

GIRLS' TOBACCO USE

Worldwide, tobacco use among girls is increasing, and the differences in smoking rates between girls and boys are not as large as one might expect. In 14 percent of countries covered by the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), more girls than boys smoke cigarettes. Within the Western Pacific, Africa, and Eastern Mediterranean regions, boys and girls are equally likely to use tobacco products other than cigarettes. As with males, the overwhelming majority of female smokers become addicted to tobacco before reaching adulthood.

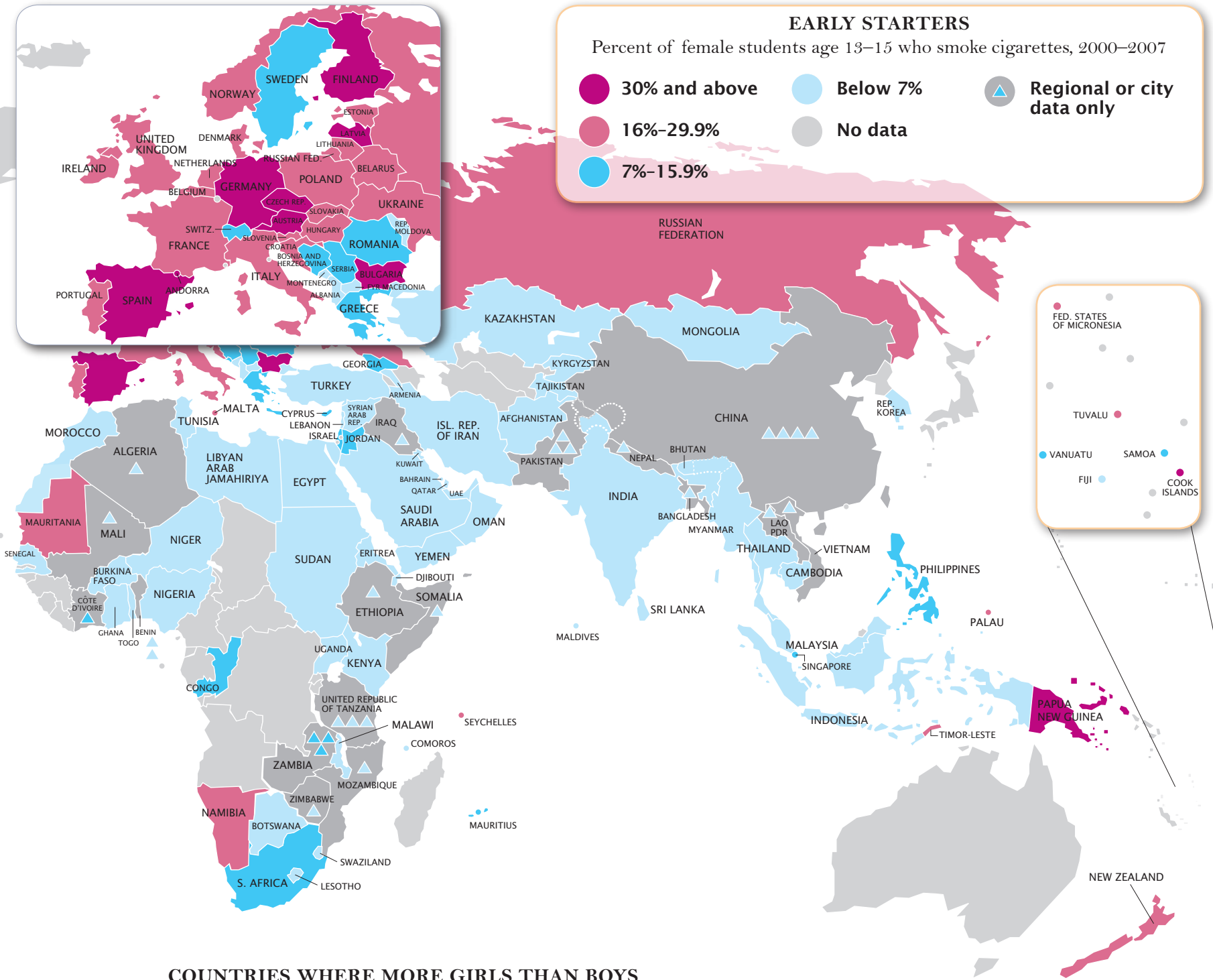
The factors that increase the risk of girls smoking are broadly similar to those of boys: tobacco industry marketing; easy access to tobacco products; low prices; peer pressure; tobacco use and approval by peers, parents, and siblings; and the misperception that smoking enhances social popularity.

In cultures where women are subjected to unrealistic body-image ideals, girls and young women may initiate smoking or rationalize their addiction in the mistaken belief that smoking assists with weight loss. In fact, cigarette smoking is not associated with a lower BMI (body mass index) in young women. Smoking prevention and cessation programs designed for girls and young women may benefit from the inclusion of counseling related to body image.



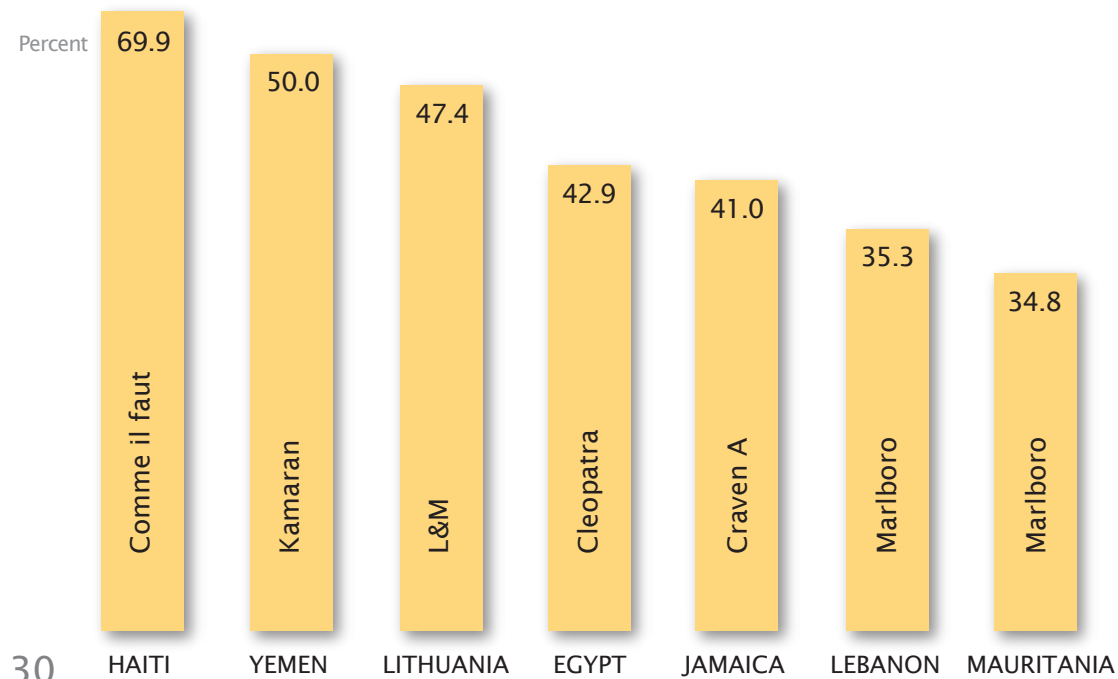
NINETY PERCENT of youth worldwide agree that smoking does not make girls more attractive.

THE DIFFERENCE in current cigarette smoking rates between boys and girls is smaller than the difference between men and women, suggesting that adult female smoking prevalence rates are likely to increase.



THE POWER OF BRANDING

Percent of teenage girls who report smoking brand as specified, selected countries, 2003–2006



COMMON REASONS YOUNG WOMEN START SMOKING

- Global trends in women's emancipation
- Concern with weight, body image, and fashion
- Cigarette marketing campaigns targeting women
- Positive images of smoking in movies, magazines, and youth culture
- Perceived improvement in economic status
- Drug-positive subcultures

COUNTRIES WHERE MORE GIRLS THAN BOYS AGE 13–15 SMOKE CIGARETTES, 2000–2007

