Economics of Tobacco in Trinidad & Tobago

Consumption and Prevalence

In 1999, Trinidad & Tobago consumed 1,320 million cigarettes, or 0.5% of the total LAC consumption, with only 0.3% of LAC’s population. In 1999, Cigarette consumption per person 15 years old and over was 67 packs.

In Trinidad and Tobago, smoking prevalence for adult males aged between 35 and 69 was 42% during 1977-1986 period. It was only 8% for their female counterparts. In 1988, about one tenth of young people were smokers.


Tobacco Tax

In 1999, cigarette tax accounted for 43% of retail price in Trinidad and Tobago. The average price of cigarettes was 1.12 US dollars in 1999.
In 1999, total cigarette tax collected was 32 million US dollars, accounting for 2.7% of government tax revenue in Trinidad & Tobago.
Health Issue

In 1994, the age-standardized mortality rate were 29 per 100,000 males aged over 35 from cancers of the trachea, lung and bronchus in Trinidad and Tobago. By comparison, 9 females 100,000 over 35 died of these diseases. Meanwhile, lip, oral cavity, and pharynx cancer claimed the lives of 12 males aged over 35 per 100,000 people and 4 females aged over 35 per 100,000 people in 1994.

Mortality from Smoking Related Diseases for People age 35 years and over in Trinidad & Tobago, 1994


Tobacco Control Measures

The Bureau of Standards stipulates that advertisement for free tobacco samples must only appear in trade publications; no coupons are permitted, and advertisements must not be addressed to children. However, tobacco advertising and sponsorship are widespread, including tobacco company sponsorship of steel bands and steel band concerts. A health warning is required on all packages sold in Trinidad and Tobago. The sale of tobacco products to persons aged 16 years and younger is prohibited.

Voluntary restrictions on smoking in health care facilities are in place, as well as in businesses and schools. The national airline prohibits smoking on flights of 1.5 hours or less.
Smoking prevention education is included in general health education in schools, beginning in primary school and continuing through senior high school. NGOs and health professional organizations are engaged in limited prevention and control activities. The Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society sponsors the World No-tobacco Day. The Seventh Day Adventist Church sponsors smoking cessation clinics.

Production and Trade

In 1999, Trinidad and Tobago produced 1,300 million cigarettes. Imports was 20 million in 1999 and there were no exports of cigarettes.

Trinidad and Tobago stopped tobacco leaf growing since 1995. In 1994, leaf production was 31 metric tons.
Trinidad and Tobago has been a net tobacco importer during 1970-1998. In 1998, it had a net deficit in tobacco trade of 4 million US dollars.