Current state and evolution of the
tobacco epidemic in Portuguese and
European school-aged adolescents
by sex, between the years 1998 and
2014

To prevent tobacco consumption among adolescents, Portugal and other countries have implemented policies such as the development of curriculum-based programmes, environmental changes (e.g., smoke-free schools; bans on smoking in public places); parental involvement and restrictive strategies for tobacco access (e.g., restriction of tobacco purchase age, creation of specific places for selling). However, despite the global progress in tobacco control, more than one third of the world’s population is still unprotected from the level recommended by the MPOWER approach adopted by WHO.¹

Monitoring the tobacco epidemic is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the preventive measures developed to control tobacco consumption by adolescents and adults. This study aimed to characterize the current state and evolution of tobacco epidemic in Portuguese school-aged adolescents and to compare it with other European countries, by sex, based on data from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) reports from 1997/1998 (© 2018 Sociedade Portuguesa de Pneumologia. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)).

References
developed preventive measures such as smoking prevention programmes at schools, besides legislative policies banning smoking in public places and all outdoor areas of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and areas close to the entrances of health institutions and public companies.

The combined effect of public awareness interventions and strategies and bans to control smoking (e.g., restrictions on tobacco vending and purchase age) with strict policies implemented in many countries and regions (including the increase in prices and tobacco taxes, bans on smoking in public places and restrictions in advertising), along with the implementation of school-based programmes with parental and community involvement seems to be associated with a reduction of tobacco consumption in adolescence.

At a moment in which the smoking epidemics seem to be stabilized, the investment in preventive measures at school, through health promotion and education, is essential. In Portugal, the "SmokeOut" curriculum-based programme constitutes a validated and available resource for implementation in school context, presenting promising results in improving student attitudes and knowledge about smoking and in preventing tobacco consumption. Afterwards, longitudinal evaluation of these interventions is essential to produce evidence-based knowledge on smoking prevention.
Funding

This study was co-funded by national funding from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and by the Programa Operacional Capital Humano (POCH), co-participated by the European Social Fund and by national funds of MCTES, under the PhD scholarship SFRH/BD/125425/2016 (to Isabel Sousa).

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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I. Sousa,*, C. Samorinha, b J. Precioso,a

a Instituto de Educação, Universidade do Minho, Campus de Gualtar, 4700-057 Braga, Portugal
b EPIUnit-Instituto de Saúde Pública, Universidade do Porto, Rua das Taipas, n. 135, 4050-600 Porto, Portugal

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: isabelsousa@ie.uminho.pt (I. Sousa).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pulmoe.2018.05.009
2531-0437/
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