

# Indications of Compliance with India's E-cigarette Ban 5 Years After Implementation: A Pilot Study in Delhi

## Significance

India banned the sale of e-cigarettes in 2019. Stakeholder interviews and advocate data suggest that sales still occur at physical shops. Yet, e-cigarette availability at tobacco vendors has not been systematically evaluated.

This study had two aims:

- Assess whether e-cigarette devices and replacement liquids were available at tobacco vendors
- Refine methods for a multicity study

## Methods

- In 2024, we randomly chose four areas in Delhi:
  - Two low-income
  - One middle-income
  - One high-income
- Data collectors began at pre-identified local markets and walked for 15 minutes to identify tobacco vendors
- Data on e-cigarette device availability, replacement liquid availability, and product location (including concealment) were collected from eight vendors in each area (n=32)
- Descriptive statistics were used

# Pilot data suggest compliance with **India's e-cigarette ban** may exceed 75% among physical tobacco vendors in **Delhi**



A vendor in India – this specific site was not visited during our study. Image source: Richard I'Anson/The Image Bank Unreleased via Getty Images

## Results

- Overall, 13% of tobacco vendors (n=4) had e-cigarettes and 0% had replacement liquids available
- One of 16 vendors in low-income (6%), two of eight in middle-income (25%), and one of eight in high-income areas (13%) had e-cigarettes available
- Of the four vendors with e-cigarettes available, three had them “concealed under, behind, or inside a table, counter, or other object,” away from customer view, while one concealed them in a “backroom or other private room”

## Conclusions

- Compliance with the e-cigarette sales ban may be over 75% among tobacco vendors in Delhi
- Vendors with e-cigarettes available are concealing the products, requiring customers to ask about availability
- Replacement liquid availability may be uncommon
- It is plausible that some vendors may not be comfortable selling illicit e-cigs to new customers, meaning compliance may be lower for all income levels
- Given the high level of compliance in low-income areas, the multicity study will focus on middle- and high-income areas



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## Authors

Jeffrey J. Hardesty, Emma Walker,  
 Sejal Saraf, Elizabeth Crespi,  
 Saana Kataria, Divansh Mittal,  
 Joanna Cohen