.e. 147/213 shops), at least one tobacco or electronic nicotine product was being sold, the most frequently sold product being the conventional cigarette, sold in 95.9% of these shops (i.e. 141/147, Fig. 2).

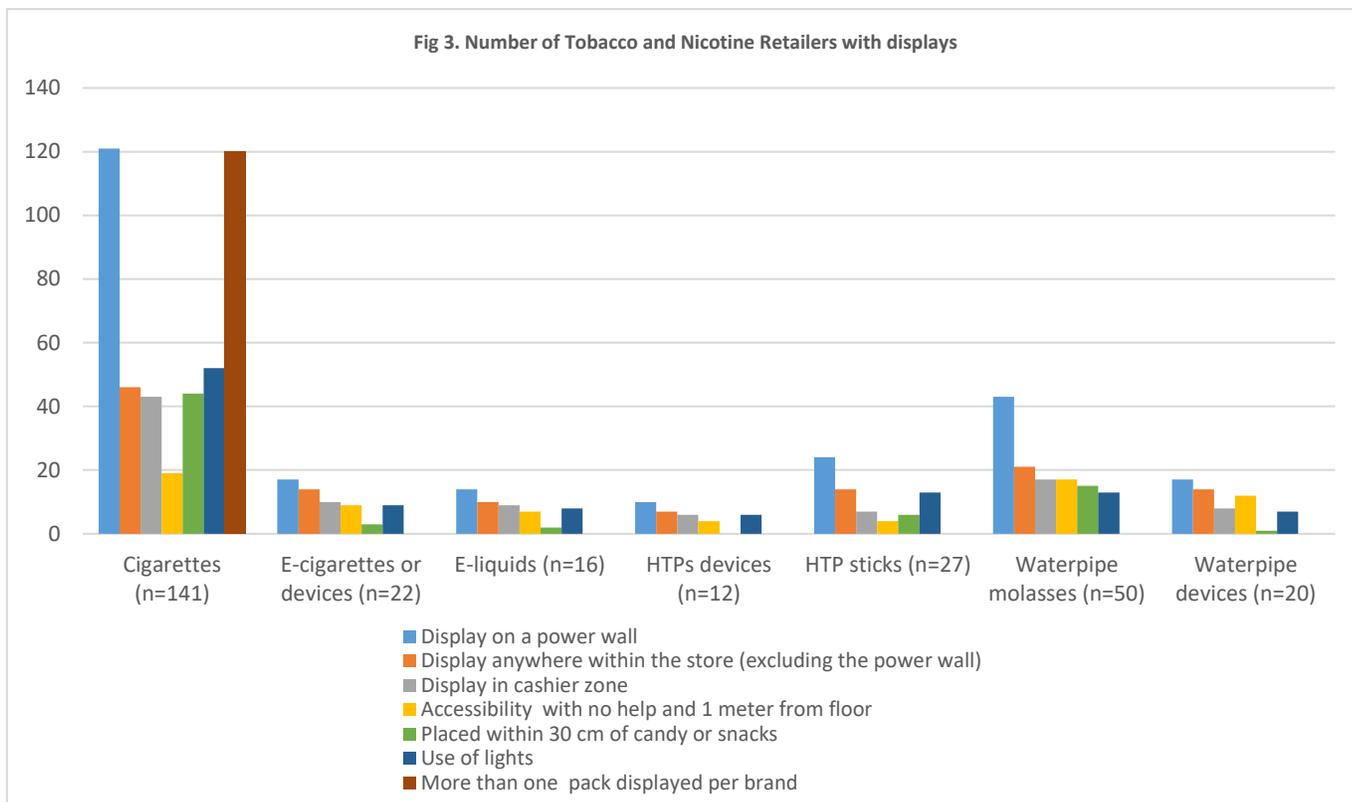


Types of products sold	Findings
Cigarettes	141 (68.5%)
E-cigarettes or devices	22 (10.7%)
E-liquids	16 (7.8%)
E-cigarettes or devices AND/OR E-liquids	24 (11.7%)
HTPs devices	12 (5.8%)
HTP sticks	27 (13.1%)
HTPs devices AND/OR sticks	27 (13.1%)
Waterpipe molasses	50 (24.3%)
Waterpipe devices	20 (9.7%)
Waterpipe molasses OR waterpipe devices	55 (26.7%)
Any tobacco or ENDS product	147 (69.0%)
Average number of products per store	1.96

PRODUCT PACKAGING AND IN-STORE DISPLAYS

Displays

- ◆ In 23.1% of shops containing any tobacco or electronic nicotine products, products were accessible within one meter from floor (Fig. 3)
- ◆ 25-50% of tobacco or electronic nicotine products were displayed with illumination.

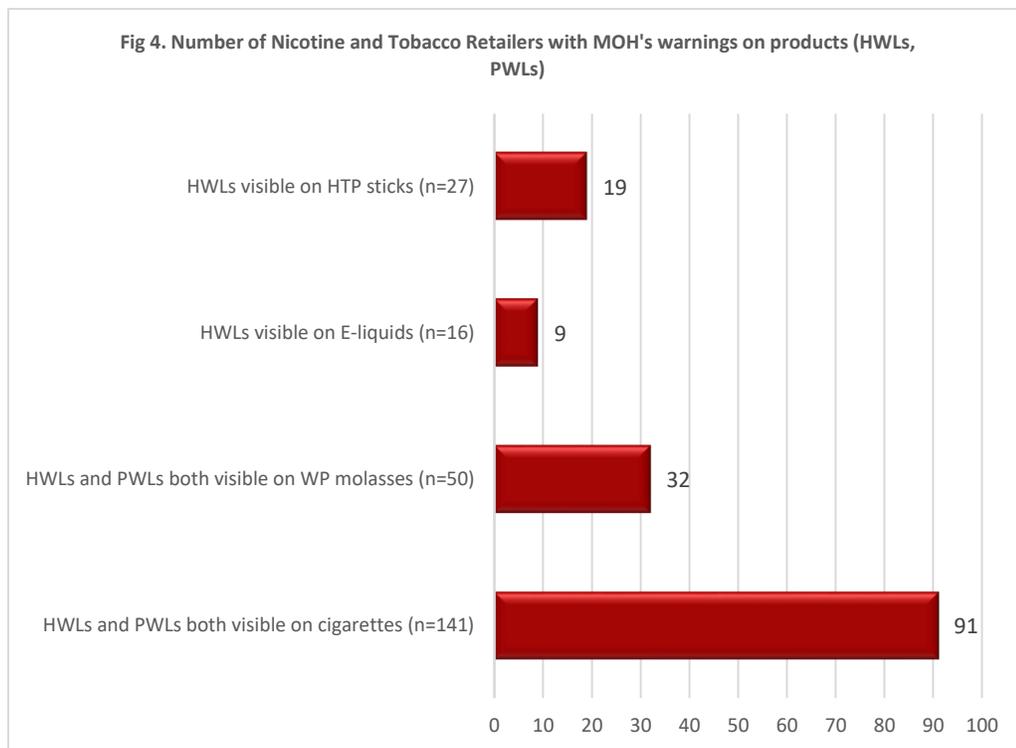


Types of products displayed on a power wall	
Cigarettes (n=141)	121/141 (85.8%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	17/22 (77.3%)
E-liquids (n=16)	14/16 (87.5%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	10/12 (83.3%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	24/27 (88.9%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	43/50 (86.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	17/20 (85.0%)
Lights used to illuminate products	
Cigarettes (n=141)	52/141 (36.9%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	9/22 (40.9%)
E-liquids (n=16)	8/16 (50.0%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	6/12 (50.0%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	13/27 (48.1%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	13/50 (26.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	7/20 (35.0%)
Products placed within 30 cm of candy or snacks	
Cigarettes (n=141)	44/141 (31.2%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	3/22 (13.6%)
E-liquids (n=16)	2/16 (12.5%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	0/12 (0%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	6/27 (22.2%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	15/50 (30.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	1/20 (5.0%)

Product displays (excluding power wall)	
Cigarettes (n=141)	46/141 (32.6%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	14/22 (63.6%)
E-liquids (n=16)	10/16 (62.5%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	7/12 (58.3%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	14/27 (51.9%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	21/50 (42.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	14/20 (70.0%)
Products displayed in cashier zone (excluding power wall)	
Cigarettes (n=141)	43/141 (30.5%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	10/22 (45.5%)
E-liquids (n=16)	9/16 (56.3%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	6/12 (50.0%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	7/27 (25.9%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	17/50 (34.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	8/20 (40.0%)
More than one cigarette pack displayed per brand	120/141 (85.1%)
Products accessible with no help and 1 meter from floor	
Cigarettes (n=141)	19/141 (13.5%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	9/22 (40.9%)
E-liquids (n=16)	7/16 (43.8%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	4/12 (33.3%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	4/27 (14.8%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	17/50 (34.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	12/20 (60.0%)
More than one cigarette pack displayed per brand	120/141 (85.1%)

On-pack' health and pictorial warning labels

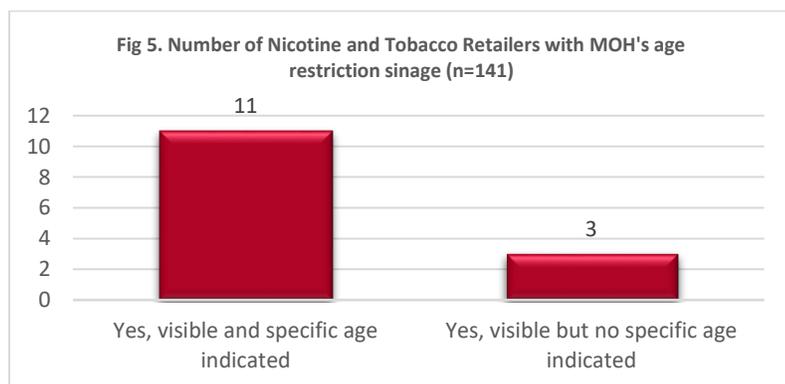
- Warning labels on cigarette packs were generally visible, although it is relevant to note that Jordan's warning labels have not been modified in 12 years and based on previously conducted research have lost their salience and effectiveness.



Health warning labels (HWLs) and Pictorial warning labels (PWLs) both visible on cigarettes	
Yes	91/141 (64.5%)
No, only HWLs	6/141 (4.3%)
No, only PWLs	6/141 (4.3%)
Blanks/Unknowns	38/141(26.95%)
HWLs and PWLs both visible on Waterpipe molasses	
Yes	32/50 (64.0%)
No, only HWLs	5/50 (10.0%)
No, only PWLs	1/50 (2.0%)
HWLs visible on E-liquids	
Yes	9/16 (56.3%)
HWLs visible on HTP sticks	
Yes	19/27 (70.4%)

MOH's age restriction signage

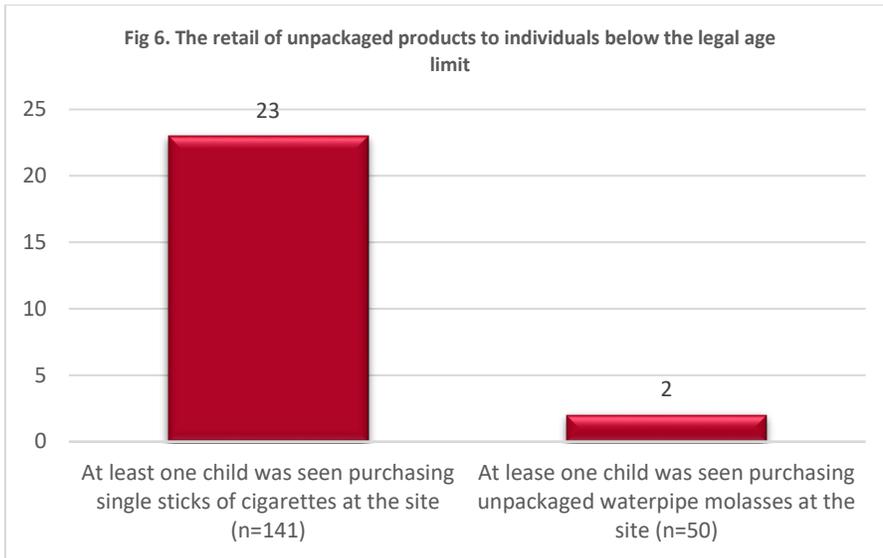
- 90% of stores had no signs prohibiting sales to minors (Fig. 5).



Sign that says cigarettes can only be sold to adults	
Yes, specific age indicated	11/141 (7.8%)
Yes, but no specific age indicated	3/141 (2.1%)
No	127/141 (90.1%)
Sign prohibiting sales, no TI logo	11/141 (7.8%)
Sign prohibiting sales, TI logo	3/141 (2.1%)

Single sticks and unpackaged molasses sales to minors

- ◆ In 20% of store visits, children were seen buying single stick cigarettes or loose molasses (Fig. 6).



	Yes
Did you observe child buying single sticks cigarettes	23/141 (16.3%)
Did you observe child buying water-pipe molasses	2/50 (4.0%)

IN-STORE PRODUCTS PROMOTIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

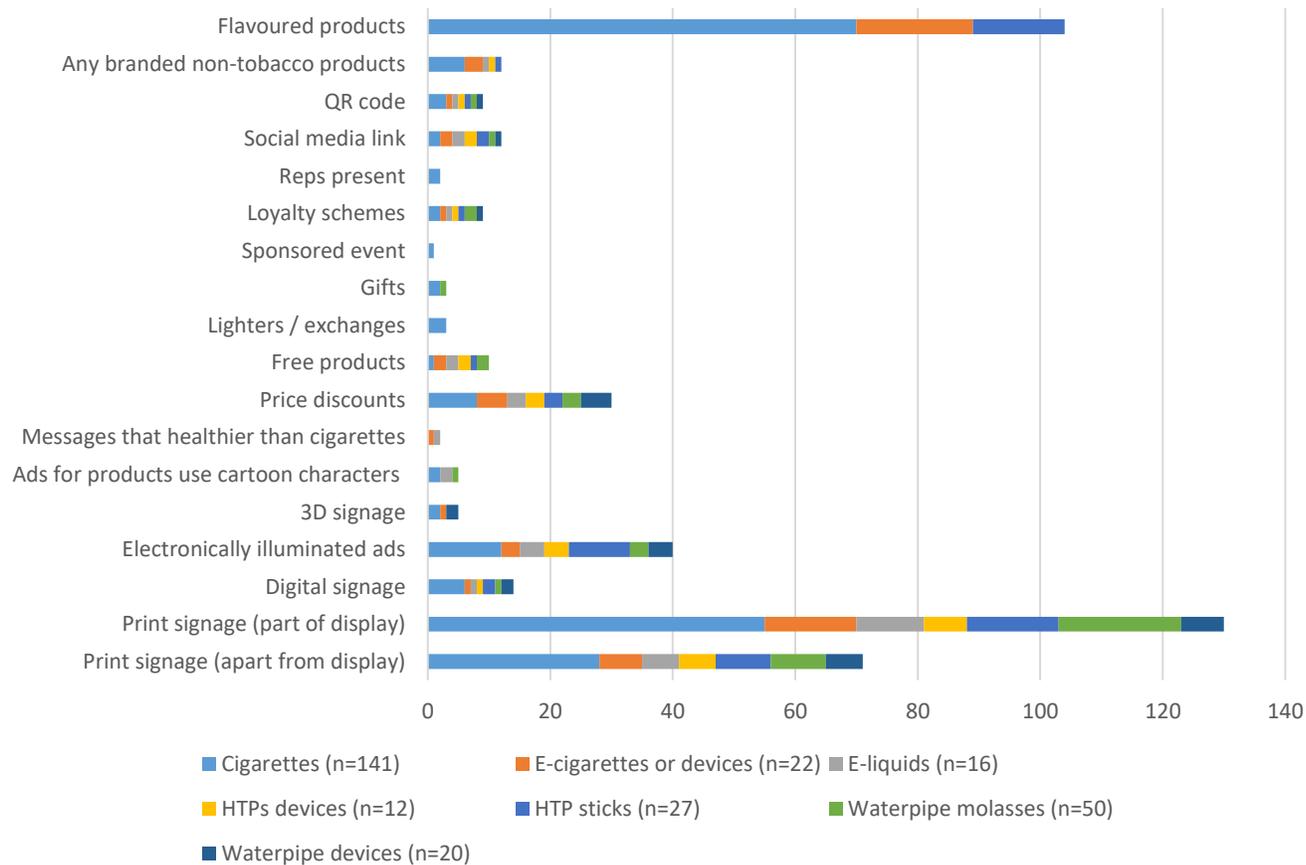
Promotion as cessation tools

- ◆ In non-cigarette products, none displayed messages for tobacco cessation.

Types of advertising observed

- ◆ Various forms of advertising were observed across the surveyed shops. The most commonly used forms included sales of flavored products, print signage, and illuminated products to attract (Fig. 7). It is also important to note that advertising forms such as price discounts and distribution of free products also were observed.

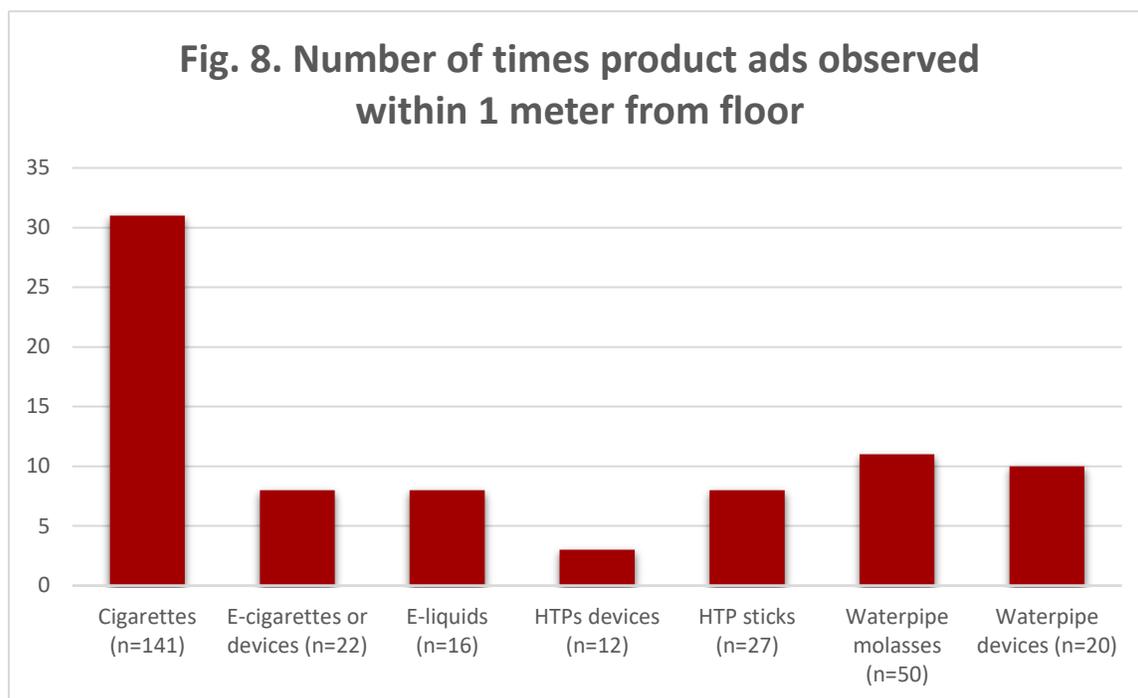
Fig 7. Number of Tobacco and Nicotine Retailers with Advertising inside the store



Yes (frequencies)	Cigarettes (n=141)	E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	E-liquids (n=16)	HTPs devices (n=12)	HTP sticks (n=27)	Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	Waterpipe devices (n=20)
Print signage (apart from display)	28 (19.9%)	7 (31.8%)	6 (37.5%)	6 (50.0%)	9 (33.3%)	9 (18.0%)	6 (30.0%)
Print signage (part of display)	55 (39.0%)	15 (68.2%)	11 (68.8%)	7 (58.3%)	15 (55.6%)	20 (40.0%)	7 (35.0%)
Digital signage	6 (4.3%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (7.4%)	1 (2.0%)	2 (10.0%)
Electronically illuminated ads	12 (8.5%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (25.0%)	4 (33.3%)	10 (37.0%)	3 (6.0%)	4 (20.0%)
3D signage	2 (1.4%)	1 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (10.0%)

Placements of advertisements

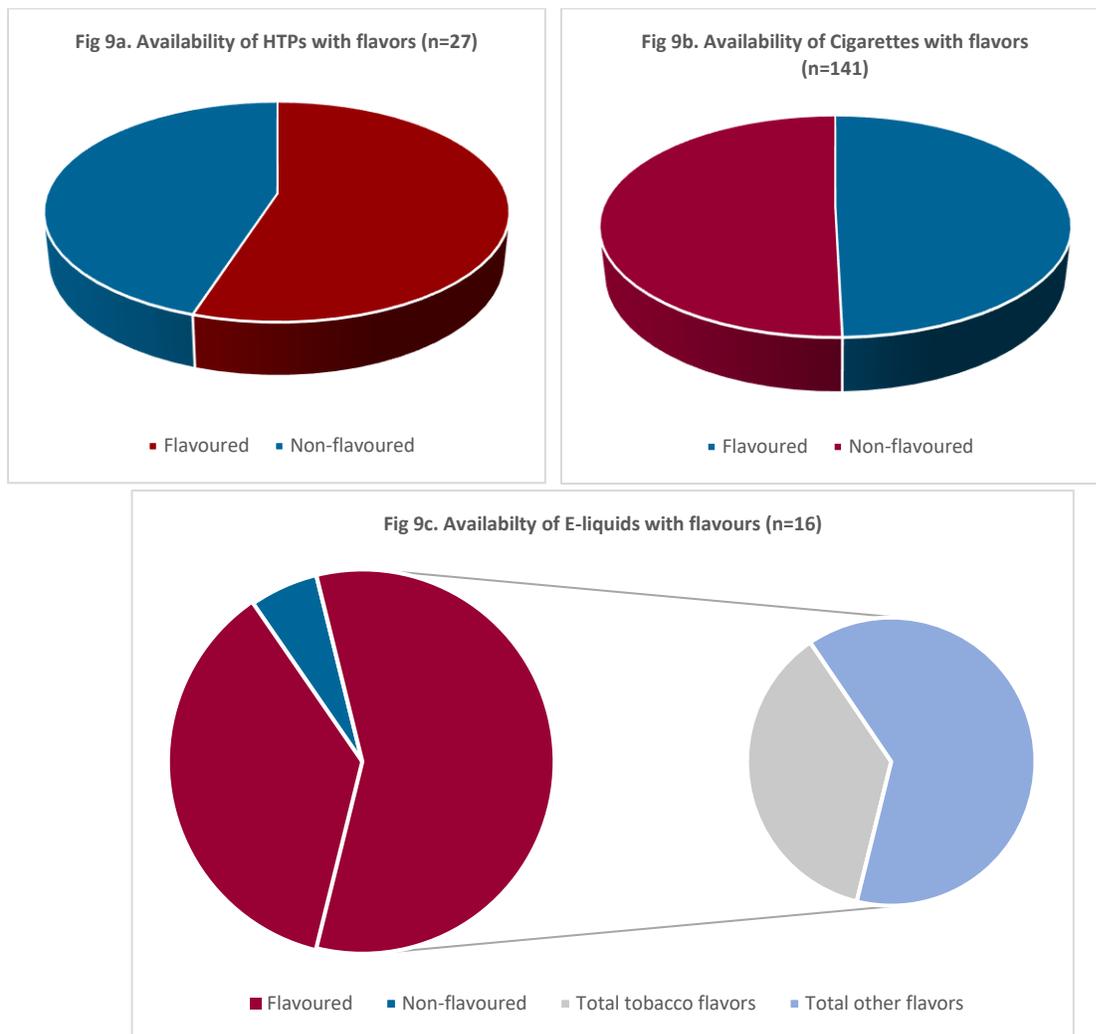
- ◆ Across the tobacco and electronic nicotine product categories, advertisements were observed within one meter from the floor (Fig 8), at eye-level of children.



Product ads placed within 1 meter from floor	Proportions "yes"
Cigarettes (n=141)	31/141 (22.0%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	8/22 (36.4%)
E-liquids (n=16)	8/16 (50.0%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	3/12 (25.0%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	8/27 (29.6%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	11/50 (22.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	10/20 (50.0%)

Flavors

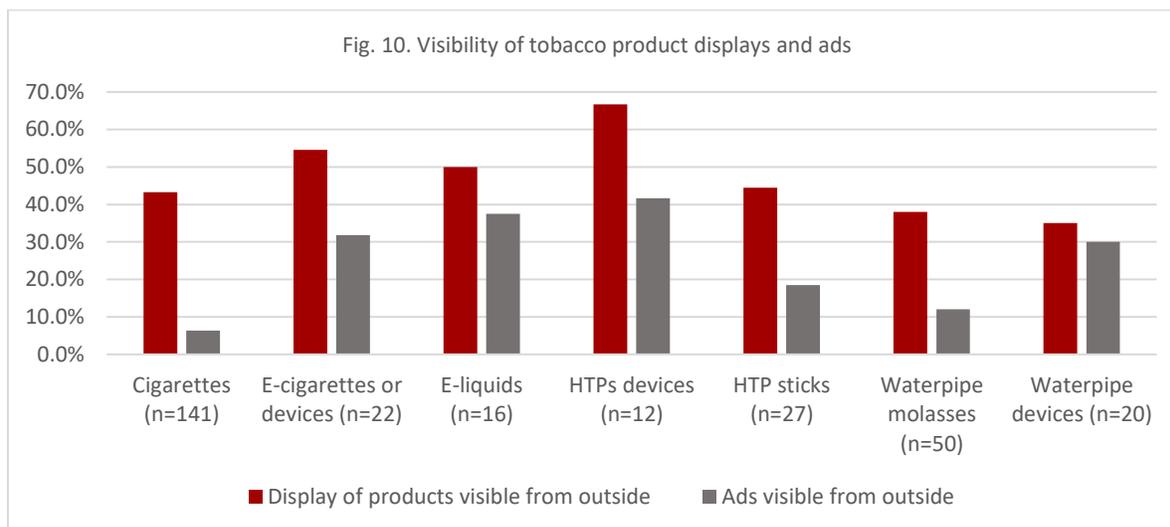
- ◆ Most (86.4%) of e liquids or devices were available in luring flavors. Flavored cigarettes also were observed (Fig. 9).



	Yes
Does store sell flavored cigarettes?	70/141 (49.6%)
Does store sell flavored e-cigarettes?	19/22 (86.4%)
Does store sell flavored HTPs?	15/27 (55.6%)
What flavors of e-cigarettes are available	
Tobacco only flavor	1/22 (4.5%)
Tobacco as well as other flavors	10/22 (45.5%)
Other flavors only	9/22 (40.9%)
Total tobacco flavors	11/22 (50.0%)
Total other flavors	19/22 (86.4%)

RETAILERS WITH PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS SEEN FROM OUTSIDE THE STORE

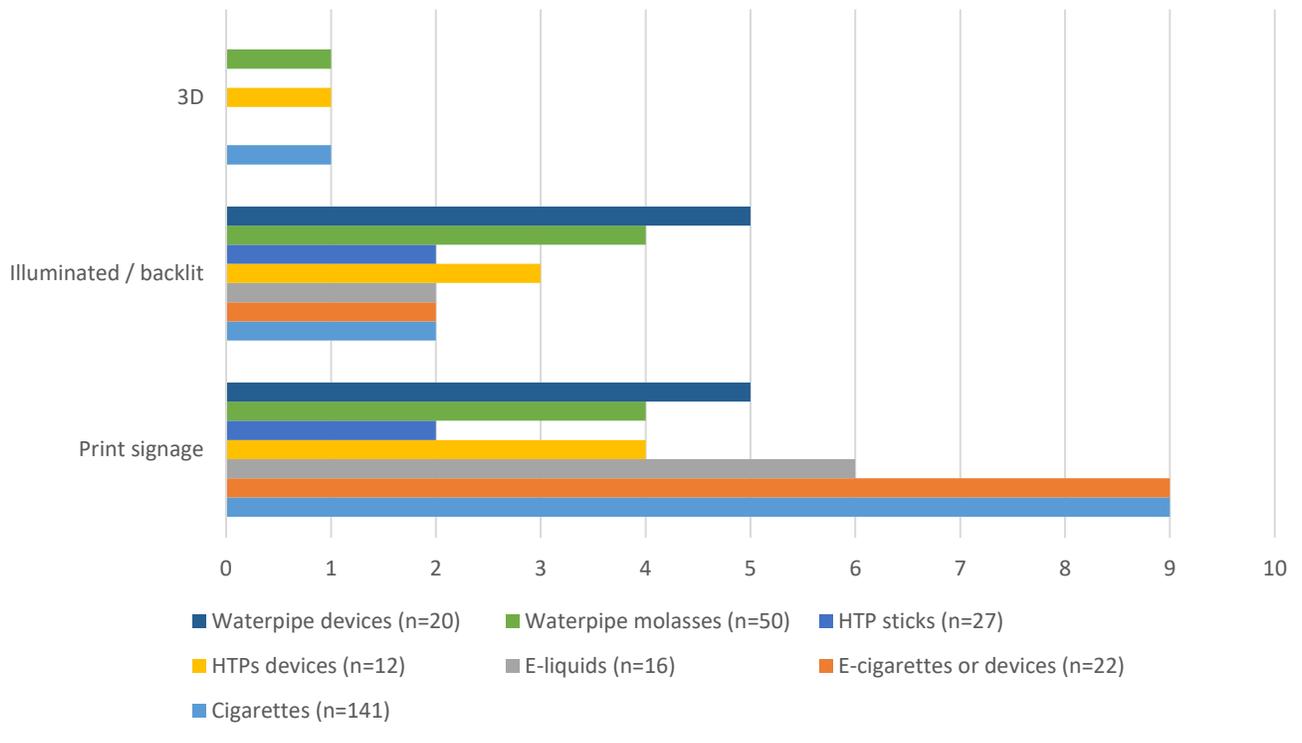
- ◆ In many shops, both displays and advertisements were visible from outside the store (Fig. 10).



	Display of products visible from outside	Ads visible from outside
Cigarettes (n=141)	61 (43.3%)	9 (6.4%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	12 (54.5%)	7 (31.8%)
E-liquids (n=16)	8 (50.0%)	6 (37.5%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	8 (66.7%)	5 (41.7%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	12 (44.4%)	5 (18.5%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	19 (38.0%)	6 (12.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	7 (35.0%)	6/20 (30.0%)

- ◆ A considerable number of shops displayed advertisements outside the store, using more than one form of advertising (Fig. 11) to increase visibility of tobacco and electronic nicotine products.

Fig. 11. Forms of advertising outside the store



How are products advertised	Print signage	Illuminated / backlit	3D
Cigarettes (n=141)	9/141 (6.4%)	2/141 (1.4%)	1/141 (0.70%)
E-cigarettes or devices (n=22)	9/22 (40.9%)	2/22 (9.1%)	0 (0%)
E-liquids (n=16)	6/16 (37.5%)	2/16 (12.5%)	0 (0%)
HTPs devices (n=12)	4/12 (33.3%)	3/12 (25.0%)	1/12 (8.3%)
HTP sticks (n=27)	2/27 (7.4%)	2/27 (7.4%)	0 (0%)
Waterpipe molasses (n=50)	4/50 (8.0%)	1/50 (2.0%)	1/50 (2.0%)
Waterpipe devices (n=20)	5/20 (25.0%)	2/20 (10.0%)	0 (0%)

PRESENCE OF WATERPIPE CAFES

- ◆ Approximately 12% of schools (9/73) had a waterpipe café in the 150m vicinity.

CONCLUSIONS

Jordan's children are a vulnerable group that must be protected from exposure to tobacco and electronic nicotine products when they are at an impressionable age. Laws have been put in place to protect them. Health law 47/2008 prohibits single stick sales and the sale of tobacco products to minors, as well as advertising and promotion of tobacco products. The 73/2013 regulations and 2015 amendments prohibit the sale of tobacco products in a 250m radius of kindergartens, schools, and universities (as well as health clinics and hospitals), and the Jordanian FDA's 2019 regulations for "display, sale, and storage of electronic vaping products, electronic liquid products, and electronically heated tobacco products" also prohibit the sales of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products within a 500m radius of educational [and healthcare] facilities. These regulations are an effort to ensure that children, in their daily environments, are not exposed to tobacco and electronic nicotine products.

Our study demonstrates that these laws are violated around schools. Tobacco and electronic nicotine product sales within a vicinity even narrower than the 250m one specified by the law (we scoped a 150m radius) are wide spread, and the majority of shops scoped around a random sample of schools display and sell at least one form of tobacco or electronic nicotine product, while utilizing various forms of advertising such as appealing flavors, packaging and displays with high visibility, and single stick sales.

Raising awareness about the law in combination with strict implementation of the law can contribute to curbing the current increasing trend in smokers we are observing in Jordan. Using various media outlets to educate the public on the importance of protecting our children could be an effective tool to ensure their collaboration in the implementation of the law.

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APPENDIX 1: Visual depiction of violations to Jordan's public health law (73/2013 and its 2015 amendments; and JFDA's 2019 regulations)

Visual display of spread of products: ideal situation (left hand side) versus reality (right hand side). Each block represents a tobacco or electronic nicotine product, each row a shop:

