

Highlights of



OBSERVATÓRIO SOBRE AS ESTRATÉGIAS DA INDÚSTRIA DO TABACO

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Editorial: Regulatory Challenges in Tobacco Control in Brazil

The tobacco control landscape in Brazil is facing another critical moment, marked by debates on public health policies, regulation, and monitoring of the tobacco industry, which does everything in its power to maintain its profits.

The Center for Tobacco and Health Studies (Cetab), aiming to contribute to the discussion, has established a partnership with the Department of Epidemiological Analysis and Surveillance of Non-Communicable Diseases (DAENT) of the Ministry of Health. This collaboration has sparked a dialogue that highlights the need for regulation and evidence on the health harms caused by alcohol consumption, which, like the tobacco industry, uses tactics and strategies to retain consumers. These discussions underscore the importance of coordinated and strategic action to face the challenges posed by these industries and promote public health protection.

On October 21st, Cetab and DAENT, with the support of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), organized the event called “Dialogues on Brazilian Policies for the Prevention and Control of Alcohol Use,” which emphasized the importance of including alcoholic beverages in the set of selective taxes within the tax reform. This initiative has demanded intersectoral cooperation between public agencies, such as the Federal Revenue Service and the Federal Police. Alcohol consumption is linked to thousands of deaths annually, in addition to generating significant economic and social impacts. The parallels between combating smoking and controlling alcohol consumption highlight the need for integrated policies that can effectively prevent the harm these substances cause to society.

Another significant event was the webinar held on October 23rd by the Miguel Murat de Vasconcellos Study Center, part of FioCruz's National School of Public Health (CEENSP), which discussed “The Tobacco Industry and the Fake News Industry: Confronting Strategies and Lessons Learned.” In this event, experts discussed how the tobacco industry’s disinformation strategies to discredit scientific evidence mirror tactics seen in the excessive use of digital technologies, both negatively impacting public health. This event reinforced the importance of focusing on policies that directly combat the tobacco industry’s manipulation strategies, promoting regulations that protect society, especially vulnerable groups such as children and adolescents.

Another milestone in tobacco control is currently under review by the Supreme Federal Court (STF), which will rule between November 1st and 11th, 2024, on the constitutionality of the regulation of additives in tobacco products, established by ANVISA through Collegiate Board Resolution (RDC) No. 14/2012. This ruling has the potential to consolidate a significant advance in public health protection, banning additives that make cigarettes more attractive to children and young people. Now, with Extraordinary Appeal 1.348.238, the STF has the opportunity to affirm ANVISA's role in regulating these products and ensure the effective implementation of this measure nationwide.

Cetab/Fiocruz emphasizes that tackling these industries is a task that requires intersectoral collaboration, scientific rigor, and a keen eye on the manipulation and disinformation strategies aimed at undermining public health achievements.

Luis Guilherme Lemos Hasselmann - Journalist - Center for Tobacco and Health Studies (Cetab/ENSP)

Event Discusses Tobacco Industry Tactics and Parallels with Digital Device Regulation

On October 23rd, the Miguel Murat de Vasconcellos Study Center at the Sergio Arouca National School of Public Health (CEENSP/ENSP) held a critical debate on the theme "The Tobacco Industry and the Fake News Industry: Confronting Strategies and Lessons Learned." Broadcast live on YouTube, the event addressed some of the tactics used by the tobacco industry to influence public policy and manipulate public perception of the risks of smoking, drawing comparisons with the challenges faced in regulating excessive use of cell phones and digital platforms.

Featuring renowned experts like Silvana Rubano Turci, coordinator of Cetab/Fiocruz, Juliano Cappi, advisor to the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br), and Valeska Carvalho Figueiredo from the ENSP's Department of Epidemiology, the event aimed to highlight how disinformation, often spread through fake news, has been a powerful tool for both the tobacco industry and big tech companies. The session was moderated by Marcelo Fornazin, also from ENSP.

Silvana Rubano Turci noted that the tobacco industry has historically employed corporate social responsibility strategies, sponsorships, and misleading campaigns to soften its image, discrediting scientific studies that prove the health damages of smoking. According to her, similar practices are observed in the use of digital devices, particularly cell phones and social media platforms, where addiction is exploited to maximize user engagement, making it harder to implement effective regulatory policies.

Valeska Figueiredo emphasized the need for stricter regulatory measures in both sectors. "Society needs more protection from the interests of these industries, which often prioritize profit over the health and well-being of the population," she warned.



Juliano Cappi brought the perspective of the internet and the challenges in regulating the use of digital platforms. He mentioned that, like the tobacco industry, big tech companies benefit from weak regulatory frameworks, using strategies to bypass legislation and perpetuate business models that harm social well-being.

The comparison between the tobacco industry and big tech platforms reinforces the urgency of an integrated approach to confronting disinformation and manipulation tactics from these corporations. The debate shed light on the importance of strengthening regulation, not only to protect public health in the context of smoking but also to address the challenges posed by the excessive use of digital devices.

For those who missed the live event, the recording is available on ENSP's YouTube channel, offering an opportunity to delve deeper into one of the most relevant contemporary issues for public health and the regulation of industries that influence our daily lives.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PmxmpOE4Is>

Cetab and DAENT Discuss the Need to Update Alcohol Control Policies in Brazil

On October 21st, Cetab/Fiocruz, in partnership with DAENT, organized a seminar with representatives from various government agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Justice, Federal Police, Federal Highway Police, and SENATRAN, along with experts from various departments of the Ministry of Health. These representatives showcased their activities and highlighted the need for more effective actions to mitigate the harms caused by alcohol consumption. The impact is significant. In 2022, more than 21,000 deaths in the country were attributed to alcohol, an average of two lives lost per hour.

The meeting also highlighted that the negative effects are not limited to public health. Alcohol consumption directly affects the economy and national security, accounting for 27% of all road accidents in Brazil. Furthermore, the economic costs caused by alcohol consumption already exceed 1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in middle- and low-income countries. In the health sector, the Unified Health System (SUS) spent more than 1.7 billion reais in 2018 on treating alcohol-related cancers, and forecasts suggest that this amount could double by 2040 if preventive measures are not adopted.

Among the solutions discussed at the event was support for the implementation of selective taxes on alcoholic beverages. This measure aims to discourage consumption by increasing the cost of these drinks, resulting in reduced demand and, consequently, reduced health damage.

Another noteworthy point is the intersectoral cooperation needed to strengthen prevention policies, with institutions such as the Federal Police, the Federal Revenue Service, and the Ministry of Justice playing crucial roles in monitoring and ensuring the effective implementation of control measures.

The debate concluded with a call for the formulation of integrated policies that not only focus on taxation but also include educational campaigns and prevention programs targeting the most vulnerable groups.



As alcohol consumption is a multifaceted problem, the unification of efforts among health, security, and regulatory entities will be vital for advancing the reduction of alcohol-related impacts in Brazil.

Source: https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/2024/outubro/ministerio-da-saude-reune-especialistas-para-discutir-politicas-de-controle-do-alcool-no-brasil?fbclid=IwY2xjawGQkHZleHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHeXC2hX3_g4QAp6nYGiL-t_V-6Bgl64I94ZAUGjj8is-GCrLYCCVg3_XWg_aem_OUMpXj1XccabrZ6evuKztA

The Constitutionality of Additive Regulation in Tobacco Products by ANVISA: Impact of the STF Ruling

Between November 1st and 11th, 2024, the Supreme Federal Court (STF) will analyze Extraordinary Appeal 1.348.238, which deals with ANVISA's authority to prohibit additives in cigarettes through RDC No. 14/2012. These additives, such as menthol and other flavorings, make cigarettes more attractive, especially to young people. The ruling, under the rapporteurship of Minister Dias Toffoli, could strengthen ANVISA's power to create norms aimed at protecting public health and harmonize judicial decisions on the matter.

The ban on additives, aligned with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), seeks to reduce smoking initiation and increase cessation rates, protecting the population from chronic diseases caused by smoking, such as cancer and cardiovascular problems. Although a previous STF ruling deemed the regulation constitutional, the current ruling could provide binding effect, preventing further challenges and offering greater legal certainty.

This judgment will be a landmark in tobacco regulation in Brazil, reinforcing ANVISA's role in restricting the sale of harmful products. With this decision, it is expected that smoking prevalence will continue to decline, particularly among young people, and that Brazil will remain a global leader in the fight against tobacco.

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FCTC

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