

Examining the effects of regulating tobacco sales

October 28 2016, by Neil Schoenherr

State actions to regulate retail sales of tobacco nearly doubled between 2012 and 2014, according to new research from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis, but much of that activity involved e-cigarettes, perhaps the least harmful tobacco product.

Researchers surveyed tobacco-control officials from 48 states in 2012 and again in 2014 to determine the extent of their policy activity at the retail level. It was the first study of retail tobacco-control policies in the U.S., where tobacco is sold at 380,000 [retail outlets](#).

Conducted in partnership with policy scientists at Stanford University and the University of North Carolina, the survey found that average retail policy activity almost doubled over the two years, with most of the activity in the regulation of e-cigarettes and the number and density of retail outlets.

The study found less progress in other, more effective tobacco-control efforts, such as non-tax approaches to increase prices, which reduces youth smoking.

"The current study suggests that state and local programs require more capacity to promote evidence-based policymaking," wrote the study's lead author, Douglas Luke, professor at the Brown School and Director of the Center for Public Health Systems Science.

He said the U.S. Food and Drug Administration should continue to

strengthen regulation of [tobacco products](#).

"Maximizing federal regulation of tobacco products and marketing would free state and local programs to pursue other innovative policies that are outside of the FDA's domain," Luke wrote.

The study was published Oct. 10 in the journal *Tobacco Control*.

More information: Douglas A Luke et al. Tobacco retail policy landscape: a longitudinal survey of US states, *Tobacco Control* (2016). [DOI: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2016-053075](https://doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2016-053075)

Provided by Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

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