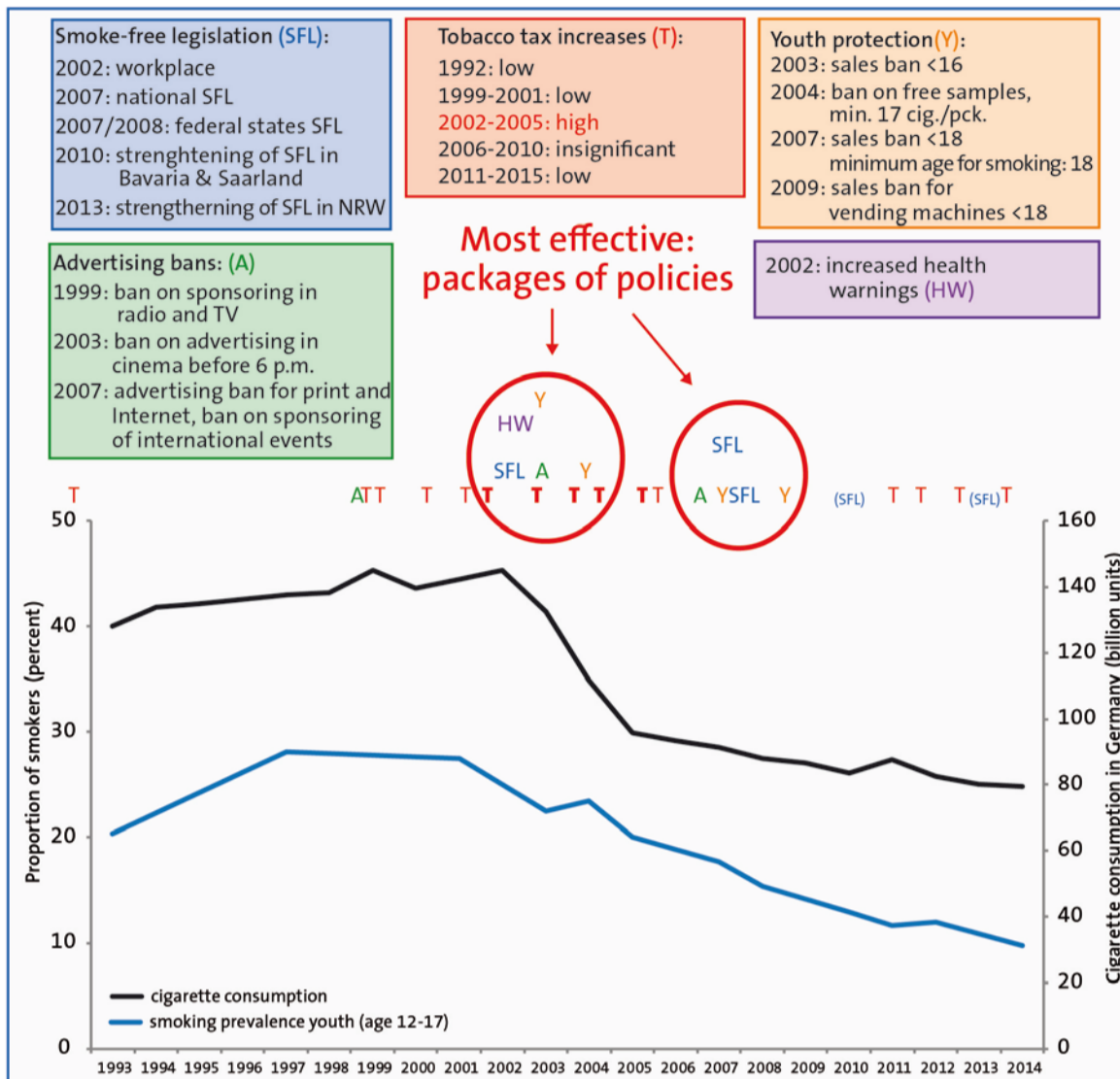


Introduction

In Germany, obesity is on the rise. Projects aiming at a change of the behaviour of individuals like food training programs or physical activity programs could not halt this trend. These projects need to be supported by political measures to change the external conditions in the society and to promote a healthy lifestyle. Several policies proved to be successful in curbing the tobacco epidemic. Some of these – adapted to obesity – may prove effective in obesity prevention, too.

Effective policies for tobacco prevention in Germany



Smoke-free legislation

- Protects non-smokers from passive smoking
- Makes smoking less attractive
- Prevents youth from taking up smoking
- *In Germany*, smoke-free legislation supports the trend towards non-smoking

Protection of minors

- Smoking initiation takes place before age 18
- Preventing smoking initiation is essential for curbing the tobacco epidemic
- *In Germany*, the sales ban to youth and the ban on free samples support the trend towards non-smoking among youth

Ref.: German Cancer Research Center, Tobacco Atlas Germany 2015

Tobacco tax increases

- A 10% increase of the cigarette price leads to 4% reduction of consumption in adults and up to 13% reduction in youth
- *In Germany*, the high tax increases 2002-2005 were accompanied by a marked reduction of cigarette consumption

Advertising ban

- A comprehensive advertising ban leads to about 7% decline in consumption
- Partial bans have no effect
- *In Germany*, billboard advertising for tobacco products is still allowed

Essential for policies:

- WHO-Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- scientific evidence
- political will
- reduced influence of industry

Effective policies for obesity prevention (promoted by the German NCD Alliance, DANK)

Taxes on unhealthy food (high content of sugar/fat)

- Food taxes have to be accompanied by subsidies
- Price increase by 20% for soft drinks → reduced consumption by 24%
- Price increase by 20% for fast foods → reduced consumption by ~ 10%
- Subsidy for fruit and vegetables of 20% → increased consumption by ~ 10%
- Mexico: Tax on sugary beverages of 10% in 2014 → 6% decline of purchase in taxed beverages and 4% increase of purchases in untaxed beverages
- **Recommendation for Germany:**
- Tax increase by 20% in food with high content of fat, sugar or salt
- reduction of the general value-added tax rate from 19% to 18%

Ban on marketing of unhealthy food to children

- The food industry targets children as customers of tomorrow and tries to bind them to brands
- A ban on marketing to children on TV can
- reduce the consumption of fast food
- reduce the proportion of overweight children by 25%
- A complementary ban on marketing to children in the mass media would markedly increase the effectiveness of a TV ban
- *In Germany*, there is a voluntary self-restriction on food marketing to children
- This voluntary self-restriction is not effective
- **Recommendation for Germany:**
Ban on marketing of unhealthy food to children in all media

Increased physical activity at school: At least one hour every day

- Moderate activity for 60-90 min. daily increases energy consumption by ~10%, thus decreases weight gain if the energy intake is constant
- An hour of moderate physical activity/day decreases mortality by ~30% and prolongs life by ~4 years compared with physical inactivity
- Half an hour of activity/day lowers mortality by ~15-20% and prolongs life by ~3 years
- The ideal environment for promotion of physical activity for children is the school: all children are accessible
- *In Germany*, schools have only 90 min. of school sport per week
- **Recommendation for Germany:**
- Daily one hour of school sport
- Complementation of sport with playing

Mandatory quality standards for meals in educational institutions

- Composition and quality of the daily food influence the physical and emotional development of children and the development of their eating behaviour, lasting up to adulthood
- School kiosks selling sweet snacks and soft drinks compete with the canteen
- *Germany*: DGE quality Standard:
- balanced, diverse main meal
- no processed products
- no use of additives
- low-fat cooking
- short warm-holding times
- ban on sale of sweets, snacks and soft drinks in schools
- installation of water dispensers
- *In Germany*, the existing quality standards for school food are poorly implemented
- **Recommendation for Germany:**
Mandatory implementation of the DGE quality standard

Refs.: Powell LM et al. (2013) *Obes Rev* 14: 110-28; Effertz T / Adams M, *JPubHealth*, 2014, DOI: 10.1007/s11553-11014-10464-z; Carolina Population Center at University of North Carolina, Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública, <http://uncfoodresearchprogram.web.unc.edu/822/>; Veerman JL et al. (2009) *Eur J Public Health* 19: 365-9; Dhar T, Baylis K (2011) *J Marketing Res* 48: 799-813; Wen CP et al. (2011) *Lancet* 378: 1244-1253; Effertz t et al. (2015) *Präv Gesundheitsf*, DOI 10.1007/s11553-014-0483-9

