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'To be honest, I'm really scared': perceptions and experiences of intimidation in the LMIC-based tobacco control community

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ABSTRACT

Background It is well-evidenced that environmental or human rights advocacy comes with risks for those involved. Much less is known about the risks of tobacco control advocacy despite the emphasis on tobacco industry conduct. This study explores the experiences and perceptions of intimidation among members of the tobacco control community in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Methods We interviewed six experts representing each of the World Health Organization (WHO) regions to inform an online survey conducted among the LMIC-based tobacco control community. Thematic analysis was used for analysing qualitative data while quantitative data were analysed descriptively.

Results Twenty-three participants from five WHO regions completed the survey. Almost three-quarters of survey participants reported that they, or another member of the tobacco control community in their country, had experienced intimidation. The most frequently reported forms of intimidation were discreditation on social or traditional media, legal threats/action and threatening messages. Physical intimidation, theft/burglary, cyberattacks and surveillance were individually rare but reported collectively by over 40% of participants. Results suggested intimidation might be increasing and changing in nature, and undermines tobacco control efforts: it affects organisations' capacity and agenda, their ability to build relationships with those needed to advance policy, as well as the well-being of individuals. Participants used a range of strategies in response to intimidation and reported that they would benefit from better support.

Conclusion This exploratory study suggests that intimidation is a crucial challenge for the tobacco control community. There are several measures the global tobacco control community could take, including establishing an international support mechanism and building capacity to deal with intimidation and draw attention to it.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental and human rights advocacy have been recognised as potentially dangerous undertakings, and cases of advocates who have lost their lives are well documented.^{1–5} Organisations such as Human Rights Watch⁶ and Amnesty International⁷ routinely expose cases of state repression against advocates, and threats and violence against them from powerful corporations.⁸ Less attention has been paid to risks faced by the tobacco control

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC

- ⇒ The tobacco industry uses a wide range of strategies to oppose tobacco control policies and those in favour of them. Its efforts have included threats against policymakers and governments, including legal threats.
- ⇒ Less is known about industry attempts to intimidate members of the tobacco control community, including advocates and researchers.

WHAT THIS STUDY ADDS

- ⇒ This initial study on the topic suggests that intimidation is common, takes many forms and has significant detrimental effects on organisations' and individuals' ability to function effectively in tobacco control. It impacts well-being and has driven individuals out of tobacco control.

HOW THIS STUDY MIGHT AFFECT RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND/OR POLICY

- ⇒ The study identifies an urgent need to study this issue in more detail and find solutions.
- ⇒ It draws attention to measures the global tobacco control community could take to address intimidation and support those affected by it.

community despite evidence of the tobacco industry's willingness to discredit and silence its opponents.^{9–13} A Philip Morris memorandum from 1981 suggested dealing with troublesome research findings by 'attacking researchers themselves, where vulnerable'.¹⁴

Tobacco control researchers have exposed aggressive and covert industry surveillance of public health groups, and attacks directed against governments^{15–19} and prominent researchers.^{20–24} Peer-reviewed articles also mention instances in which advocates were attacked or ridiculed in the media or public statements,^{11 12 14 25 26} were subject to legal threats or action^{14 27 28} or received intimidating anonymous messages.²⁹ Most of these studies focus on high-income countries. A recent study on industry interference in eight low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)³⁰ reported examples where advocates were publicly discredited, received threatening messages, believed that they were being followed, experienced cyberattacks, and attempts at cancelling the funding of tobacco control



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organisations, showing that intimidation is a concern shared by advocates globally.

More evidence on the risks of tobacco control work is available in the media. Examples include the break-in at tobacco control organisations in Brussels³¹ and anonymous messages and calls received by tobacco control researchers from the University of Bath.³² A New York Times article reported instances of intimidation of tobacco control advocates in LMICs.³³ It documented, among others, public discreditation and physical intimidation against advocates in Indonesia and an armed attack on an advocate's home, leading to fatalities, in Nigeria.³³ Moreover, intimidation of public health advocates working in other areas has been documented, arguably the most notable case being the use of sophisticated spyware against advocates for a sugar-sweetened beverage tax in Mexico.³⁴

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)³⁵ and its implementation guidelines³⁶ only require parties to monitor the industry, not to provide support to individuals intimidated by the industry. Furthermore, none of the publicly available tobacco control toolkits provided by international tobacco control organisations are dedicated to or offer detailed advice regarding the risks associated with advocacy.

This paper seeks to enhance our understanding of the lived experiences, and perceptions, of intimidation in the LMIC-based tobacco control community. Focusing on the experiences and perceptions of members of the tobacco control community, it seeks to explore the forms and impact of (and changes over time in) intimidation, responses to intimidation and whether the tobacco control community needs to better address intimidation.

Given the lack of an agreed definition of the concept, our starting point was to consider intimidation as an umbrella term based on the dictionary definition '*action[s] of frightening or threatening someone, usually in order to persuade them to do something that [one] want[s] them to do*',³⁷ which allowed for both overt (eg, public discreditation in the media) and covert (eg, private messages) intimidations. However, we deliberately explored meanings of intimidation as part of the work. Members of the tobacco control community typically include advocates and researchers, but we allowed for a broader conception to also include, for example, journalists and civil servants by inviting participants to self-identify as part of the tobacco control community while also specifying their background.

It was beyond the scope of the project to capture intimidation in its entirety. Instead, the study aims to act as a starting point to provide initial insights which will help determine whether further research and attention should be directed to this topic.

METHODS

Due to the limited literature and primary data on experiences of intimidation among members of the tobacco control community, we used a two-step approach to data collection using interviews to inform a survey.

Step 1 (expert interviews)

Sampling and recruitment

We purposely selected interview participants (IP) with several years of experience in tobacco control in multiple countries and at the regional or global level. To ensure that we covered all geographical areas, we sought to recruit one participant per WHO region. The participants needed to be fluent in English or Spanish so that the lead researcher could conduct the interviews. Interviewees were identified through our networks with snowball sampling used to identify further participants.

Data collection

The interview schedule was informed by the existing literature^{11 14 20 21 25–30} and developed in a series of author meetings. It explored the participants' understanding of the concept, their insights into forms of intimidation members of the tobacco control community face and how they respond to it, specific examples they were aware of, and their perception of the drivers of intimidation, its impacts and existing or potential support mechanisms. We piloted the guide with two experienced members of the tobacco control community. All interviews were conducted in November and December 2020, recorded and transcribed by the lead author.

Step 2 (survey)

Sampling and recruitment

The survey collected primary data from members of the LMIC-based tobacco control community. To participate, a member had to have internet access, read and write English, French or Spanish and self-identify as a member of the tobacco control community in an LMIC. People with tobacco industry links were not eligible.

We shared the surveys through our networks but avoided distributing to mailing lists with unknown recipients to avoid attracting the attention of actors outside the tobacco control community.

Data collection

The questionnaire was based on the existing literature and the interview findings. The survey's purpose, scope and content were discussed in a series of author meetings. It was piloted in English with four non-native speakers of English, including two researchers and two advocates, then translated into French and Spanish by professional translators. In light of both the interviews and piloting, our initial definition was broadened further as follows: '*We understand intimidation very broadly as actions that make you feel frightened or threatened. It also includes unsuccessful attempts at intimidation*'. Given the lack of prior research on the topic, we sought to gain an overview of participants' experiences and perceptions. We included open and closed questions and ensured that participants could add unique answers in sections with closed questions. For example, participants were asked whether they identified as advocates, researchers, civil servants, etc, but also given the option to select 'other' and describe their role differently. The questionnaires are available in the online supplemental file 1.

We used Online Surveys (<https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>) to collect the survey data. The surveys were password protected and were open for six weeks between April and June 2021. The results were downloaded into a Microsoft Excel sheet.

Data analysis

Demographic data and closed questions were analysed descriptively. Thematic analysis^{38 39} was used for the open-ended survey questions and expert interviews. NVivo V.12 was used to facilitate the analysis. To ensure participants' anonymity, direct quotes only indicate if they came from an IP or survey participant (SP) and, for the latter, whether they had self-identified as advocate, researcher, etc.

Ethics

Given the sensitivity of the topic and that data collection had to be remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we chose a survey as the most appropriate method to collect data from individuals

Table 1 Characteristics of the survey participants

Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Female: 14 participants (61%) ▶ Male: 9 participants (39%)
Role(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Advocate: 9 participants (39%) ▶ Researcher: 7 participants (30%) ▶ Advocate and researcher: 4 participants (17%) ▶ Civil servant: 1 participant (4%) ▶ Advocate, researcher and civil servant: 1 participant (4%) ▶ Researcher and journalist: 1 participant (4%)
Experience in tobacco control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Less than 10 years: 14 participants (60%) ▶ Less than 2 years: 5 participants (21%) ▶ More than 10 years: 9 participants (40%) ▶ More than 20 years: 4 participants (17%)
Region of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ South-East Asian Region (SEAR): 8 participants (34%) (<i>active in seven countries</i>) ▶ African Region (AFR): 5 participants (21%) (<i>active in four countries</i>) ▶ Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR): 4 participants (17%) (<i>active in three countries</i>) ▶ European Region (EUR): 3 participants (13%) (<i>active in two countries</i>) ▶ Americas Region (AMR): 3 participants (13%) (<i>active in two countries</i>) ▶ Western Pacific Region (WPR): no participants

who may experience intimidation. The drawback was that the survey data were not as detailed as, for example, the interview data might have been.⁴⁰ Not collecting personal data, which was a means of protecting participants' identities, meant that we could not ask participants for further clarification or more information. The research team benefited from advice given by colleagues in all country income groups and WHO regions. However, due to concerns around data security and collaborator safety during a time when travel was not possible, the research team was limited to UK-based researchers. The team was however diverse with participants from three WHO regions.

Patient involvement

There was no patient involvement.

RESULTS

Sample

Interviews

Between November and December 2020 we conducted remote interviews with five tobacco control experts from five WHO regions. The duration ranged from 53 to 70 minutes. A participant from the sixth WHO region submitted a six-page written response. Four of the six interviewees were from LMICs and five had extensive experience working in LMICs.

Survey

Twenty-three participants completed the survey. The majority identified as advocates and researchers, had less than 10 years of experience in tobacco control, and all WHO regions bar the Western Pacific region were represented (see [table 1](#) for sample characteristics).

Types of intimidating actions: perceived commonality and frequency

Almost three out of four SPs (17 out of 23; 74%) reported they or another member of the tobacco control community in their country had experienced some form of intimidation. *Overt forms of intimidation* aiming to discredit their target publicly—public discreditation via various routes—were reported and experienced more frequently than less public facing forms of intimidation ([table 2](#)). Legal threats and actions were also commonly reported. More *covert forms of intimidation* took

numerous forms including threatening messages (also common) or cyberattacks, physical intimidation/violence, burglaries/theft, surveillance and formal complaints, which while individually uncommon were collectively reported by over two-fifths of participants (10 out of 23; 43%).

Changes over time

Two out of three participants (15 out of 23; 65%) covering all five regions reported that intimidation has changed over time. Of those, two-thirds (10 out of 15; 67%) covering all regions reported that intimidation has intensified and almost all (14 out of 15; 93%) found that the forms of intimidations have changed over time (see online supplemental file 2, graph 1). Participants attributed these changes to two processes. First, the *emergence of newer nicotine and tobacco products* which led to '*growth of tobacco industry's business*' (SP, advocate), and brought new actors into the arena. Second, an increase in *channels of intimidation*, including '*paid journalists [and] media companies*' (SP, advocate). Most importantly, online platforms, especially social media, have become crucial spaces through which members of the tobacco control community are targeted. This shift was reported to have resulted in a higher frequency and wider reach of attacks, with attackers often remaining anonymous—'*online, there is no control of authorship or any responsibility*' (SP, advocate/researcher).

The responses also illustrate that *experiences over time varied*: while some participants found that industry attacks have become more subtle, one pointed out that there are now '*more blatant threats against civil society organisations*' (SP, advocate). As an interviewee noted, '*[the tobacco industry] chooses its intimidation tactics depending on what works effectively in local settings*' (IP, expert).

Perceived drivers of intimidation

Over a third of the SPs (8 out of 23; 35%) from four regions (African Region (AFR), South-East Asian Region (SEAR), European Region (EUR), Eastern Mediterranean Region) reported that intimidation happens because the tobacco industry was fearful of tobacco control: '*adequate tobacco control policies mean less business for the tobacco industry*' (SP, advocate) and, therefore, the tobacco control community is '*a thorn in the side of the tobacco industry*' (SP, researcher). Through intimidation,

Table 2 Forms of intimidation, frequency of experience and numbers of respondents, including number of WHO regions

	Have you experienced/do you think that other members of the tobacco control community have experienced..., and how frequently*? (n=23)					
	I have experienced it.		Other members of the tobacco control community in your country have experienced it.		I or another member has experienced it.	WHO regions
Public discreditation—social media	10 (43%)	Frequently: 3 Sometimes: 4	12 (52%)	Frequently: 5 Sometimes: 7	14 (61%)	Five
Public discreditation—traditional media	9 (39%)	Frequently: 3 Sometimes: 6	12 (52%)	Frequently: 6 Sometimes: 6	12 (52%)	Four
Public discreditation—other (eg, statements on the website)	9 (39%)	Frequently: 3 Sometimes: 5	10 (43%)	Frequently: 3 Sometimes: 5	11 (48%)	Four
Legal threats or attacks	5 (21%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 3	9 (39%)	Frequently: 4 Sometimes: 3	11 (48%)	Four
Non-anonymous intimidating messages	6 (26%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 3	9 (39%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 4	10 (43%)	Five
Anonymous intimidating messages	6 (26%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 2	8 (34%)	Frequently: 2 Sometimes: 6	9 (39%)	Four
Cyberattacks	4 (17%)	Frequently: 2 Sometimes: 1	8 (34%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 2	8 (34%)	Four
Physical violence/intimidation	2 (9%)	Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 2	4 (17%)	Frequently: 1 Sometimes: 1	4 (17%)	Three
Theft/burglary	2 (9%)	Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 1	3 (13%)	Frequently: 0 Sometimes: 1	3 (13%)	Three
Other:† spying/surveillance	2 (9%)		2 (9%)		2 (9%)	Two
Other:† anonymous complaint to the employer	2 (9%)		0		2 (9%)	One
Other:† disseminating false information about individual/organisation among policy makers/in hearings	1 (4%)		1 (4%)		2 (9%)	Two
Other:† complaint against the organisation to controlling authority	0		1 (4%)		1 (4%)	One

*The participants were provided with the following options: All the time, Frequently, Sometimes, Rarely, Never, Prefer not to say/I don't know. 'All the time' remained unused.

†These forms have been identified on the basis of responses to open-ended questions.

the industry would also try to prevent 'new voices [to] come up in the future' (SP, researcher). One interviewee who could not recall examples of intimidation noted that civil society had not been heavily engaged in tobacco control, suspecting that the industry might not perceive it as a threat.

The *government's role* was also important for explaining intimidation. 'The industry intimidates more advocates in LMICs because there is less support from the governments and fewer consequences to face' (SP, advocate/researcher/civil servant). Interviewees also linked intimidation, especially its more dramatic forms like physical intimidation, and burglary, to contexts of weak institutions, poor governance and high levels of corruption, also implying that people in such contexts have less expectation of being protected by the state.

Knowing who is behind the attacks

Participants tended to be *more confident about the originator of the attack where the intimidation was public facing*: at least half of the participants reported being at least 'quite sure' that such attacks could be attributed to the tobacco industry (see online supplemental file 2, table 1). In some cases, evidence on who is the aggressor was available: in one instance, there was a legal case filed against a tobacco control organisation, in which the plaintiff was known. In another, a participant reported having evidence that money had been offered to journalists for publishing denigratory information about the tobacco control community. Some participants stated that obtaining evidence on the source of the attack was at times challenging although the content was revealing: 'They use exactly the same narrative as those furthered by [tobacco company] against tobacco control advocates' (SP, advocate).

Participants were *less confident in identifying the aggressor where the intimidation was more covert*, including anonymous messages, cyberattacks, physical intimidation and theft (see online supplemental file 2, table 1). Between 20% (physical intimidation/violence) and 45% (non-anonymous messages) of participants reported being at least 'quite sure' that the tobacco industry was behind the attack. Advocates considered multiple factors in attempting to understand the events: 'the circumstances, the timing and the methods and the targeting were more what let us... to have the firm conviction that this was not just a random job' (IP, expert). While some participants reported they would retain messages or letters, many participants reported difficulties in obtaining evidence on the origins of covert attacks.

Impact of intimidation

More than two in three participants (17 out of 23; 70%) covering all five regions reported that intimidation affected them and their work. The analysis identified three impacts. First, it *affects the organisational level, 'eating up time and resources'* (IP, expert).

I have to spend more time preparing for possible industry attacks when I am proposing an action... There is a huge quantity of energy spent on dismantling the allegations of the industry. (SP, advocate/researcher)

Second, intimidation *impacts collaboration*: '[i]t creates obstacles for building relationships with decisionmakers, media, non-governmental organisations, WHO and other international organizations, government, opinion leaders' (SP, advocate); 'Some legislators might hesitate to work with us given the suggestion that we are "foreign agents"' (SP, advocate); 'Some [...]

stakeholders fear being attacked by the [tobacco] industry if they partner with [tobacco control] organisations' (SP, advocate).

Finally, it affects individuals, making them uncomfortable or fearful. '[It] sometimes scares me to go public with the information I may uncover' (SP, advocate/researcher/civil servant). Also, an interviewee suggested that 'when you receive a legal challenge or many people attack you on social media (...) it's understandable if you maintain quiet because of it' (IP, expert). Participants from three regions (AFR, SEAR, EUR) shared examples of people who had quit advocacy as a result of intimidation. One reported: 'Many medical doctors and young people stopped because they were not expecting to receive accusations of unethical intentions' (SP, advocate/researcher).

Over a third of the participants (8 out of 23; 35%) covering all regions said that they *do not engage in certain activities or do not say certain things* because they fear consequences. Talking about a country with very limited tobacco control progress, an interviewee shared, 'I would personally want to have a strong voice and share what I'm sharing in other countries... But I can't... I'm scared' (IP, expert). An SP commented, 'sometimes, you feel threatened and find yourself carefully selecting the words... or you feel the need to protect your family members from getting hit by the assaults indirectly' (SP, advocate).

Where close links between policymakers and industry existed, advocates would try 'to avoid getting into a direct conflict with some of these very influential people or institutions' (IP, expert). They would instead focus on areas that were deemed safe, for example, raising awareness about the dangers of smoking. 'They don't mention names [of those with industry links]. This is a red border; they have to stop there' (IP, expert). It is worth noting that in such context, the state is the feared oppressor.

Responding to intimidating actions

Participants reported a range of techniques they employ in response to attacks, most prominently 'correcting' industry false claims and exposing industry conduct through public statements or the media. One participant reported that when false information was shared through the media, they would respond by 'sending official letters to the media with proofs of incorrect information' (SP, advocate). Another participant mentioned that the standard response was to file a *legal complaint*.

Several participants mentioned that their organisation or funder had a *non-engagement policy*, either generally or for a specific area such as social media. Yet, a participant reported,

it's difficult to not engage when you are being attacked personally in so many platforms at the same time. It scares you and it would be great to [...] expose these situations so they stop happening. (SP, advocate/researcher)

Looking at whether their responses worked well, most participants found that they were at least partly successful (see online supplemental file 2, graph 2). Responses were found to create awareness among policymakers and the public. In addition, responding was effective in showing the industry that 'advocates will not be scared easily' (SP, advocate). A few participants reported direct effects when responding to intimidation (eg, an attacker backing off and a legal case being withdrawn).

Some participants mentioned responses to intimidation that were disruptive or had a negative impact on the targets: a participant shared that they had changed their contact details and became very concerned about *digital security*. Another participant reported that following an attack from a tobacco company, their boss asked them to *stop working on that company*. An important concern regarding responding to intimidation was

that exposing industry conduct could raise the visibility of the industry which would not necessarily facilitate its discreditation.

What is needed to better handle intimidation?

While most participants covering all regions commented that there is *awareness and evidence* that intimidation happens, most saw room for improvement: 'it's not taken seriously (by the tobacco control community)' (SP, researcher/journalist). Furthermore, an increased understanding that it is not a matter of individual cases was important: '[we need] more evidence on how this is a concerted effort' (SP, advocate).

It would be helpful for everyone to know that they are part of a community facing similar challenges. It would reassure them, it would encourage them because when you then face intimidation, you feel you're not alone. (IP, expert)

Most participants saw the need for *more and more timely support*, both from the government and the international tobacco control community 'to reach more people and fight back better' (SP, advocate). Types of support included legal and financial support as well as psychological support for those affected by industry attacks. *Government support* was perceived as crucial and often lacking. When advocates filed complaints, the response was slow. Another concern was related to the government's role in protecting and not constraining the freedom of speech of civil society organisations and individuals more generally.

Regional or international tobacco control organisations were also perceived as an important source of support. An interviewee explained these organisations could, and to some extent already do, facilitate responding to threats or discrediting efforts by 'helping with legal support and, with letters to media, letters to authorities or even sometimes putting some media communication' (IP, expert). While it was known that organisations provide help for governments receiving legal threats, less was known about existing support for civil society organisations or individuals: 'because most of the intimidation is not really documented... I can't say that there is that direct form of assistance' (IP, expert).

SPs stated they would also benefit from more *collective action*, which was perceived as less risky than speaking up alone. Also, having another organisation expose industry conduct for the local tobacco control community would make it less frightening for local advocates.

Finally, to pre-empt attacks and improve the handling of future intimidation, creating and *sustaining strong networks* and *building capacity* were considered crucial. Networks should provide support when responding to concrete cases, and could facilitate learning, for example: 'how to respond to various forms of intimidation through case studies from around the world' (IP, expert). In addition, training initiatives could help build capacity in the tobacco control community, covering, among others, how to collect evidence of and expose intimidation. Yet, for this to work, 'you need to build the trust first' (IP, expert) and, hence, such sessions should not only cover the risks and dangers of tobacco control work. Furthermore, 'there has to be some way forward and people have to go with heartening ideas' (IP, expert).

DISCUSSION

To our knowledge, this is the first paper on the experiences and perceptions of intimidation among members of the LMIC-based tobacco control community. It suggests that intimidation is widespread and increasing, targets both organisations and individuals and significantly threatens tobacco control. Some participants suggested the industry was deliberately seeking to deter advocates

and may have had some success given reports that some individuals had left the field as a result and others limited what they said or did. A further route to impact is that, by discrediting individuals and organisations, the relationship building needed for tobacco control becomes difficult. Participants suggested that intimidation was more egregious in contexts where institutions and governance were weak and corruption was high.

Intimidation was found to take several forms, some overt and some covert. Public discreditation via mainstream or social media and other public platforms, including by paying journalists, was common and appears to have intensified with the advent of social media. This is consistent with the grey literature³³ and reflects broader social concerns around the 'dark side' of social media, including cyberbullying, trolling and fake news.⁴¹ Previous research has shown the tobacco industry's increased use of social media and the growing online harassment faced by public health advocates and researchers more broadly.^{23 42–45} We also found that tobacco control advocates, researchers and organisations are confronted with legal threats or actions. This is consistent with documented evidence, for example, in the cases of Australia⁴⁶ and Uruguay,¹⁵ that industry uses such techniques against governments or public officials to impede, weaken and undermine tobacco control policies, even when claims are unfounded and chances of winning the case are low.⁴⁷

In addition to these public threats, participants experienced more covert actions. These included threatening messages, cyberattacks, false information being disseminated about them or their organisations and formal complaints. Arguably, more worryingly they also included physical intimidation or violence, burglary or theft, and surveillance which were collectively reported by five out of 23 SPs (22%). In line with the grey literature,³³ it was often difficult to obtain evidence and know with certainty who the originator of such actions was and participants reported greater certainty in ascribing overt actions to the tobacco industry.

The needs participants identified to help deal with intimidation include more support from governments and the global tobacco control community when reacting to immediate threats, and learning from each other and capacity building. These overlap with needs identified in a previous study on countering industry interference more generally.⁴⁸

The findings of the study should be considered preliminary. The survey sample is small and does not cover the Western Pacific region. The survey relies on the limited information provided by participants, in which recall and social desirability biases cannot be excluded. It is also possible that those who perceive intimidation as an issue felt more inclined to fill the survey, thus skewing the sample.⁴⁹ Conversely, what might be considered intimidation by some could be perceived as normal industry conduct by others leading to possible under-reporting. The small sample size could, among others, link to language barriers (the survey was only available in English, French and Spanish and not the other official United Nations languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian)), our cautious approach to survey distribution and fear among potential participants. We received informal feedback that some potential participants were too scared to share their experiences. Another potential explanation is the length of the survey—it took around 30 to 45 minutes. A shorter survey might have led to higher completion rates, but it would have yielded less rich data. The study was also undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic when the public health community was overwhelmed. This limited our ability to conduct in-depth in-person interviews.

Although care must therefore be taken in generalising our findings, this paper nevertheless offers insight into the scale of intimidation, suggesting it is not limited to a few extreme cases but is widespread. It also identifies the diversity of experiences in both receiving and dealing with intimidation.

Given that few tobacco control advocates and researchers have opened up about experiences of intimidation before, we hope that this research facilitates dialogue and encourages members of the tobacco control community to share their experiences and needs. This study also invites the global tobacco control community to reflect on its approach to exposing and addressing intimidation, including the policies of funding bodies. It suggests that both proactive and reactive support is needed. This might include integrating this topic into curricula of capacity-building initiatives, creating new mechanisms for collecting data on and enabling support and action on intimidation. The role of media and social media must also be carefully scrutinised given the role it can play both in enacting and addressing intimidation.

A crucial step could be a decision in the WHO FCTC Conference of the Parties, calling governments to protect those advocating for tobacco control in their countries from industry threats and attacks and supporting those who experience intimidation. International organisations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, could implement policies offering protection, including funded communications and legal support, to staff and member organisations in order to increase their ability to respond and deter intimidation.

This study has laid the foundation for further research on intimidation in the tobacco control community. Further in-depth work including detailed country or regional case studies is needed to explore intimidation and its contextual variation in greater detail; larger surveys might help give a clearer picture of scale.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that intimidation is an important issue for tobacco control in LMICs which goes beyond the attacks on governments and policy makers and may be limiting tobacco control progress in LMICs.

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Supplementary file – Survey tool

English version

Experience of types of intimidation in relation to tobacco control activity

We understand intimidation very broadly as actions that make you feel frightened or threatened. It also includes unsuccessful attempts at intimidation.

2 Have you ever experienced intimidation in relation to your tobacco control activity? (legal threats or attacks; anonymous intimidating messages; non-anonymous intimidating messages; physical intimidation or violence; theft or burglary; cyberattack)

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b How often have you...

(Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently All the time Prefer not to say/ I don't know)

...experienced legal threats or attacks?

...received intimidating anonymous messages (phone calls, letters, emails, other online message)

...received intimidating non-anonymous messages (phone calls, letters, emails, other online messages)?

...experienced physical violence or intimidation (e.g., being assaulted, being followed)?

...experienced theft or burglary that you think related to your tobacco control activity?

...experienced cyberattacks?

...experienced another form/ other forms of intimidation?

i If you have experienced other form(s) of intimidation, please explain. These may include attempts to stop your work being released/published, attempts to restrict your funding, spying/surveillance, or any other.

3 Do you think other members of the tobacco control community in your country have experienced intimidation? (legal threats or attacks; anonymous intimidating messages; non-anonymous intimidating messages; physical intimidation or violence; theft or burglary; cyberattack)

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b How often do you think they have...

(Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently All the time Prefer not to say/ I don't know)

...experienced legal threats or attacks?

...received intimidating anonymous messages (phone calls, letters, emails, other online message)

...received intimidating non-anonymous messages (phone calls, letters, emails, other online messages)?

...experienced physical violence or intimidation (e.g., being assaulted, being followed)?

...experienced theft or burglary that you think related to your tobacco control activity?

...experienced cyberattacks?

...experienced another form/ other forms of intimidation?

i If you think they have experienced other form(s) of intimidation, please explain. These may include attempts to stop their work being released/published, attempts to restrict their funding, spying/surveillance, or any other.

4 Have you ever experienced public discreditation in relation to your tobacco control activity? (through traditional media; through social media; through statements on websites; through open letters; through press releases; other)

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b How often have you experienced...

(Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently All the time Prefer not to say/ I don't know)

...public discreditation in the traditional media (radio, television, newspaper)?

...public discreditation on social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)?

...another form/ other forms of public discreditation (e.g., statements on websites, open letters, press releases, other)?

i If you have experienced other form(s) of public discreditation, please explain. These may include accusations of unethical conduct, or any others.

5 Do you think other members of the tobacco control community in your country have experienced public discreditation? (through traditional media; through social media; through statements on websites; through open letters; through press releases; other)

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b How often do you think they have experienced...

(Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently All the time Prefer not to say/ I don't know)

...public discreditation in the traditional media (radio, television, newspaper)?

...public discreditation on social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook)?

...another form/ other forms of public discreditation (e.g., statements on websites, open letters, press releases, other)?

i If you think they have experienced other form(s) of public discreditation, please explain. These may include accusations of unethical conduct, or any others.

6 If you or other members of the tobacco control community in your country experienced public discreditation or received intimidating messages (phone call/letters/emails/online messages), what (if any) arguments were used against you? What did they accuse you of doing?

7 Do you or other members of the tobacco control community in your country not engage in certain tobacco control activities or not say certain things publicly because you fear consequences?

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b Please explain more (e.g., what activities are affected, what consequences do you fear and by whom, is it because it happened to others).

Who is behind the intimidation?

8 How sure are you that the tobacco industry is behind the intimidation you had in mind when answering the previous questions? Please go through the list and indicate how certain you are who is behind the types of intimidation. If you are not aware of instances of a type of intimidation, please skip the row.

(Not at all sure Very unsure Quite unsure Quite sure Very sure There is no doubt. I have evidence. Prefer not to say/don't know)

Legal threats or attacks

Intimidating anonymous messages

Intimidating non-anonymous messages

Physical violence/intimidation

Theft/ burglary

Cyberattacks

Public discreditation (traditional media)

Public discreditation (social media)

Public discreditation (other)

Other form(s) of intimidation, including public discreditation (described by you)

a If you selected other form(s) of intimidation, please explain.

9 Please explain what makes you unsure or sure? Please specify to which example you are referring.

10 If you have evidence, what evidence is it?

11 Do you experience difficulties obtaining evidence and if so, why?

Additional questions on intimidation

Any details you provide are very valuable, but you have the option to skip optional questions if you prefer. Please make sure you fill in the demographic information on the last page and submit your response - otherwise, your valuable data will be lost. Thank you!

12 Do you think intimidation has changed over time?

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b Is it now more intense or weaker than previously?

(More intense - Weaker - The same - Other)

I If you selected Other, please specify:

c Have the forms of intimidation changed over time?

(Yes - No - Other)

i If you selected Other, please specify:

d Please comment on how and why intimidation has (not) changed over time.

13 Is there awareness in the tobacco control community that intimidation is a problem?

a Please explain.

14 Is intimidation a taboo topic in the tobacco control community in your country?

a Please explain.

15 Why do you think members of the tobacco control community experience intimidation?

Responding to intimidation

16 How have you or other members of the tobacco control community responded to intimidation?

(Please explain with examples if possible)

17 Do you think the response has worked well?

a Please explain.

Impact of intimidation

Impacts could include experiencing feelings of insecurity, losing funding, your work not being released, altering outputs, disruption/delay of your work, or any other.

18 Do you think intimidation impacts on you and your tobacco control work?

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

19 Do you think intimidation impacts on the work of other member of the tobacco control community in your country?

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

20 If you can, please share some more details on how intimidation impacts you, your work, and the tobacco control community in your country?

21 Are you aware of cases where people stopped working in tobacco control due to experiences of intimidation?

(Yes - No - Other)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

b Please explain. You don't need to mention names. If you mention a name, we will anonymise it in the research outputs.

How to handle intimidation better

22 What do you and the tobacco control community need to handle intimidation better? Is there any support you have or would like to have?

Additional comments

23 Do you wish to add any further examples or thoughts on the topic?

Demographic information

24. How would you describe your gender?

(Female Male Other Prefer not to say)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

25. How old are you?

(Under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 Over 70 Prefer not to say)

26 In which WHO region do you live?

(African Region Easter Mediterranean Region European Region Region of the Americas South-East Asian Region Western Pacific Region)

a In which country do you live? If you prefer not to answer the question, you can put “Prefer not to say”

27 In which WHO region do you do (most of) your tobacco control work?

(African Region Easter Mediterranean Region European Region Region of the Americas South-East Asian Region Western Pacific Region)

a In which country do you do (most of) your tobacco control work? If you prefer not to answer the question, you can put “Prefer not to say”

28 How would you describe your role?

(Advocate Researcher Politician Civil Servant Other Prefer not to say)

a If you selected Other, please specify:

29. How long have you been active in tobacco control?

(Less than 2 years 2-5 years 6-9 years 10-20 years more than 20 years Prefer not to say)

French version

Expérience des types d'intimidation en rapport avec l'activité de prévention du tabagisme

Nous employons le terme d'intimidation pour désigner au sens large les actions qui vous effraient ou vous font ressentir une menace. Cela comprend également les tentatives échouées d'intimidation.

2 Avez-vous déjà été victime d'intimidation en rapport avec vos activités de prévention du tabagisme ? (Menaces ou attaques légales ; messages d'intimidation anonymes ; messages d'intimidation non-anonymes ; intimidation ou violence physique ; vol ou cambriolage ; cyberattaque)

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b À quelle fréquence avez-vous...

(Jamais Rarement Parfois Régulièrement Tout le temps Je préfère ne pas l'indiquer/je ne sais pas)

...reçu des attaques ou menaces légales ?

...reçu des messages d'intimidation anonymes (appels téléphoniques, lettres, e-mails, autres messages en ligne) ?

...reçu des messages d'intimidation non-anonymes (appels téléphoniques, lettres, e-mails, autres messages en ligne) ?

...rencontré des tentatives d'intimidation ou des violences physiques (ex. : agression, se faire suivre dans la rue) ?

...subi un vol ou un cambriolage lié selon vous à vos activités de prévention du tabagisme ?

...été la cible de cyberattaques ?

...rencontré une autre ou autres formes d'intimidation ?

i Si vous avez rencontré d'autres formes d'intimidation, veuillez préciser. Cela peut être des tentatives d'empêchement de publication ou de divulgation de votre travail, des tentatives pour restreindre votre financement, de l'espionnage ou de la surveillance ou toute autre forme.

3 Pensez-vous que d'autres membres de la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays ont été victime d'intimidation ? (Menaces ou attaques légales ; messages d'intimidation anonymes ; messages d'intimidation non-anonymes ; intimidation ou violence physique ; vol ou cambriolage ; cyberattaque)

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b À quelle fréquence pensez-vous qu'ils ont...

(Jamais Rarement Parfois Régulièrement Tout le temps Je préfère ne pas l'indiquer/je ne sais pas)

...reçu des attaques ou menaces légales ?

...reçu des messages d'intimidation anonymes (appels téléphoniques, lettres, e-mails, autres messages en ligne) ?

...reçu des messages d'intimidation non-anonymes (appels téléphoniques, lettres, e-mails, autres messages en ligne) ?

...rencontré des tentatives d'intimidation ou des violences physiques (ex. : agression, se faire suivre dans la rue) ?

...subi un vol ou un cambriolage lié selon vous à vos activités de prévention du tabagisme ?

...été la cible de cyberattaques ?

...rencontré une autre ou autres formes d'intimidation ?

i Si vous pensez qu'ils ont rencontré d'autres formes d'intimidation, veuillez préciser. Cela peut être des tentatives d'empêchement de publication ou de divulgation de leur travail, des tentatives pour restreindre leur financement, de l'espionnage ou de la surveillance ou toute autre forme.

4 Avez-vous déjà été victime de stigmatisation publique lié à vos activités de prévention du tabagisme ? (Via des médias traditionnels ; via les réseaux sociaux ; via des publications sur des sites ; via des lettres ouvertes ; via des communiqués de presse ; autre)

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b À quelle fréquence avez-vous fait l'expérience...

(Jamais Rarement Parfois Régulièrement Tout le temps Je préfère ne pas l'indiquer/je ne sais pas)

...d'une stigmatisation publique dans les médias traditionnels (radio, télévision, journaux) ?

...d'une stigmatisation publique sur les réseaux sociaux (ex. : Twitter, Facebook) ?

...d'autres formes de stigmatisation publique (ex. : publications sur des sites, lettres ouvertes, communiqués de presse, autres) ?

i Si vous avez rencontré d'autres formes de stigmatisation publique, veuillez préciser. Cela peut être des accusations de conduite non éthique, ou toute autre forme.

5 Pensez-vous que les membres de la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays ont été victime de stigmatisation publique ? (Via des médias traditionnels ; via les réseaux sociaux ; via des publications sur des sites ; via des lettres ouvertes ; via des communiqués de presse ; autre)

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b À quelle fréquence pensez-vous qu'ils ont fait l'expérience...

(Jamais Rarement Parfois Régulièrement Tout le temps Je préfère ne pas l'indiquer/je ne sais pas)

...d'une stigmatisation publique dans les médias traditionnels (radio, télévision, journaux) ?

...d'une stigmatisation publique sur les réseaux sociaux (ex. : Twitter, Facebook) ?

...d'autres formes de stigmatisation publique (ex. : publications sur des sites, lettres ouvertes, communiqués de presse, autres) ?

i Si vous pensez qu'ils ont rencontré d'autres formes de stigmatisation publique, veuillez préciser. Cela peut être des accusations de conduite non éthique, ou toute autre forme.

6 Si vous ou d'autres membres de la communauté anti-tabac dans votre pays avez fait l'expérience d'une stigmatisation publique ou reçu des messages d'intimidation (appels téléphoniques/e-mails/messages en ligne), quels arguments ont été utilisés contre vous, le cas échéant ? De quoi vous a-t-on accusé(e) ?

7 Avez-vous, vous ou d'autres membres de la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays, déjà évité de vous livrer à certaines activités anti-tabac ou de dire certaines choses en public par peur des conséquences ?

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b Veuillez préciser (ex. : quelles activités furent affectées, de quelles conséquences vous aviez peur et de la part de qui, si c'était parce que cela était arrivé à d'autres).

Qui était à l'origine de l'intimidation ?

8 À quel point êtes-vous sûr(e) que l'industrie du tabac était derrière l'intimidation à laquelle vous pensiez en répondant à la question précédente ? Veuillez parcourir la liste et indiquer votre niveau de

certitude concernant l'identité des auteurs de chaque type d'intimidation. Si vous n'avez pas connaissance d'un certain type d'intimidation, veuillez passer à la ligne suivante.

(Pas sûr du tout Très peu sûr Peu sûr Assez sûr Très sûr J'en suis certain(e). J'ai des preuves. Je préfère ne pas l'indiquer/je ne sais pas)

Attaques ou menaces légales

Messages d'intimidation anonymes

Messages d'intimidation non-anonymes

Violence/intimidation physique

Vol/cambriolage

Cyberattaques

Stigmatisation publique (médias traditionnels)

Stigmatisation publique (réseaux sociaux)

Stigmatisation publique (autre)

Autre(s) forme(s) d'intimidation, y compris la stigmatisation publique (décrite par vous)

a Si vous avez sélectionné d'autres formes d'intimidation, veuillez préciser.

9 Pouvez-vous expliquer ce qui vous rend sûr(e) ou vous fait douter. Veuillez préciser l'exemple auquel vous faites référence.

10 Si vous avez des preuves, de quelle nature sont-elles ?

11 Trouvez-vous difficile d'obtenir des preuves et si oui, pourquoi ?

Questions supplémentaires sur l'intimidation

Toute information fournie s'avère précieuse, mais vous avez la possibilité de passer les questions facultatives si vous le préférez. Veuillez vous assurer de remplir les informations démographiques sur la dernière page et d'envoyer votre réponse, car autrement vos données seront perdues. Merci !

12 Pensez-vous que l'intimidation a changé au cours du temps ?

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b Est-elle plus intense ou moindre par rapport au passé ?

(Plus intense Moindre Identique Autre)

i Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

c Les formes d'intimidation ont-elles changé au cours du temps ?

(Oui Non Autre)

i Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

d Veuillez décrire comment et pourquoi l'intimidation a changé (ou non) au cours du temps.

13 A-t-on conscience que l'intimidation est un problème au sein de la communauté anti-tabac ?

a Veuillez expliquer votre réponse.

14 L'intimidation est-elle un sujet tabou dans la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays ?

a Veuillez expliquer votre réponse.

15 Pourquoi pensez-vous que les membres de la communauté anti-tabac sont victimes d'intimidation ?

Répondre à l'intimidation

16 Avez-vous, vous ou d'autres membres de la communauté anti-tabac, répondu à des tentatives d'intimidation ? Veuillez fournir des exemples si possible.

17 Pensez-vous que la réponse a eu l'effet désiré ?

a Veuillez expliquer votre réponse.

Les effets de l'intimidation

Les effets peuvent inclure un sentiment d'insécurité, une perte de financement, la non-publication de vos recherches, des résultats modifiés, une interruption ou un retard dans votre travail, ou autre chose.

18 Pensez-vous que l'intimidation a des effets sur vous et votre travail de prévention du tabagisme ?

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

19 Pensez-vous que l'intimidation affecte le travail d'autres membres de la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays ?

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

20 Si possible, veuillez préciser de quelle manière l'intimidation affecte votre personne, votre travail et la communauté anti-tabac de votre pays.

21 Connaissez-vous des cas de personnes ayant cessé de travailler dans la prévention du tabagisme parce qu'elles avaient été intimidées ?

(Oui Non Autre)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

b Veuillez expliquer votre réponse. Il n'est pas nécessaire de donner des noms. Si vous mentionnez un nom, nous le rendrons anonyme dans les résultats de recherche.

Comment mieux gérer l'intimidation

22 Que faudrait-il à la communauté anti-tabac et à vous-même pour mieux gérer l'intimidation ? Y a-t-il une forme d'assistance que vous avez ou que vous souhaiteriez avoir ?

Commentaires additionnels

23 Avez-vous d'autres exemples à ajouter sur le sujet ?

Informations démographiques

24. Comment décririez-vous votre genre ?

(Femme Homme Autre Préfère ne pas l'indiquer)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

25. Quel âge avez-vous ?

(Moins de 20 ans 20-29 ans 30-39 ans 40-49 ans 50-59 ans 60-69 ans Plus de 70 ans Préfère ne pas l'indiquer)

26 Dans quelle région OMS vivez-vous ?

(Afrique Méditerranée orientale Europe Amériques Asie du Sud-Est Pacifique occidentale)

a Dans quel pays vivez-vous ? Si vous préférez ne pas répondre à cette question, veuillez écrire « préfère ne pas l'indiquer ».

27 Dans quelle région OMS faites-vous la majorité de votre travail de prévention du tabagisme ?

(Afrique Méditerranée orientale Europe Amériques Asie du Sud-Est Pacifique occidentale)

a Dans quel pays faites-vous la majorité de votre travail de prévention du tabagisme ? Si vous préférez ne pas répondre à cette question, veuillez écrire « préfère ne pas l'indiquer ».

28 Comment définiriez-vous votre poste ?

(Porte-parole Chercheur Politicien Fonctionnaire Autre Préfère ne pas l'indiquer)

a Si vous avez sélectionné Autre, veuillez préciser:

29. Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous actif/ active dans la lutte antitabac ?

(Moins de 2 ans 2-5 ans 6-9 ans 10-20 ans Plus de 20 ans Préfère ne pas l'indiquer)

Spanish version

Experiencias de distintos tipos de intimidación debidos a la actividad relacionada con el Control del Tabaco

Atribuimos una acepción amplia a la intimidación; dicha acepción abarca acciones que llevan a que uno se sienta atemorizado/a o amenazado/a. También se extiende a los intentos de intimidación que no desembocan en ella.

2 ¿Ha experimentado en alguna ocasión intimidación por su actividad relacionada con el Control del Tabaco? (por ej. amenazas o ataques legales; mensajes intimidantes anónimos; mensajes intimidantes no anónimos; intimidación física o violencia; hurto o robo; ataques cibernéticos)

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b ¿Con cuánta frecuencia...

(Nunca Rara vez A veces Con frecuencia Siempre Prefiero no decirlo/no lo sé)

... ha sido amenazado/a o atacado/a legalmente?

... ha recibido mensajes anónimos intimidantes? (Por teléfono, por carta, por correo electrónico u otros mensajes en línea)

... ha recibido mensajes intimidantes no anónimos? (Por teléfono, por carta, por correo electrónico u otros mensajes en línea)

... ha sufrido violencia o intimidación física? (por ej. asalto o persecución)

... ha experimentado robo o hurto que, según su opinión, fue debido a su actividad en el Control del Tabaco?

...ha experimentado ataques cibernéticos?

...ha experimentado otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación?

i Si ha experimentado otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación, por favor especifíquela(s). Estas pueden incluir intentos de impedir que se publicara su trabajo, intentos de restringir sus fondos, espionaje/vigilancia, o cualquier otro intento de este tipo.

3 ¿Cree que otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país han experimentado intimidación? (por ej. amenazas o ataques legales; mensajes intimidantes anónimos; mensajes intimidantes no anónimos; intimidación física o violencia; hurto o robo; ataques cibernéticos)

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b ¿Con cuánta frecuencia cree que...

(Nunca Rara vez A veces Con frecuencia Siempre Prefiero no decirlo/no lo sé)

...son amenazados o atacados legalmente?

... reciben mensajes anónimos intimidantes? (Por teléfono, por carta, por correo electrónico u otros mensajes en línea)

... reciben mensajes intimidantes no anónimos? (Por teléfono, por carta, por correo electrónico u otros mensajes en línea)

... sufren violencia o intimidación física? (por ej. asalto o persecución)

...experimentan robo o hurto que, según su opinión, fue debido a su actividad en el Control del Tabaco?

... experimentan ataques cibernéticos?

...experimentan otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación?

i Si cree que otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país han experimentado otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación, por favor especifíquelas. Estas pueden incluir intentos de impedir que se publicara su trabajo, intentos de restringir sus fondos, espionaje/vigilancia, o cualquier otro intento de este tipo.

4 ¿Ha sido víctima de desprestigio público a causa de su actividad relacionada con el control del tabaco? (Por medios tradicionales; en redes sociales; en declaraciones en línea; en cartas abiertas; en comunicados de prensa u otros medios)

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b ¿Con cuánta frecuencia ha...

(Nunca Rara vez A veces Con frecuencia Siempre Prefiero no decirlo/no lo sé)

...sido víctima de desprestigio público por medios tradicionales? (Por la radio, por televisión, en la prensa)

... sido víctima de desprestigio público en las redes sociales? (Por ej. en Twitter o Facebook)

...sido desprestigiado/a de otra manera? (Por ej. en declaraciones en línea, en cartas abiertas, en comunicados de prensa u otros medios)

i Si ha experimentado otra(s) forma(s) de desprestigio público, por favor, especifíquelas aquí. Estas pueden incluir haber sido acusado/a de una conducta no ética.

5 Según su opinión ¿son víctimas de desprestigio público otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país? (Por medios tradicionales; en redes sociales; en declaraciones en línea; en cartas abiertas; en comunicados de prensa u otros medios)

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b ¿Con cuánta frecuencia cree que...

(Nunca Rara vez A veces Con frecuencia Siempre Prefiero no decirlo/no lo sé)

...experimentan desprestigio público por medios tradicionales? (Por la radio, por televisión, en la prensa)

...experimentan desprestigio público en las redes sociales? (Por ej. en Twitter o Facebook)

...son desprestigiados de otra manera? (Por ej. en declaraciones en línea, en cartas abiertas, en comunicados de prensa u otros medios)

i Si cree que otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país han experimentado otra(s) forma(s) de desprestigio público, por favor, especifíquelas aquí. Estas pueden incluir que se les haya acusado de una conducta no ética.

6 Si usted u otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país ha(n) tenido experiencias de desprestigio público o ha(n) recibido mensajes intimidantes (por teléfono/en cartas/en correos electrónicos/en mensajes online), ¿qué se dijo en contra de usted? ¿De qué le/la acusaron?

7 Usted u otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco ¿se abstiene(n) de decir ciertas cosas o elige(n) no llevar a cabo ciertas actividades relacionadas con el Control del Tabaco por temer las repercusiones?

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b Por favor, explique su respuesta: ¿cuáles son las actividades afectadas?; ¿cuáles son las repercusiones que teme, y de parte de quién?; ¿siente temor por haber visto lo que les ha pasado a otras personas?

¿Quién está detrás de la intimidación?

8 ¿Cuán seguro/a está de que la industria tabaquera está detrás de los tipos de intimidación nombrados en la primera pregunta? Repase la lista e indique cuán seguro/a está de quién está detrás de la intimidación. Si no es consciente de casos de alguno de los tipos de intimidación nombrados, por favor, sáltese esa casilla.

(No estoy para nada seguro/a Estoy poco seguro/a No estoy muy seguro/a Estoy bastante seguro/a Estoy muy seguro/a No cabe duda. Tengo evidencia que lo demuestra. Prefiero no decirlo/no lo sé)

Amenazas o ataques legales

Mensajes intimidantes anónimos

Mensajes intimidantes no anónimos

Violencia o intimidación física

Robo/hurto

Ataques cibernéticos

Desprestigio público (por medios tradicionales)

Desprestigio público (en redes sociales)

Desprestigio público (de otro tipo)

Otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación, incluyendo el desprestigio público (descrito por usted)

a Si ha seleccionado otra(s) forma(s) de intimidación, por favor, especifíquelas aquí:

9 Por favor, explique por qué (no) está seguro/a. Especifique el ejemplo al que se refiere.

10 En el caso de que tenga evidencia, ¿qué evidencia tiene?

11 ¿Le resulta difícil obtener evidencia? Si es así, ¿por qué?

Preguntas adicionales sobre la intimidación

Cualquier información que nos pueda dar es muy útil, sin embargo, tiene la opción de saltarse las preguntas optativas si prefiere. Por favor, asegúrese de rellenar la información demográfica en la última página y de entregar su respuesta. Si no, perderemos la información útil que nos ha proporcionado. ¡Muchas gracias!

12 ¿Cree que la intimidación ha cambiado a lo largo del tiempo?

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b ¿Es más o menos intensa que antes?

(Más intensa – Menos intense – Igualmente intensa – Otro)

i. Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

c. ¿Han cambiado las formas de intimidación a lo largo del tiempo?

(Sí - No - Otro)

i Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

d Explique cómo y por qué ha cambiado la intimidación (o no) a lo largo del tiempo.

13 ¿Los miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco son conscientes de que la intimidación es un problema?

a Explíquelo por favor.

14 ¿La intimidación es un tema tabú en la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país?

a Explíquelo por favor.

15 ¿Por qué cree que los miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco experimentan la intimidación?

Respuestas a la intimidación

16 ¿Cómo ha(n) respondido usted u otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco a la intimidación? Dé ejemplos, si es posible.

17 ¿Cree que la(s) respuesta(s) le(s) ha servido bien?

a Explíquelo por favor.

El impacto de la intimidación

El impacto que tiene la intimidación podría incluir sentirse inseguro/a, perder fondos, que no se publique su trabajo, cambiar los resultados de su trabajo, que su trabajo se vea interrumpido o retrasado, o cualquier otro ejemplo de este tipo

18 ¿Cree que la intimidación tiene un impacto negativo sobre usted y su trabajo relacionado con el Control del Tabaco?

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

19 ¿Cree que la intimidación tiene un impacto negativo sobre el trabajo de otros miembros de la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país?

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

20 Si puede, por favor explique más sobre cómo le afecta la intimidación; cómo afecta su trabajo, y cómo afecta a la comunidad del Control del Tabaco en su país.

21 ¿Conoce casos de gente que dejó de trabajar en el campo del Control del Tabaco por haber tenido experiencias intimidantes?

(Sí - No - Otro)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

b Por favor, explique su respuesta. No tiene que divulgar ningún nombre. Si decide mencionar un nombre, haremos anónimo este dato en los resultados de la investigación.

Cómo afrontar mejor la intimidación

22 ¿Qué necesitan usted y la comunidad del Control del Tabaco para poder afrontar mejor la intimidación? ¿Disponen de apoyo de algún tipo? ¿Les gustaría tener más apoyo, y de qué tipo?

Comentarios adicionales

23 ¿Desea dar más ejemplos, o compartir algo más sobre el tema?

Información demográfica

24. ¿Cómo describiría su propio género?

(Mujer Hombre Otro Prefiero no decirlo)

a Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

25. ¿Cuántos años tiene?

(Menos de 20 De 20 a 29 De 30 a 39 De 40 a 49 De 50 a 59 De 60 a 69 Más de 70 Prefiero no decirlo)

26 ¿En qué región de la OMS vive?

(Región de África Región del Mediterráneo oriental Región de Europa Región de las Américas Región de Asia Sudoriental Región del Pacífico occidental)

a ¿En qué país vive? Si prefiere no contestar esta pregunta, ponga “prefiero no decirlo”.

27 ¿En qué región de la OMS lleva a cabo la mayoría de su trabajo relacionado con el Control del Tabaco?

(Región de África Región del Mediterráneo oriental Región de Europa Región de las Américas Región de Asia Sudoriental Región del Pacífico occidental)

a ¿En qué país lleva a cabo la mayoría de su trabajo relacionado con el Control del Tabaco? Si prefiere no contestar esta pregunta, ponga “prefiero no decirlo”.

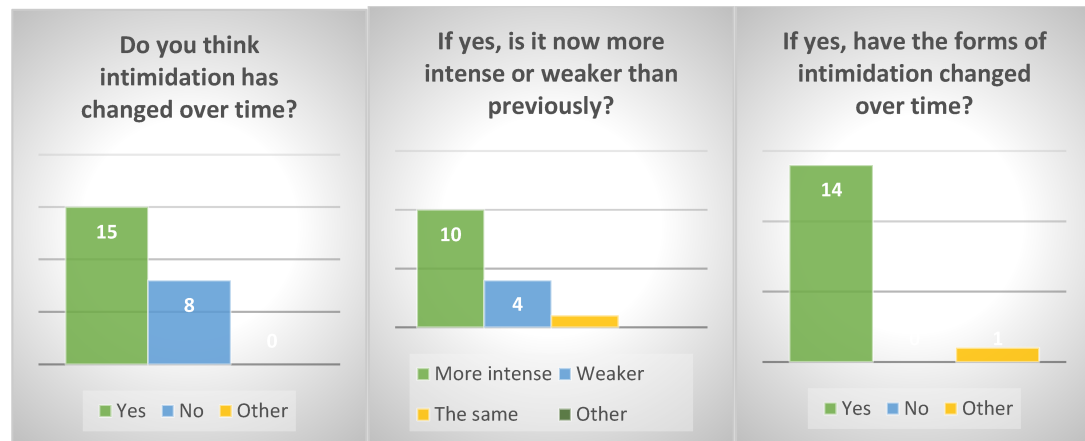
28 ¿Cómo describiría su rol?

(Defensor/a Investigador/a Político/a Funcionario/a Otro Prefiero no decirlo)

a. Si ha seleccionado otro, especifique aquí por favor:

29. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva activo/a en el campo del Control de Tabaco?

(Menos de 2 años De 2-5 años De 6-9 años De 10-20 años Más de 20 años Prefiero no decirlo)

SUPPLEMENTARY FILE (Graphs and table in the order appearing in the text)**Graph 1:**

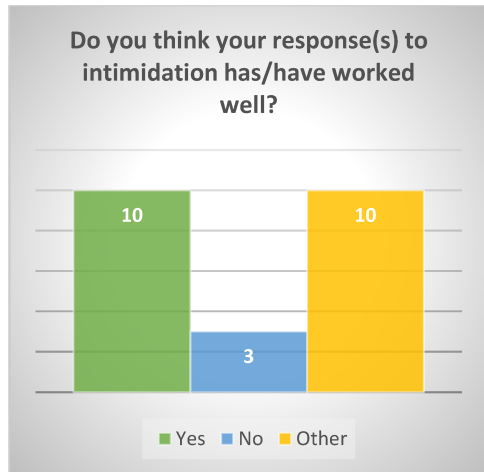
Graph 1: Results – Changes in intimidation over time

Supplementary Table 1:

How sure are you the tobacco industry is behind each form of intimidation?					
	There is no doubt/ very sure/ quite sure		Quite unsure/ very unsure/ not sure at all		Number of participants answering the question*
Public discreditation – social media	13/21 (62%)	There is no doubt: 3 Very sure: 4 Quite sure: 6	8/21 (38%)	Quite unsure: 3 Very unsure: 1 Not sure at all: 4	21 out of 23
Public discreditation – traditional media	10/19 (53%)	There is no doubt: 3 Very sure: 4 Quite sure: 3	9/19 (47%)	Quite unsure: 3 Very unsure: 1 Not sure at all: 5	19 out of 23
Legal threats or attacks	10/19 (53%)	There is no doubt: 3 Very sure: 4 Quite sure: 3	9/19 (47%)	Quite unsure: 5 Very unsure: 1 Not sure at all: 3	19 out of 23
Public discreditation – other (statements on website)	10/20 (50%)	There is no doubt: 2 Very sure: 5 Quite sure: 3	10/20 (50%)	Quite unsure: 3 Very unsure: 3 Not sure at all: 4	20 out of 23
Non-anonymous intimidating messages	9/20 (45%)	There is no doubt: 1 Very sure: 3 Quite sure: 5	11/20 (55%)	Quite unsure: 4 Very unsure: 4 Not sure at all: 3	20 out of 23
Anonymous intimidating messages	7/18 (39%)	There is no doubt: 0 Very sure: 3 Quite sure: 4	11/18 (61%)	Quite unsure: 4 Very unsure: 3 Not sure at all: 4	18 out of 23
Cyberattacks	4/16 (25%)	There is no doubt: 1 Very sure: 2 Quite sure: 1	12/16 (75%)	Quite unsure: 4 Very unsure: 1 Not sure at all: 7	16 out of 23
Theft/Burglary	3/14 (21%)	There is no doubt: 0 Very sure: 1 Quite sure: 2	11/14 (79%)	Quite unsure: 2 Very unsure: 1 Not sure at all: 8	14 out of 23
Physical violence/intimidation	3/15 (20%)	There is no doubt: 0 Very sure: 1 Quite sure: 2	12/15 (80%)	Quite unsure: 3 Very unsure: 2 Not sure at all: 7	15 out of 23

Table 1: Results – Who is behind intimidation? (no. of participants/ no. of participants answering the question) (*participants were asked to only complete rows for which they knew examples)

Graph 2:



Graph 2: Results – Do you think your response(s) to intimidation has/have worked well?