

S. Korea activists seek court ban on cigarette sales

January 12 2012

South Korean anti-smoking activists have gone to the constitutional court to try to shut down the country's cigarette industry, a court official said Thursday.

Nine people, led by the former director of the National Medical Center Park Jae-Gahb, urged the court to review the tobacco law which they said infringes people's rights to health and happiness.

Their petition against the law, which governs the manufacture and sale of [cigarettes](#), was filed Wednesday. It was unclear when the court would make a ruling.

"The harmfulness of cigarettes has been scientifically proven, but the government allows their production, sales and import rather than trying to find solutions to protect its citizens' health," said a statement from the group.

The constitution guarantees a right to health, it said, adding that cigarettes are as addictive as opium and should be treated accordingly.

The court official said the petition is the first of its kind in the world. Campaigners in [South Korea](#) have previously sought compensation from [tobacco companies](#) for people harmed from smoking.

About 40 percent of South Korean adults smoked last year, compared to the 2008 average among all Organisation for [Economic Cooperation](#) and

Development member nations of 27.3 percent.

The government is trying to reduce the rate and parliament has passed a law calling on provincial governments to restrict smoking in public places.

Since January, Seoul city has banned smoking at bus stops, in parks, near schools and in other [public spaces](#).

(c) 2012 AFP

Citation: S. Korea activists seek court ban on cigarette sales (2012, January 12) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-01-korea-activists-court-cigarette-sales.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.