

Key Findings

About half (52%) of retailers sampled (N=244) in Moscow and St. Petersburg sold electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in 2016. Advertising and promotion for e-cigarettes was present in 30% (n=73) of retailers; the main form of promotion was signage.

Background

In 2014, the Russian Federation (Russia) implemented comprehensive tobacco control legislation which includes bans on advertising, promotion and retail display of tobacco products. E-cigarettes are not currently regulated in Russia, leaving the country potentially vulnerable to the unregulated availability and marketing of these products.

Methods

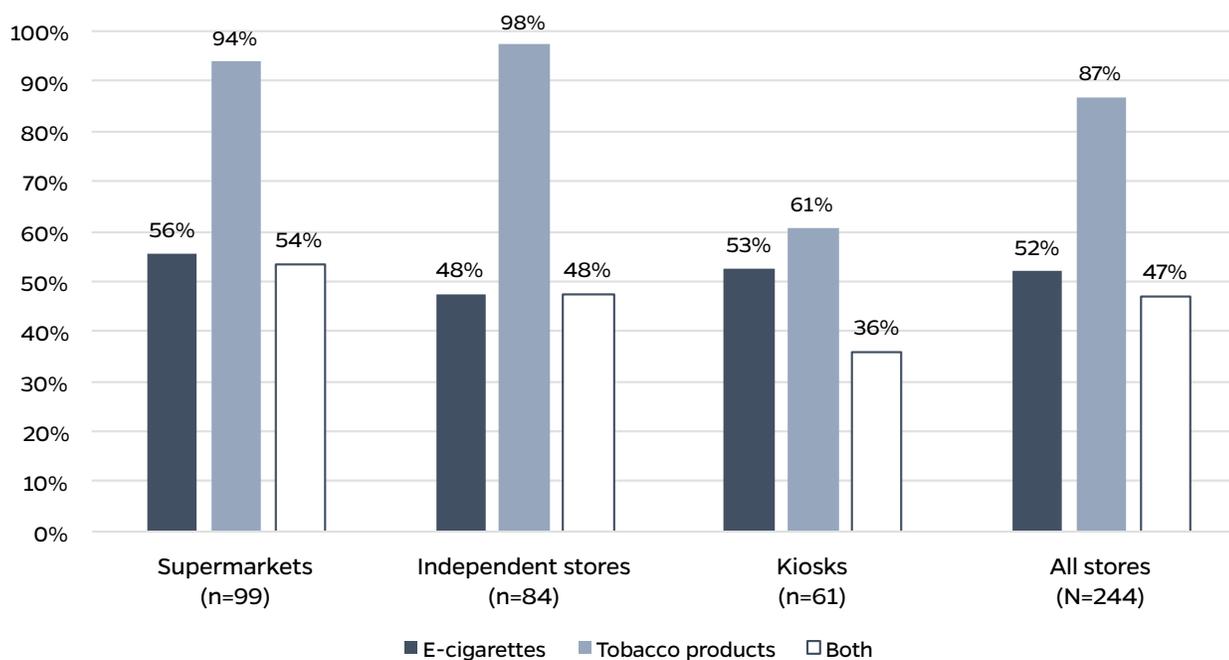
Two trained data collectors used a standardized checklist formatted for mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) to record information about the availability and display of e-cigarettes and tobacco products, and the presence of advertising and promotion of only e-cigarettes at 244 points of sale in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Data collection occurred in March and April of 2016. The sample of retailers included 99 supermarkets, 84 independent markets/convenience stores (independent stores), and 61 kiosks.

Availability of E-cigarettes and Tobacco Products

52% of the retailers (N=244) sold e-cigarettes, 87% sold tobacco products, such as cigarettes, and 47% sold both product types (Figure 1).



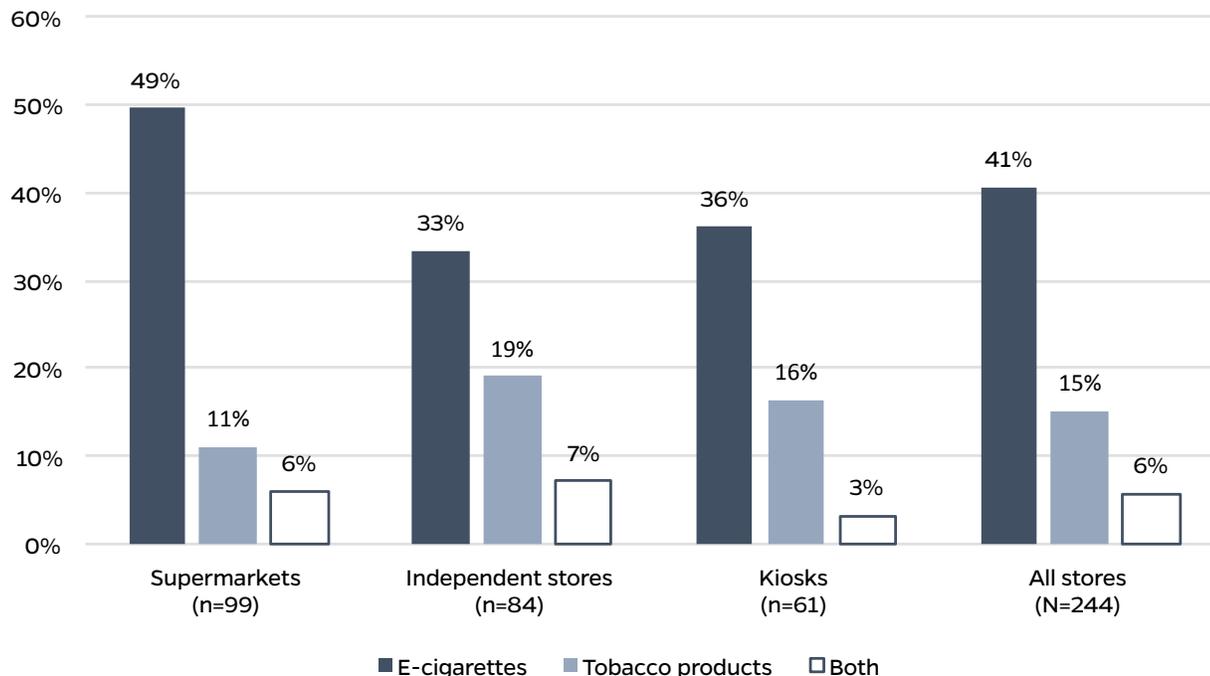
Figure 1. E-cigarette and tobacco product availability, by store type



Retail Display of E-cigarettes and Tobacco Products

Among all retailers, 41% displayed e-cigarettes, 15% tobacco products, and 6% both e-cigarettes and tobacco products (Figure 2). The vast majority of e-cigarette displays present were in the cashier zone (81%); other locations included the kiosk or store window visible from the street (10%), on a power wall (6%), or elsewhere (3%).

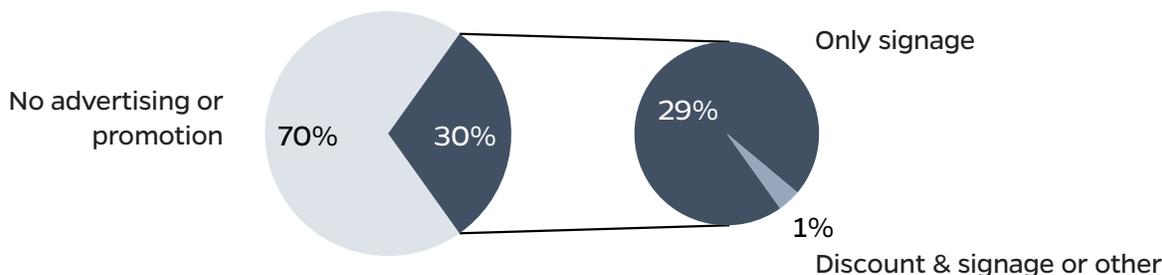
Figure 2. E-cigarette and tobacco product display, by store type



Advertising and Promotion of E-cigarettes

E-cigarette advertising and promotion were present at 30% (n=74) of all retailers and were predominantly found in supermarkets and kiosks, typically in the form of signage.

Figure 3. Presence of e-cigarette advertising and promotion at point of sale



Conclusions

Nearly a third of retailers (30%) had e-cigarette advertising and promotion in 2016, largely limited to signage. Currently, sales and marketing of e-cigarettes are not regulated in Russia; it is possible that promotion of these products may become more aggressive in the future.