Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS) Data — Pakistan

Economics & Media Cessation

PRESS RELEASE

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS) Data — Pakistan

The Cost of 20 Cigarettes Rose by PKR 115.7 in a Decade, Yet Smokers Are Spending More — And Fewer Adults and Young People Are Getting Help to Quit

Islamabad, September 9th, 2026

Pakistan's tobacco control effort has achieved measurable results over the past decade. Tobacco taxes rose by approximately 208% during fiscal year 2022–23. The inflation-adjusted cost of 20 cigarettes rose from PKR 120.6 in 2014 to PKR 236.3 in 2024. Advertising bans and health warning requirements have been strengthened. Yet the data from Pakistan's own surveillance system tells a more complicated story. Average monthly cigarette spending among smokers rose by PKR 1,589.2 in real terms over the same period — meaning remaining smokers are spending more, not buying less. Fewer adults noticed health warnings on cigarette packages in 2024 than in 2014, despite those warnings being enlarged twice. And the proportion of young smokers aged 13–15 who received professional help to quit fell from 27.0% in 2013 to 15.9% in 2022. Across age groups, the data consistently shows that cessation desire is high — but the infrastructure to support it is not keeping pace.

What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was initiated by Bilal I. Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. As he explains: *"Pakistan does not suffer from a lack of data, but from limited accessibility and weak translation of numbers into understanding. Gallup Pakistan bridges this gap by analyzing large, often under-used datasets — from PSLM and Labour Force Surveys to Economic Surveys and National Census data — so these statistics can meaningfully inform policy and public discourse."*

What data points this current edition covers:

This analysis draws on four datasets from the Global Tobacco Surveillance System (GTSS): the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Pakistan 2024 Fact Sheet, the GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet, and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) Pakistan fact sheets for 2013 and 2022. Adult figures cover persons aged 15 and older from nationally representative household surveys; youth figures cover school-enrolled students aged 13–15 from nationally representative school-based surveys. The 2022 GYTS Enhanced Codebook is additionally referenced for youth health warning response data. Statistical significance of changes between survey years is noted as reported in the source documents.

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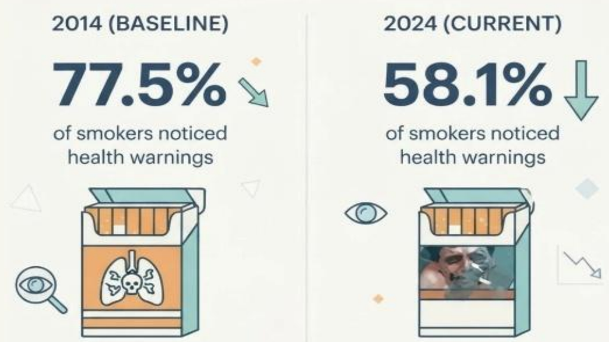
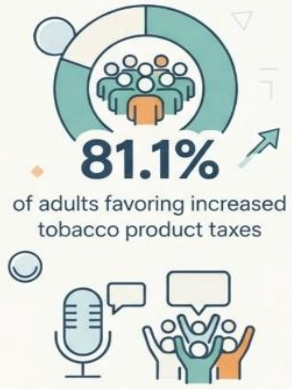
The Cost of 20 Cigarettes Rose by PKR 115.7 in a Decade, Yet Smokers Are Spending More — And Fewer Adults and Young People Are Getting Help to Quit

The inflation-adjusted cost of **20** manufactured cigarettes rose from PKR **120.6** in 2014 to PKR **236.3** in 2024 — a rise of PKR **115.7**. Yet average monthly cigarette expenditure among smokers also rose, from PKR **2,263.7** to PKR **3,852.9** — a rise of PKR **1,589.2** in real terms.

The proportion of smokers who noticed health warnings on cigarette packages fell from **77.5%** in 2014 to **58.1%** in 2024 — a fall of **19.4** percentage points — despite warning coverage being increased from **40%** to **60%** of the pack between 2018 and 2019.



81.1% of adults in 2024 favor increasing taxes on tobacco products. The cost of 100 packs of cigarettes represents **5.0%** of per capita GDP.



64.3% of students aged 13–15 saw tobacco use on television, in videos, or in movies in 2022 — virtually unchanged from 63.3% in 2013 — while anti-tobacco messages in media reached only 50.7% of students.

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GATS Pakistan 2014 and 2024 Fact Sheets; GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet.

Key Findings:

1. The inflation-adjusted cost of 20 manufactured cigarettes rose from PKR 120.6 in 2014 to PKR 236.3 in 2024 — a rise of PKR 115.7. Yet average monthly cigarette expenditure among smokers also rose, from PKR 2,263.7 to PKR 3,852.9 — a rise of PKR 1,589.2 in real terms.
2. 81.1% of adults in 2024 favor increasing taxes on tobacco products. The cost of 100 packs of cigarettes represents 5.0% of per capita GDP.
3. The proportion of smokers who noticed health warnings on cigarette packages fell from 77.5% in 2014 to 58.1% in 2024 — a fall of 19.4 percentage points — despite warning coverage being increased from 40% to 60% of the pack between 2018 and 2019.
4. Among current smokers who noticed health warnings, 20.2% thought about quitting because of them in 2024, down from 29.7% in 2014 — a fall of 9.5 percentage points. Among women smokers, this figure stands at only 9.1%.
5. Any tobacco advertisements, promotions, or sponsorships were noticed by 30.5% of adults in 2024, down from 38.6% in 2014 — a fall of 8.1 percentage points. Tobacco advertising in stores was noticed by 17.8% overall, but by 32.1% of current tobacco users.
6. 64.3% of students aged 13–15 saw tobacco use on television, in videos, or in movies in 2022 — virtually unchanged from 63.3% in 2013 — while anti-tobacco messages in media reached only 50.7% of students.
7. Among adults, only 24.1% of current smokers made a quit attempt in the past 12 months in 2024 — statistically unchanged from 24.7% in 2014 — despite 49.9% having been advised to quit by a healthcare provider.
8. Among ever-daily smokers, only 13.8% had successfully quit by 2024 — 14.9% of men and just 6.8% of women.
9. Among young smokers aged 13–15 in 2022, 70.6% tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months — up from 58.4% in 2013 — yet only 15.9% had ever received help from a programme or professional, down from 27.0% in 2013.
10. 57.2% of current young smokers show signs of nicotine dependence, yet only 15.9% have ever accessed professional cessation support.

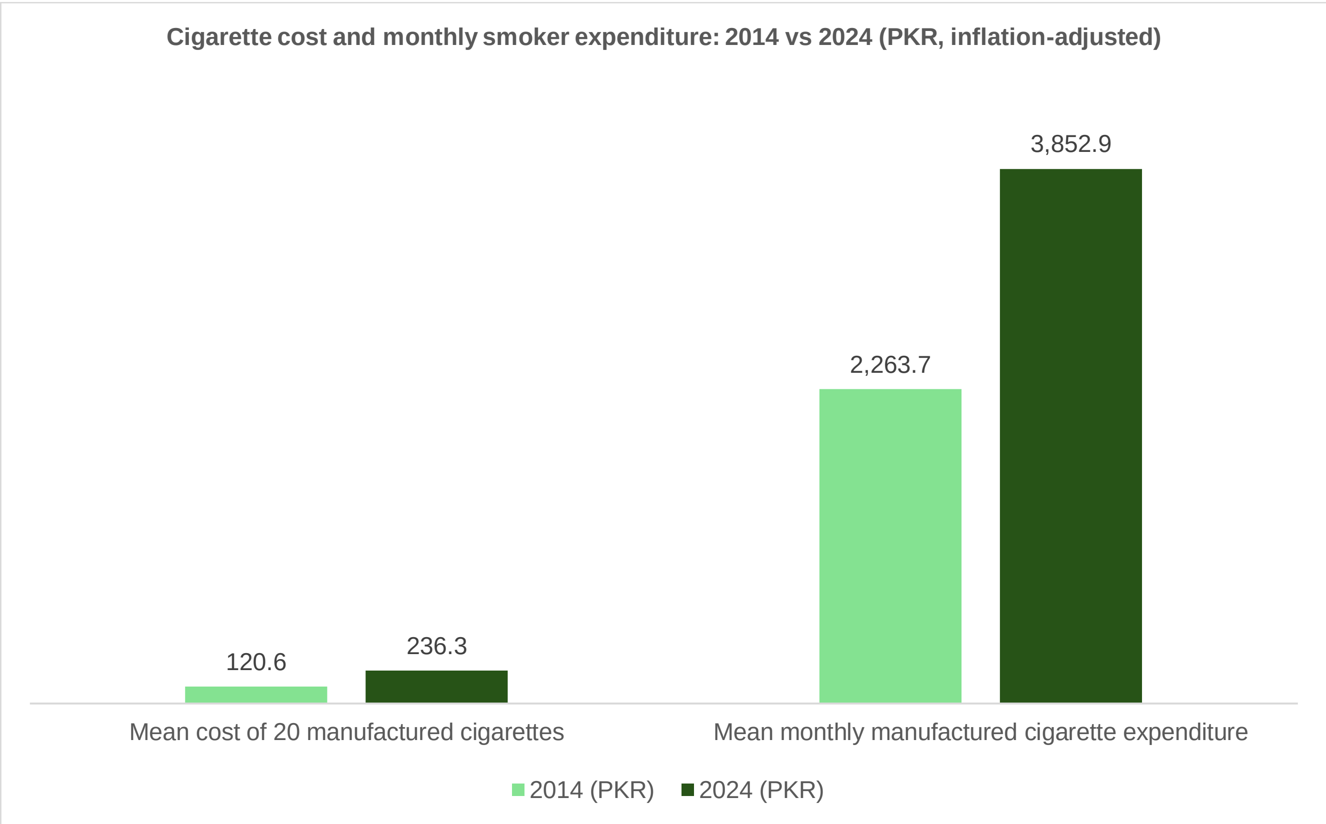
The full dataset is accessible through the Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics dashboard — Pakistan Tobacco Insights — at galluppakistandigitalanalytics.com/pakistan-tobacco-insights/

1. The Price Paradox: Higher Costs, Higher Spending

Tobacco taxes in Pakistan increased by approximately 208% during fiscal year 2022–23 alone, and the inflation-adjusted cost of 20 manufactured cigarettes rose from PKR 120.6 in 2014 to PKR 236.3 in 2024 — a rise of PKR 115.7 over the decade. On the face of it, this represents a significant fiscal tobacco control measure. The expected outcome of sustained price increases is reduced consumption: smokers buy fewer cigarettes, or stop altogether.

The expenditure data does not support this outcome among those who continued smoking. Average monthly cigarette expenditure among smokers rose from PKR 2,263.7 in 2014 to PKR 3,852.9 in 2024 — a rise of PKR 1,589.2 in real, inflation-adjusted terms. This means that remaining smokers in 2024 are spending substantially more on cigarettes than smokers were spending in 2014, not less. Part of this reflects a selection effect: price-sensitive smokers are more likely to have quit, leaving a remaining population more willing to absorb higher costs. But it also means that price increases have not reduced the financial commitment of those who continue to smoke — they have simply redistributed that commitment toward a more price-insensitive group.

Public support for further price increases is high: 81.1% of adults favor increasing taxes on tobacco products, and cigarettes currently cost the equivalent of 5.0% of per capita GDP for 100 packs. This public appetite for stronger fiscal measures is not reflected in a corresponding reduction in consumption among remaining smokers — pointing to the need for complementary demand-reduction measures beyond taxation alone.



***Note**: All figures inflation-adjusted to 2024 prices using IMF World Economic Outlook October 2025 Database. Expenditure figures are among current manufactured cigarette smokers.*

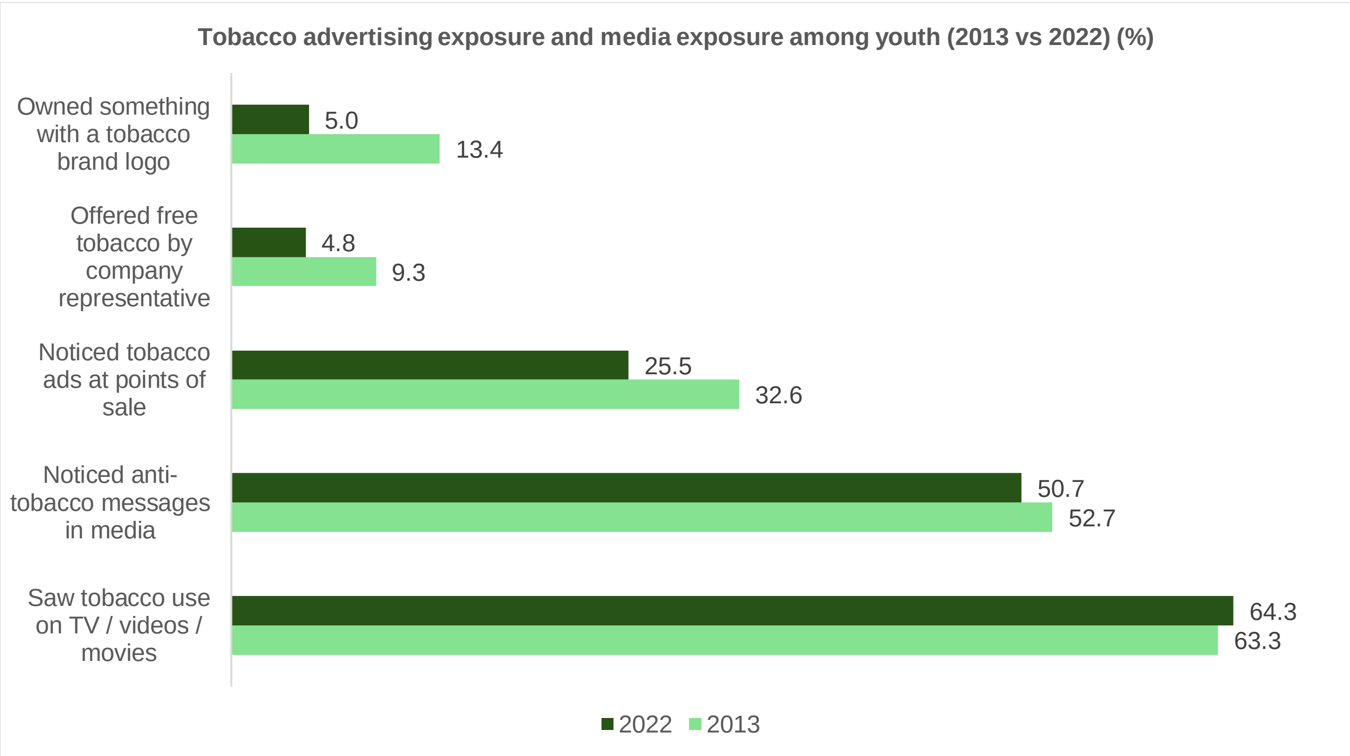
***Source**: GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet; GATS Pakistan 2024 Fact Sheet.*

2. The Media Environment: Advertising Declining, But Tobacco Normalization Persistent

Tobacco advertising exposure among adults has declined. The proportion of adults who noticed any tobacco advertisement, promotion, or sponsorship fell from 38.6% in 2014 to 30.5% in 2024 — a fall of 8.1 percentage points, which is statistically significant. Tobacco advertising in stores specifically fell from 20.4% to 17.8% — a fall of 2.6 percentage points, also significant. These declines are consistent with the Statutory Regulatory Order (S.R.O.) 72(I)/2020, which banned tobacco advertisements, promotions, and sponsorships at points of sale.

However, the 2024 data reveals a gap between the overall advertising exposure rate and the rate among tobacco users themselves. While 17.8% of all adults noticed tobacco advertising in stores, 32.1% of current tobacco users did — a gap of 14.3 percentage points. For any tobacco advertisements, promotions, or sponsorships, the gap is wider: 30.5% overall versus 43.8% among current tobacco users. This pattern is consistent with targeted marketing practices that concentrate advertising exposure among existing users rather than the general population, and it suggests that the regulatory framework — while reducing overall exposure — has not fully closed the channel through which tobacco marketing reaches its primary audience.

Among youth, the media picture is more concerning. In 2022, 64.3% of students aged 13–15 saw tobacco use on television, in videos, or in movies — virtually unchanged from 63.3% in 2013. Over the same period, the proportion of students noticing anti-tobacco messages in media fell slightly from 52.7% to 50.7%. The net result is a media environment in which pro-tobacco content reaches nearly two in three young people and anti-tobacco content reaches only one in two. This imbalance is a structural feature of the youth media environment that has not improved over nine years of tobacco control effort and that operates independently of formal advertising bans, which do not govern depictions of tobacco use in entertainment content.



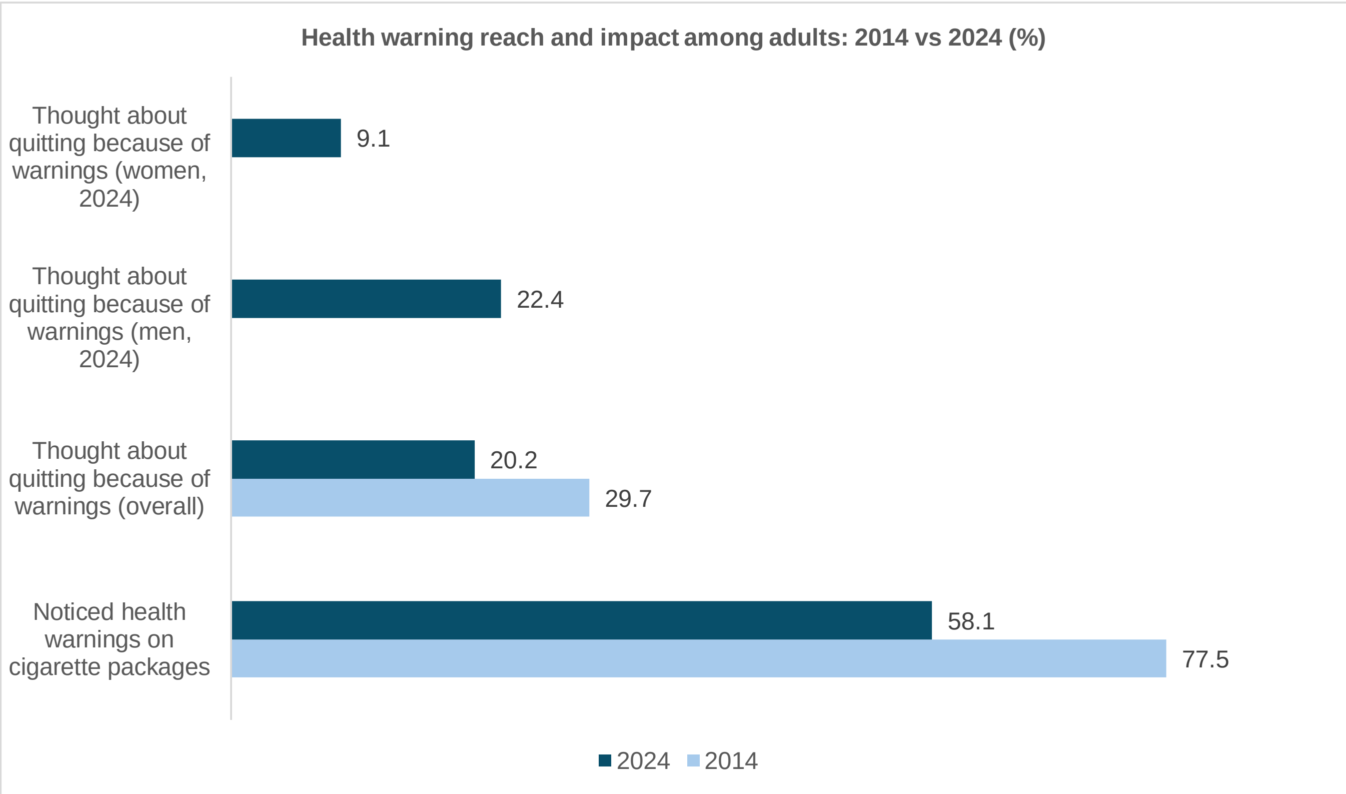
***Source**: GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet; GATS Pakistan 2024 Fact Sheet; GYTS Pakistan 2013 and 2022 Fact Sheets.*

3. Health Warnings: Larger on the Pack, Less Noticed

Pakistan's health warning requirements were strengthened twice during the survey period. Warning coverage was increased from 40% to 50% of the pack in 2018, and from 50% to 60% in 2019, with the addition of the "Smoking causes gangrene" warning line. Despite these measures, the proportion of current smokers who noticed health warnings on cigarette packages fell from 77.5% in 2014 to 58.1% in 2024 — a statistically significant fall of 19.4 percentage points. The warnings are larger; fewer smokers are registering them.

The behavioral impact of warnings has also weakened. Among current smokers, 29.7% thought about quitting because of health warnings in 2014. By 2024, that figure had fallen to 20.2% — a fall of 9.5 percentage points, which is statistically significant. Among women smokers specifically, only 9.1% thought about quitting because of health warnings in 2024. Among young smokers, the 2022 codebook data shows that 59.2% noticed health warnings on packages — and of those who noticed, 26.5% thought about quitting because of them. A further 10.4% of never-smoking students reported that warnings made them think about not starting — indicating that health warnings do reach some non-users, but the pathway from noticing to behavior change remains narrow.

The declining effectiveness of health warnings among adults — despite increased coverage — points to habituation: smokers who see the same warning repeatedly stop registering it as new information. This is a well-documented limitation of static health warning systems. The data does not allow conclusions about the specific design features driving the decline, but the direction of the trend is unambiguous: both the reach and the behavioral impact of health warnings have fallen in a decade during which they were physically enlarged.



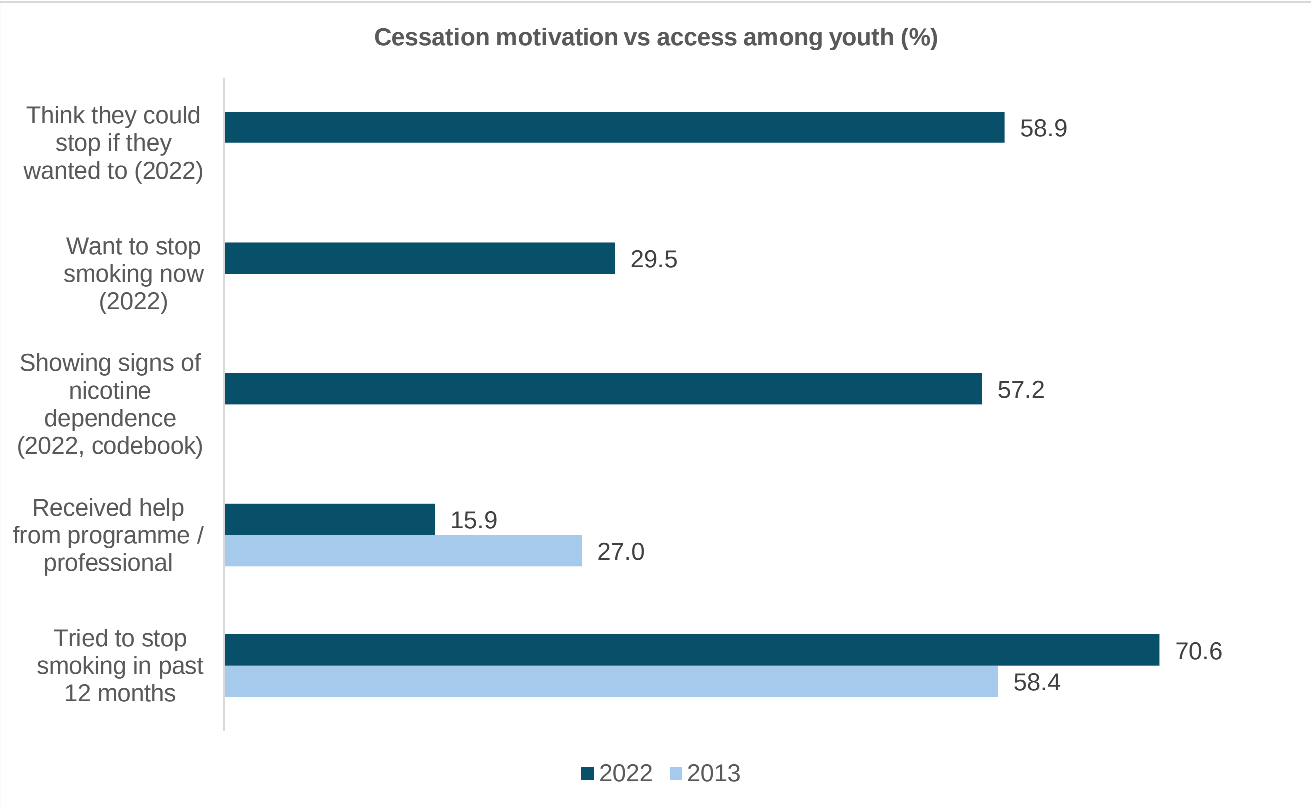
***Source**: GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet; GYTS EMRO 2022 Enhanced Codebook.*

4. The Cessation Gap: Wanting to Quit Is Not Enough

The most consistent finding across adult and youth data is the gap between the desire to quit and the support available to do so. Among adults in 2024, 39.0% of current tobacco smokers planned to quit or were thinking about quitting. Nearly half — 49.9% — who visited a healthcare provider in the past 12 months were advised to quit. Yet only 24.1% made a quit attempt, a figure statistically unchanged from 24.7% in 2014. Advice from a healthcare provider, while reaching nearly half of visiting smokers, is not translating into quit attempts at a meaningfully higher rate than a decade ago.

The stock of successful quitters in the population reinforces this picture. Among all adults who had ever smoked daily, only 13.8% had successfully quit by 2024 — 14.9% of men and 6.8% of women. The female figure is particularly striking: fewer than one in fifteen women who ever smoked daily has permanently stopped. This does not mean cessation is impossible, but it indicates that the conditions enabling permanent cessation — whether access to support, social context, or treatment — are not yet present at scale for most smokers, and are especially limited for women.

Among youth, the cessation gap is sharpest between motivation and support. In 2022, 70.6% of current young smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months — up from 58.4% in 2013, meaning more young smokers are trying to quit than before. At the same time, only 15.9% had ever received help from a programme or professional — down from 27.0% in 2013. More young smokers are trying to quit with less support than nine years ago. Among those currently smoking, 57.2% show signs of nicotine dependence. For a population where more than half of current smokers are chemically dependent and trying to quit unaided, the declining reach of professional cessation support is not a peripheral concern — it is the central structural barrier between motivation and outcome.



Source: *GATS Pakistan 2024 Fact Sheet; GATS Pakistan 2014 & 2024 Comparison Fact Sheet; GYTS Pakistan 2013 and 2022 Fact Sheets; GYTS EMRO 2022 Enhanced Codebook.*

Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

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Contact Details:
Islamabad : +92 51 2655630
Email: isb@gallup.com.pk
www.gallup-international.com