

**ABSTRACT BOOK**



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on Tobacco Control

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European Network  
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Tobacco Prevention & Cessation, (Abbr: Tob. Prev. Cessation; ISSN:2459-3087) is an open access, peer-reviewed online journal that encompasses all aspects of tobacco use, prevention and cessation that can promote a tobacco free society. The aim of the journal is to foster, promote and disseminate research involving tobacco use, prevention, policy implementation at a regional, national or international level, disease development- progression related to tobacco use, tobacco use impact from the cellular to the international level and finally the treatment of tobacco attributable disease through smoking cessation.

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Sociological agency KISS conducted the end line survey among Ukrainian smokers and nonsmokers aged 18-55 to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes towards the SF regulations and the effectiveness of the mass-media campaign.

### Results

Estimated, the “No smoking friendly” campaign reached 20 million people on TV, street posters, Indoor and social media despite a very limited budget and martial law.

Some of the sociological survey conclusions:

48% know about new anti-tobacco measures

78% responders would take some measures in case someone smokes in a place where it is prohibited

85% agreed that the materials were easy to understand

According to public monitoring (end of 2022) about 80% of cafes, bars and restaurants in Ukraine comply with the ban on smoking indoors.

### Conclusions

Mass media communication is an integral effective component to support the TC law implementation. Strategic partnership between government, domestic and international public health non-for-profit organizations and private companies was a key to success. During the war it is especially important to continue strong TC activities to save the life and health of Ukrainians.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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## The economics of tobacco farming in North Macedonia

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Tobacco leaf cultivation occupies around 3.2 percent of total arable land in North Macedonia. North Macedonia is the second largest producer of oriental-type tobacco leaf after Turkey. In 2021, the total production of tobacco was 24,329 tons from 15,457 hectares of land, with an average yield per hectare of 1,574 kilograms. North Macedonia ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2006, which introduced a legal commitment for the reduction of tobacco production and consumption as well as to help those who are employed in the tobacco sector to find alternative viable livelihoods. The process of EU integration will require the reduction of crop-specific subsidies, likely leading to less income to tobacco farmers and an eventual reduction in the area harvested. The Government adopted a new Strategy for Tobacco Production (2021–2027) in which there is envisaged indirect support for tobacco farmers, but preparations will be made with education and counseling for future change to other crops.

Tobacco farming traditionally has been supported by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. However, there is not enough research on the economic livelihood of tobacco farmers. To fill this gap and to provide results to support evidence-based policy and decision-making, a survey with a nationally representative sample was conducted. The survey comprises 806 farming households from 14

municipalities (urban and rural) in the top tobacco-producing regions in North Macedonia. Target groups (categories of respondents) for the survey are the following: 1. tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who grew tobacco in 2021); 2. former tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who grew tobacco in any year before 2021 and now cultivates other agricultural crops); and 3. never tobacco farmer (the respondent is a farmer who cultivates any agricultural crop other than tobacco and never cultivated tobacco previously).

Survey results:

- Around half of tobacco farmers are not turning a real profit. While most tobacco farmers believe they achieve positive “perceived” profits (excluding the value of household labor), with only a few households perceiving negative profits, around half of the households actually achieved negative “real” profits.
- Most farmers struggle financially, living with an average monthly income below the average net monthly wage and below the value of the minimum household consumer basket.
- Pensions and remittances are one of the most important components for maintaining an adequate level of income and standard of living for tobacco farmers’ families. Although they spend the most time in the field, current tobacco farmers have a higher incidence of poverty compared to former and never tobacco farmers.
- Compared to former tobacco workers or never tobacco workers, the median current tobacco farmer devotes more time to growing crops. The median male farmer worked 1400 hours on tobacco cultivation, while the median male former and never tobacco farmers worked 1000 hours and 1260 hours, respectively.
- The children of tobacco farmers are more involved in farming relative to other farmers’ children. Children’s help in the harvesting of tobacco is 2.3 times more common compared to children’s help in harvesting other crops; however, no farmer reported hiring children to help with tobacco cultivation and children do not appear to be engaged in potentially harmful activities related to pesticide/ herbicide application.
- Compared to other crop activities, tobacco cultivation typically requires significantly more pesticide. Pesticides are related to persistent health challenges for farmers and damage the environment through contamination of groundwater and watersheds.
- Tobacco farmers show signs of green tobacco sickness, a form of acute nicotine poisoning.
- Current tobacco farmers are more likely to rent land for farming compared to former and never tobacco farmers. In the survey, 22.2 percent of current tobacco farmers and 13.7 percent of former tobacco farmers stated that they rent land from others.
- The vast majority of farmers reported having a contract with a leaf buyer. Survey results shows that almost all tobacco farmers (94 percent) in all major tobacco-growing regions have signed contracts with tobacco leaf buyers. More than half (57 percent) of the tobacco farmers say they are satisfied with the concluded tobacco agreement, while 36 percent are not.

Tobacco cultivation is not as profitable as the government

suggests. Thus, highlighting tobacco as a highly profitable crop is unfounded. This research indicates it would be much better for tobacco farmers, in terms of labor and economic efficiency, to reorient and grow another crop or pursue other economic activities in their local economy (such as wage work or small business). Around half of tobacco farmers are not turning a real profit. The opportunity cost for unpaid family labor makes growing tobacco unprofitable. Revenues of tobacco farmers decrease significantly when the opportunity costs are calculated. Household members could better allocate their labor to other tasks that earn money; not doing so results in significant economic loss for those tobacco families. Poverty rates among tobacco farmers are slightly higher than the nationwide poverty rate. Current tobacco farmers have the highest incidence of poverty when considering per capita income. Despite their high poverty rate, only a small share of tobacco farmers use some form of social assistance. Input costs for growing tobacco are typically very high, particularly compared to most other crops.

#### Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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### Tobacco control in Ukraine in an emergency situation - Russia's armed aggression

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Russia's armed aggression has had a substantial influence on many aspects of Ukrainian society. Tobacco control is one of these sectors, which need systematic solutions and effective services to address tobacco addiction. We will discuss three significant breakthroughs that aid in the support and control of tobacco addiction in Ukraine, even in extremely difficult situations.

Prior to the conflict, Ukraine established a smoking cessation program, which included a helpline and a professional website. The website has important information about quitting smoking, and the hotline counselors offer expert assistance to individuals who wish to quit. Despite the difficult circumstances surrounding the emergency, we are dedicated to restarting the helpline and the website to assist smokers in overcoming their addiction.

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine registered an order on groups of medical warning packets on smoking tobacco products as part of the reforms in anti-tobacco laws. These new health warnings meet EU regulations and encompass 65% of the package space with graphic pictures on the two largest sides. Each set includes a QR code that links to the website of the stop smoking service stopsmoking.org.ua, where smokers may get the necessary help and information. To strengthen tobacco control in Ukraine, a site for monitoring anti-tobacco law infractions was established at nosmoking.phc.org.ua. Citizens can use this service to report legal infractions and make complaints. The portal allows individuals to participate in monitoring the execution of anti-tobacco laws and streamlines the complaint-filing procedure.

This improves the efficacy of Ukraine's tobacco control system by strengthening interaction between citizens and regulatory authorities (executing state authorities).

Despite the emergency conditions, Ukraine is nevertheless actively engaged in tobacco control and meeting its duties under the WHO Convention on Tobacco Control. The creation of stop smoking support programs, the application of cigarette labeling requirements, and the enhancement of the system for monitoring anti-tobacco law infractions are all essential stages in Ukraine's battle against tobacco addiction.

#### Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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### SinHumo App as an adjunct to a smoking cessation videoconferencing-based intervention: preliminary data on intervention acceptability and satisfaction

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#### Background

The development of psychological interventions addressing smoking behaviour based on information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been growing in recent years. Specifically, mobile Apps to quit smoking have shown promising results. However, scarce research has explored real-time videoconferencing-based interventions using Apps as an adjunct to quit smoking.

#### Objectives

The present study has two folds: (1) to describe the blended videoconferencing-based intervention combined with the "SinHumo" App; and (2) to examine preliminary data on acceptability and satisfaction with the intervention.

#### Methods

The psychological intervention design was constructed on evidence-based cognitive-behavioural techniques to quit and scientific literature regarding smoking cessation Apps. The blended intervention was implemented in 52 seeking treatment smokers (53.8% female; Mage = 45.18; SD = 11.68). Acceptability and satisfaction with the intervention were assessed through a questionnaire filled out by participants at the end of the intervention.

#### Results

The intervention consists in eight-sessions in group format through a videoconferencing system and an adjunct App designed to be available during the sessions and the one-year follow-up period. The App includes components like cigarette use self-tracking, an autogenerated list of reasons to quit smoking, a tool for setting weekly tobacco reduction goals, and motivational notifications. During follow-ups, users can access personalized components according to their smoking status (smoker, abstinent or relapsed). Satisfaction with the blended intervention was high (92.7%) and most participants reported that the App helped them quit smoking (87.8%). Qualitative comments indicated high acceptability overall.

#### Conclusions

The present blended intervention based on ICTs showed good acceptance and was considered helpful for most participants.











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