

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

“The role and image of the health professional are essential in promoting tobacco-free lifestyles and cultures.”

—WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2005

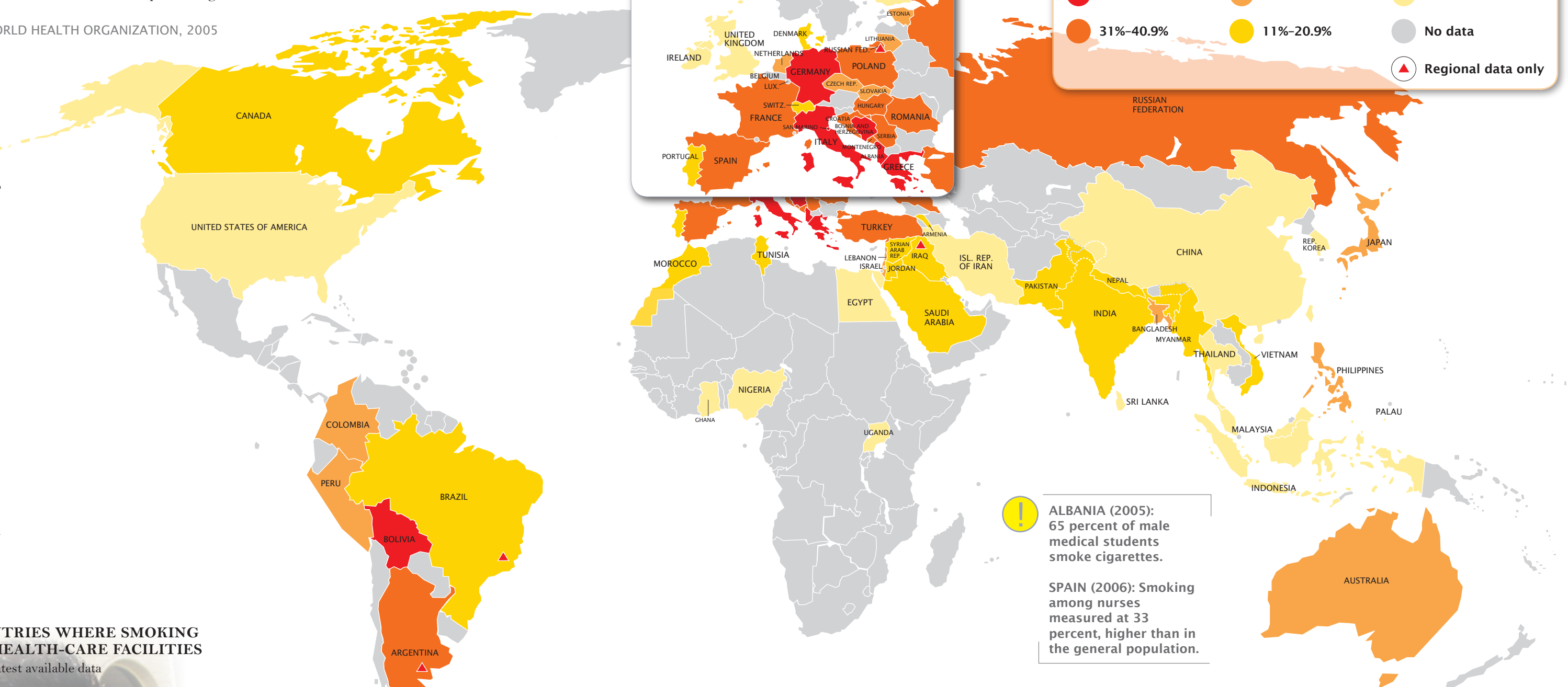
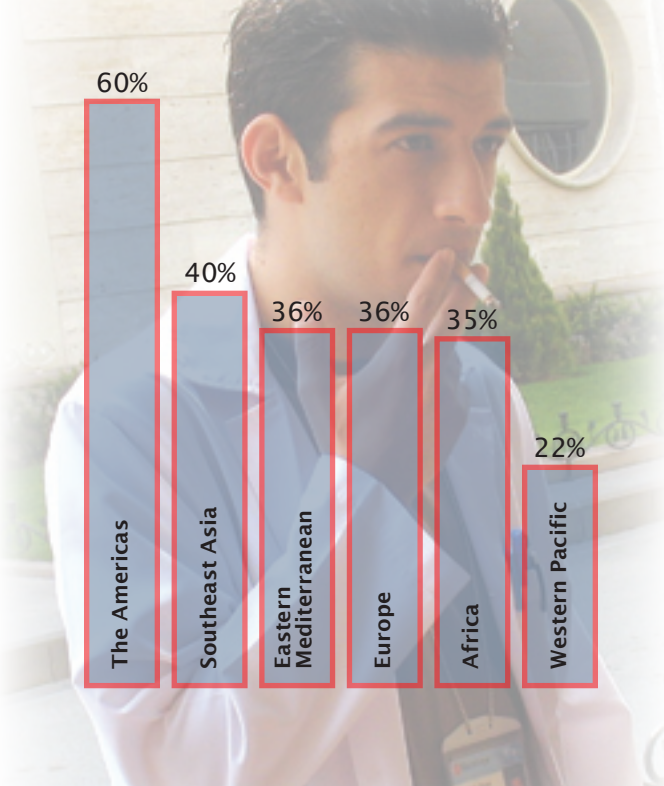
Whether in the doctor’s office, the dentist’s chair, at the bedside, or over the pharmacy counter, health professionals have a unique opportunity to counsel individuals about why and how to stop smoking. Even brief advice from a health professional can have a significant impact on smoking cessation success. However, health professionals who smoke are less likely to help their patients quit smoking, and their advice has diminished credibility.

Health-professional smoking prevalence varies widely around the world, reflecting socio-demographic patterns of tobacco use. In the early stages of the typical tobacco epidemic, smoking rates increase earlier among higher-status individuals and social trendsetters, such as health professionals, than among the general population. In later stages of the epidemic, health professionals—direct observers of the terrible health consequences of long-term smoking—are usually among the first to quit smoking and begin working to control tobacco. Unfortunately, student health professionals rarely receive smoking cessation counseling or formal training in the treatment of nicotine dependence.

Keeping hospitals smoke-free is crucial to reducing smoking rates among health workers and eliminating the exposure of patients and staff to secondhand smoke. By quitting their own addiction, becoming proficient at smoking cessation counseling, and engaging in social and political action against tobacco, health professionals can minimize and prevent tobacco’s terrible toll of death and disability.

PERCENT OF COUNTRIES WHERE SMOKING IS PERMITTED IN HEALTH-CARE FACILITIES

2008 or latest available data



SMOKING PREVALENCE AMONG HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
2008 or latest available data

- 41% and above
- 31%-40.9%
- 21%-30.9%
- 11%-20.9%
- 10.9% and below
- No data
- Regional data only

ALBANIA (2005): 65 percent of male medical students smoke cigarettes.

SPAIN (2006): Smoking among nurses measured at 33 percent, higher than in the general population.

COUNSELING STUDENTS

Percent of medical students who received formal training in smoking cessation counseling, 2007 or latest available year

Myanmar	43.5	Republic of Serbia	21.3
Armenia	32.3	Egypt	20.9
Iraq	31.1	Russian Federation	20.7
Syrian Arab Republic	29.3	Bolivia	20.5
Lebanon	29.1	Ghana	17.9
Vietnam	27.4	Sri Lanka	16.8
Peru	26.5	Uganda	15.9
Bangladesh	25.0	Croatia	14.5
Tunisia	24.6	Albania	10.3
Lithuania	24.2	Bosnia & Herzegovina	7.4
Nepal	23.3	Saudi Arabia	6.7
India	22.3	Argentina	5.2
Indonesia	21.8	Slovakia	3.0
Brazil	21.3	Czech Republic	1.4

“Is the physician important to P. Lorillard Company? Is the physician important to Kent?”

“Indeed he is! He is the one who most frequently tells people to stop smoking . . . or to cut down on smoking.”

—Lorillard Tobacco, “Kent and the Physician,” confidential report, 1963