

## Tobacco

Tobacco use is the second leading risk factor for early death and disability worldwide, claiming more than 8 million lives every year, out of which about 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers exposure to second-hand smoke (WHO, 2023<sup>[1]</sup>). The negative effects of smoking spread out beyond individual and population health affecting the economy as well. Worldwide in 2019, the prevalence of daily smoking was 29.6% for men and 5.3% for women, representing 21.1% and 33.8% reductions, respectively, since 2007 (WHO, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>).

The proportion of daily tobacco smokers varies greatly across countries but close to one in five men aged 15 and above in the LAC22 smokes daily, a rate lower than the OECD average of more than in four men of the same age group (Figure 4.17). Rates are particularly high in Chile and Argentina, where around three out of every ten men smoke, being the only two countries in the region with a rate higher than that of the OECD. The lowest rate amongst men is observed in Panama, being the only country below 10%. Rates are lower amongst women with 6.5% smoking daily, slightly more than a third of the OECD average of 18%. Chile is at the top with over one women of every four smoking, followed closely by Argentina and Uruguay. The lowest rates for women are found in Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize and Barbados, all below 2%. Guatemalan women smoke 12 times less than men do.

Tobacco use in LAC is expected to be around half of that in the OECD by 2025, with total prevalence for LAC22 at 10.7% and at 19.2% for the OECD. Chile and Argentina are the only countries in the region to show estimated trends of tobacco use above the OECD average. Countries like Panama, Peru, El Salvador and Haiti all show estimated trends for tobacco use below 7% (Figure 4.18).

Increasing tobacco prices through higher taxes is one of the most effective interventions to reduce tobacco use, by discouraging youth from beginning cigarette smoking and encouraging smokers to quit. A recent review of studies conducted in LAC countries found that tax increases effectively reduce cigarette use and can also be expected to increase cigarette tax revenue (Guindon, Paraje and Chaloupka, 2018<sup>[3]</sup>), which can be used in complementary interventions. The average taxation in LAC is 50% for a pack of 20 cigarettes (Figure 4.19). The countries with the highest taxation on tobacco are Brazil, Chile and Argentina with more than 75%, but these are not the countries with the highest prices. The most expensive tobacco can be found in Cuba with a price of USD 12.50, while the cheapest one is observed in Paraguay with a price of USD 0.31.

LAC countries can strengthen its regulations to reduce tobacco use by fully implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. For this, WHO's strategy MPOWER can be followed to Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies; Protect people from tobacco use; Offer help to quit tobacco use; Warn about the dangers of tobacco; Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and Raise taxes on tobacco (WHO, 2022<sup>[4]</sup>).

### Definition and comparability

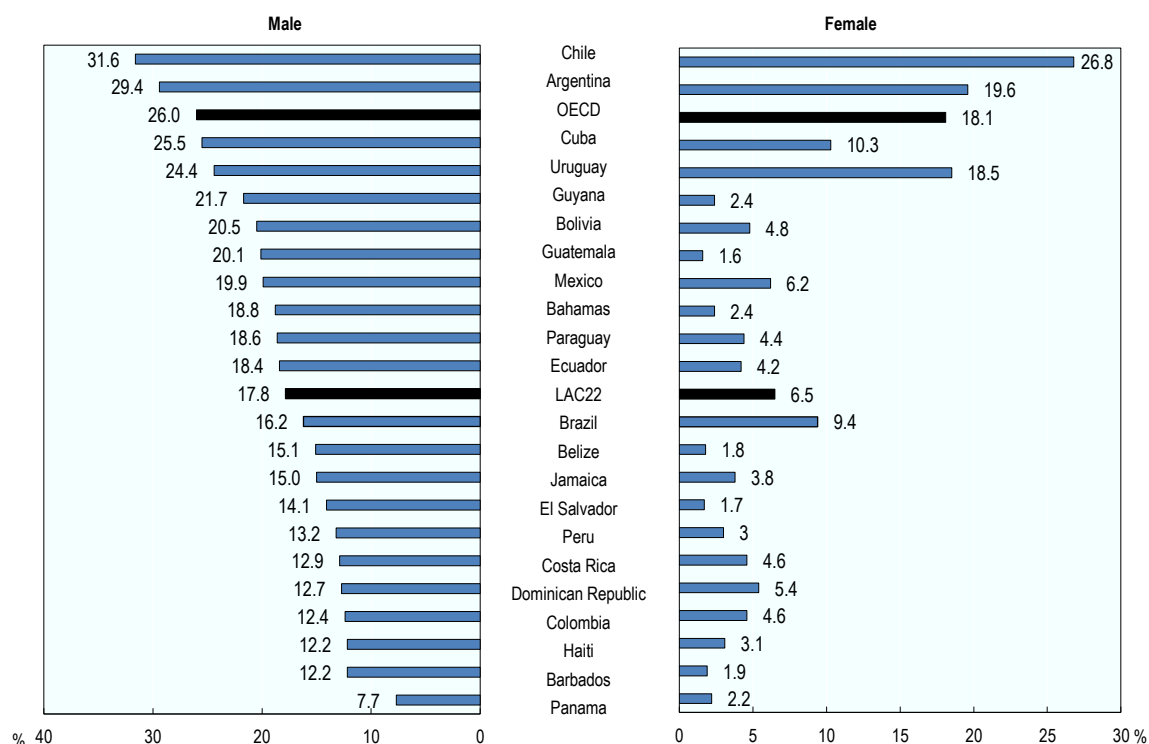
Adults smoking daily is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 years and over who reported smoking every day. Estimates for 2020 were based on data obtained from a broad range of health and household surveys, including the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS). Results were age-standardised to the WHO Standard Population.

Estimated 2025 tobacco use amongst youth is derived from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2022. It is defined as the percentage of young people aged 13-15 years who are estimated to consume any tobacco product at least once during the last 30 days prior to the survey.

## References

- Guindon, G., G. Paraje and F. Chaloupka (2018), "The Impact of Prices and Taxes on the Use of Tobacco Products in Latin America and the Caribbean", *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 108/S6, pp. S492-S502, <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2014.302396r>. [3]
- WHO (2023), *Tobacco*, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>. [1]
- WHO (2022), *Tobacco fact sheet*, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>. [4]
- WHO (2021), *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021: addressing new and emerging products*, World Health Organization, Geneva, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/343287>. [2]

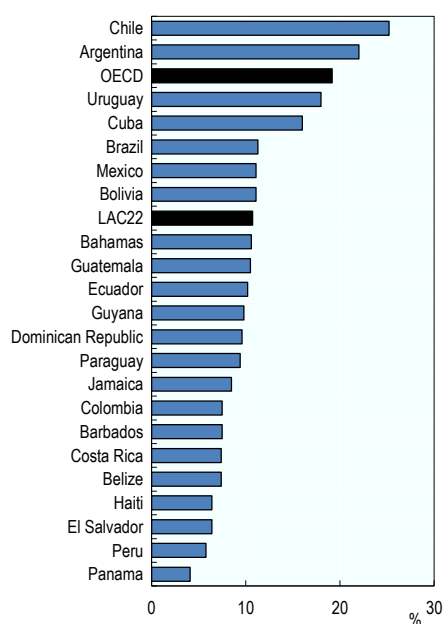
**Figure 4.17. Age-standardised prevalence estimates for daily tobacco smoking amongst persons aged 15 and above, 2020**



Source: WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use, 2021.

StatLink <https://stat.link/po9rmy>

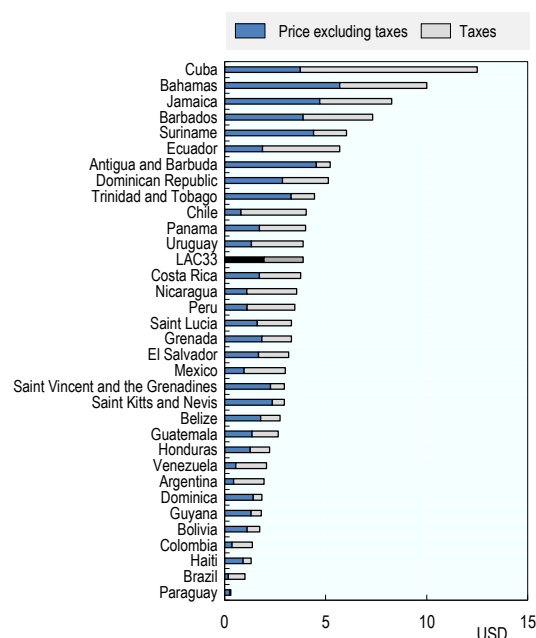
**Figure 4.18. Estimated prevalence of tobacco use amongst youth aged 13 and 15, 2025**



Source: Global Youth Tobacco Surveys 2022.

StatLink <https://stat.link/u4rsh6>

**Figure 4.19. National taxes and retail price for a pack of 20 cigarettes of the most sold brand, 2020**



Source: WHO GHO 2022.

StatLink <https://stat.link/gbzf3n>



From:

## Health at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2023

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/532b0e2d-en>

### Please cite this chapter as:

OECD/The World Bank (2023), "Tobacco", in *Health at a Glance: Latin America and the Caribbean 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/4a3dd80a-en>

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.