

# Nairobi County, Kenya Shisha Ban Compliance Study

## Health Harms of Shisha

Shisha smoking is a means of consuming tobacco, often flavored, through a waterpipe. As with every other type of smoked tobacco product, shisha use and exposure to secondhand shisha smoke is harmful to health. Shisha tobacco contains nicotine, which is a highly addictive substance, and many carcinogens that have been linked to cancers of the mouth, lung, stomach, and esophagus.<sup>1</sup> Exposure to secondhand shisha smoke is dangerous, as shisha smoke contains the same types of toxic chemicals found in cigarette smoke including, for example, carbon monoxide.<sup>1</sup> In addition, many of the dangerous chemicals present in cigarette smoke are also present in shisha smoke, with some at higher quantities.<sup>1</sup> Shisha smoke also contains ultra-fine particles and respirable particulate matter than have been linked with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.<sup>1</sup> **Smoking shisha is harmful to the health of smokers as well as the health non-smokers who are exposed to shisha smoke.**<sup>1</sup>

## Shisha Use

The Eastern Mediterranean Region (which includes Middle Eastern and North African countries) has the highest prevalence of shisha use in the world.<sup>2</sup> Recently, its popularity has grown among youth.<sup>3</sup> According to Global Youth Tobacco Surveys (GYTS), the highest rates of shisha use among the youth (age 13–15) are in the Middle East and Eastern Europe: Lebanon (36.9%) and Latvia (22.7%).<sup>3</sup> According to the 2013 GYTS Kenya, 6.2% of youth have tried shisha.<sup>4</sup>

## Kenya's Shisha Ban

On December 28, 2017, the Government of Kenya adopted and implemented a comprehensive ban on shisha. *The Public Health (Control of Shisha Smoking) Rules, 2017*, prohibits the import, manufacture, sale, offer of sale, use, advertising, promotion, distribution, and encouraging or



*Despite its growing appeal, smoking shisha is dangerous and harmful to health.*

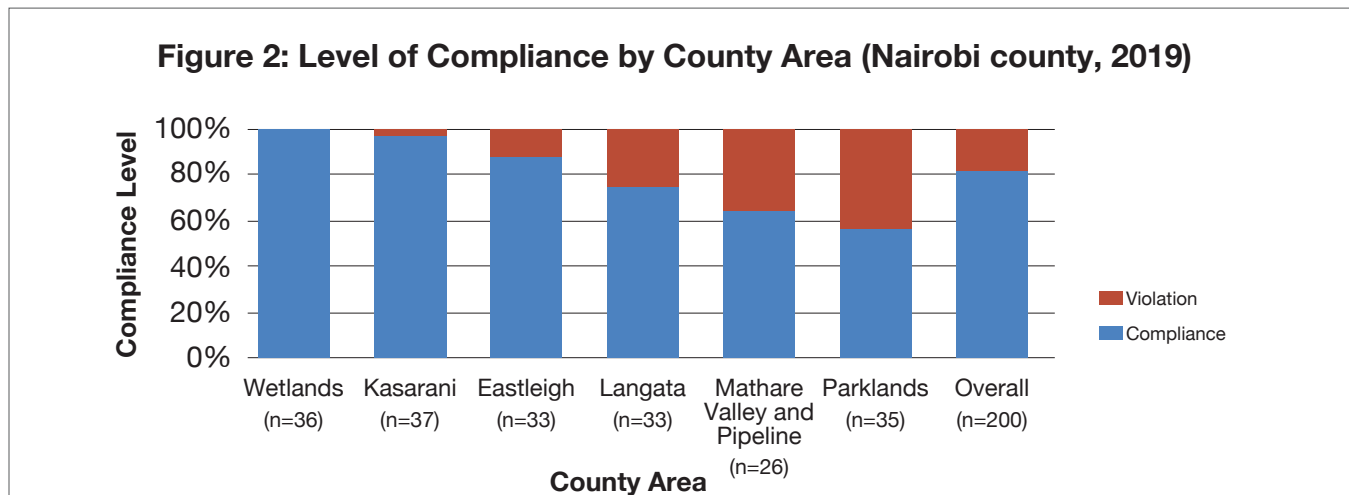
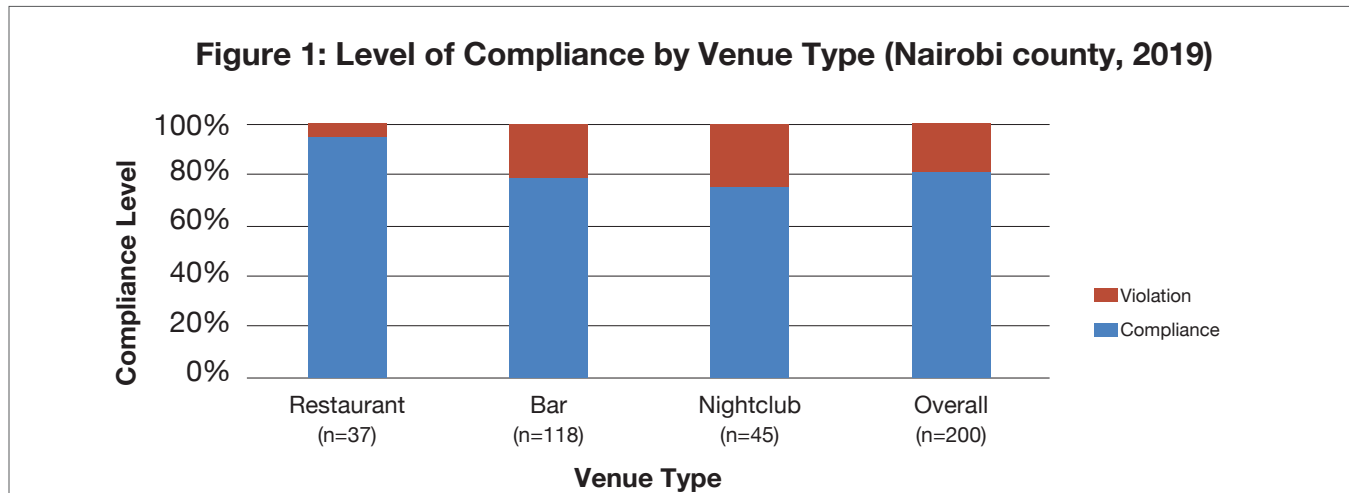
facilitating use of shisha.<sup>5</sup> Kenya is one of only six countries in the WHO African Region that have adopted some type of ban against shisha. In 2008, Mauritius became the first country to adopt a shisha ban, followed by Uganda (2015), Niger and Rwanda (2017), and Ethiopia (2019).<sup>5</sup> Kenya has one of the most comprehensive bans of the six countries.

## Compliance Study

Between May and June 2019, the Kenya Tobacco Control Alliance (KETCA), conducted a study to assess compliance with the shisha ban in public hospitality venues: restaurants, bars and nightclubs. A convenience sample of 200 venues were identified and visited in seven areas across Nairobi county: Eastleigh, Westlands, Parklands, Langata, Kasarani, Mathare Valley, and Pipeline. Data collectors visited venues between 7pm and 2am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings, when shisha use was reportedly most likely to occur in public places. A venue was in compliance with the law if neither shisha smoking nor the presence of shisha equipment were observed.

## Results

Overall, 82% of the hospitality venues visited were found in compliance. However, there was considerable variation among the seven areas. The highest level of compliance was observed in Westlands (100%), whereas Parklands had the lowest level of compliance (57%). Shisha smoking and/or equipment was most often found in nightclubs (24%) and bars (20%), but was rarely observed in restaurants (5%).



## Recommendations

1. Increase surveillance of shisha in public places using a multi-sectoral approach:
  - a. Train the relevant enforcement agency/agencies about the shisha ban;
  - b. Raise awareness of the shisha ban among bar and nightclub owners and managers.
2. Conduct a public education campaign to: 1) inform the public about the health risks of shisha use and secondhand shisha tobacco smoke exposure; and 2) raise awareness about the shisha ban.

### References

1. World Health Organization. Factsheet: Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking and Health. WHO 2015. 2. World Health Organization. Advisory Note: Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions for regulators, 2nd Ed. Geneva, Switzerland, 2018. 3. Jawad M, Lee JT, Millett C. Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking Prevalence and Correlates in 25 Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern European Countries: Cross-Sectional Analysis of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, Volume 18, Issue 4, April 2016. 4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Global Youth Tobacco Survey Kenya 2013. 5. Tobacco Control Laws. Available at [www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation](http://www.tobaccocontrolaws.org/legislation).