

# Global Adult Tobacco Survey – Brazil Report

## *Pesquisa Especial de Tabagismo (PETab) – Relatório Brasil*

### Encuesta Global de Tabaquismo en Adultos – Informe Brasil

National Cancer Institute (Brazil). Pan-American Health Organization.

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The book *Special Research on Tobacco (PETab) – Brazil Report*, released in June, 2011 in a partnership between the Brazilian National Cancer Institute (INCA) and the Pan-American Health Organization (OPAS), provides an unprecedented overview on the use of tobacco derived products in Brazil.

PETab is the name given in Brazil to the *Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS)*, a systematic monitoring survey about tobacco use and key indicators for tobacco control, which follows a global model and has already been implemented in 14 countries, favoring the production of comprehensive and standardized information with national representation and international comparability.

Coordinated by the Ministry of Health, through an Executive Committee composed by the Secretariat for Health Surveillance (SVS), by INCA and by the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), PETab also counted on the collaboration of the following institutions: 1) Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), responsible for the Health Supplement of the National Survey by Home Sampling (PNAD); 2) Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), responsible for the implementation of the research following the GATS standard protocol; 3) OPAS; 4) GATS International Committee.

Among GATS general objectives are: to produce national and regional estimates on the tobacco use, environmental exposure to tobacco smoke and cessation; to evaluate the impact of tobacco control and prevention initiatives; to support the capacity of the countries to project, implement and evaluate programs for control and prevention of tobacco use; to allow international comparison of data. And, among the specific objectives: the prevalence of use of smoked and non-smoked tobacco products; environmental exposure to tobacco smoke; cessation; exposure to pro- and anti-tobacco advertisements; knowledge and attitudes; average price and average monthly cost with industrialized cigarettes.

The research involves several dimensions related to the most important strategies to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated to tobacco and had, as target population, people who were 15 years old or above, summing up about 40 thousand interviews.

The results showed there was in Brazil, in 2008, 24.6 million smokers in this adult population (17.2%), with 21.6% of prevalence among men and 13.1% among women. Another observation was that the average age for smoking initiation ranged from 17 to 19 years old (among daily smokers and former daily smokers with ages ranging from 20 to 34 years old).

Although this percentage is larger among men, it is also among people in the range of 45 to 64 years old (22.7%), among those living in the south (19%), among the ones living in rural areas (20.4%), among the ones having lower school levels (25.7% among the ones who have not gone to school or who have gone for less than a year) and among the ones with lower income (23.1%).

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Another important observation was that in the north and northeast, there is a significant percentage of smokers that use handmade rolled cigarettes, a factor that causes concern as to the actions that can be taken to inform them about the risks and methods of smoke cessation.

Regarding the motivation of the Brazilian smokers to interrupt tobacco use, it is possible to realize that a significant part of this population tried to quit smoking within the last 12 months (45.6%), which corresponds to approximately 12 million smokers, and this rate is 48% among young people. And in order to offer more adequate quitting strategies to different smoker groups who wish to quit, the greatest challenge of the National Program for Tobacco Control is exactly what this survey adds in contribution: understanding the characteristics of the smoker populations (degree of addiction, population groups more vulnerable to the actions of the tobacco industry, differences in access to health services, etc).

Another aspect that causes concern and that was revealed by the survey was the quantity of non-smokers exposed to second hand smoke in at least one of the environments studied, which is about 22 million people, either in the work environment, or health centers, or restaurants, or public transportation or in government offices and buildings. These data point out to the urgent necessity that the recommendations envisioned by the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, mainly regarding the article that refers to protection from second-hand smoking, be totally implemented in Brazil.

About the dissemination of information on the risks of use and exposure to second hand smoke for health, the survey indicated that the country is on the right path: about 96% of those who were interviewed believe smoking can cause serious damages to health, while 91% believe smoking can cause serious health damage to non-smokers. It was also found that 67% of individuals had noted anti-tobacco information on the radio or television and 65% thought about quitting after seeing the warnings on cigarette packages. These data reveal that there is, among people, great awareness about the health problems related to tobacco and high perception of the counter-advertisement diffused in the media in general and on cigarette packages, a result of the several actions of the National Program for Tobacco Control over the last decades.

Regarding the economic aspects, it was observed that the expenses with cigarettes vary from 4.8% to 7% of the family expenses, enabling the conclusion that a prices and taxes policy is more and more necessary, mainly in a scenario where the purchasing power of the Brazilians has increased and justifies an increase in cigarette taxes.

It is expected that PETab will have a five-year periodicity and the next steps of the National Policy for Tobacco Control will be guided by them.