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Smoking in top-grossing US movies 2013

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2013

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SUMMARY of FINDINGS

• Exposure to on-screen smoking will recruit 6.4 million smokers from among today's children. Two million of those recruited to smoke by films will die prematurely from tobacco-induced diseases.

• The percentage of youth-rated films with smoking continued a steady decline, with 62 percent of PG-13 films smokefree in 2013 compared to 20 percent in 2002.

• At the same time, tobacco incidents per PG-13 film with smoking are on the rise. In 2012, for the first time, incidents per PG-13 film with smoking were as high as in R-rated films. Incidents climbed 37 percent from 2010 to 2013. The share of PG-13 films with >50 tobacco incidents grew from 17 percent in 2010 to 31 percent in 2012 and 29 percent in 2013

• In 2013, PG-13 films delivered 10.4 billion in-theater tobacco impressions to audiences, 30 percent below 2012 but nearly twice as high as 2010, when smoking in youth-rated films was at its lowest.

• Despite being an early adopter of a policy intended to reduce tobacco content in its youth-rated films, from 2010 to 2013 Time Warner (Warner Bros.) delivered the most youth-rated, in-theater tobacco impressions of any film company (20.2 billion, 25% of all youth-rated impressions). Comcast (Universal) films delivered the least exposure (4.4 billion, 5%).

• By 2013, all sectors of the US film industry showed they can eliminate smoking from their youth-rated films for at least one year. Comcast, Disney, and Time Warner did so in 2010; independents in 2011; Fox, Sony, and Viacom in 2013. But rebounds among the first two groups indicate that a uniform, industry-wide R-rating is needed to permanently and substantially reduce adolescent exposure.

• The period 2002 to 2013 saw a decline in tobacco brand display in top-grossing films. Brand occurrences in 2013 were higher than in any year since 2005, mainly from Altria (Marlboro) and Reynolds American (Camel, Kool, Winston). While extras comprise 45% of on-screen smokers, 99% of brands used on-screen are smoked by film stars or co-stars, a pattern similar to periods when tobacco industry influence on studios and their stars has been extensively documented.

• Since May 2007, when the MPAA claimed it has made smoking a factor in its film ratings, it has allowed 88 percent of youth-rated, top-grossing films with smoking to be released without its small-print "smoking" label. Nearly three-quarters of PG-13 films with >50 tobacco incidents each went unlabeled. The MPAA's labeling scheme misrepresents the true risk from smoking on screen; as well, there is no evidence that labeling films with smoking can reduce adolescent exposure. In contrast, the widely endorsed R-rating for smoking is an evidence-based policy that will avert one million future tobacco deaths among US children alive today.

BACKGROUND

In the last two decades, health researchers in more than a dozen countries have repeatedly confirmed what US tobacco companies have known since the late 1920s: movies sell smoking.[1] In 2012, after reviewing the scientific evidence, the US Surgeon General concluded that exposure to smoking on screen *causes* kids to smoke.[2]

Harm from film smoking | Exposure to on-screen smoking is a major factor in smoking initiation. Based on large-scale US studies of exposure effects,[3] the authors estimate that films will recruit 6.4 million new US smokers from among today's children.[4] Almost 90 percent of those recruited to smoke by on-screen exposure will start smoking before age 18.[5] Two million of them will ultimately die from tobacco-induced diseases such as lung cancer, stroke, and emphysema.[6]

The encouraging news is that reducing kids' exposure to on-screen smoking will reduce kids' risk of smoking. In January 2014, the U.S. Surgeon General reported that R-rating future films with tobacco imagery would reduce teen smoking rates by 18 percent;[7] doing so would avert one million of the 5.6 million projected future tobacco deaths among children alive today.[8]

Widely-endorsed policy solutions | A modernized R-rating is based on the Surgeon General's conclusion that on-screen smoking causes youth smoking. The rating for a film is routinely determined as part of the marketing plan for a film before it is made and film producers already calibrate screenplays, film direction, and editing to achieve the rating that is desired for marketing purposes. An R-rating for smoking would supply the same market incentive as today's R-rating exerts on strong language, grisly violence, and sexualized nudity. Just as producers include these elements in films knowing they will trigger an R-rating, the R-rating for smoking will keep tobacco imagery out of films that media companies make accessible to kids.

At the same time, filmmakers will remain free to include smoking in any film they want.

The proposed R-rating for tobacco would exempt portrayals of actual people who actually smoked, as in a biographical drama or documentary. It would also make an exception for depictions of the real consequences of tobacco use.

Evidence-based policy solutions complementary to the R-rating include:

(1) strong anti-tobacco spots before films with smoking, in any medium

(2) producers' certifying that no one associated with their film production entered into any agreement related to tobacco's on-screen presence;

(3) ending all tobacco brand display on screen;

(4) making media productions with smoking ineligible for public subsidies.

Such policies have been endorsed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the New York State and Los Angeles County health departments, and leading national health and medical organizations.

Hollywood's response | Put on notice by health experts as early as 2003, and ignoring their own health consultants' advice in 2007, the major Hollywood studios or their parent companies have responded to the problem of on-screen smoking in modest ways:

- At their own expense, all MPAA-member companies add State of California-produced anti-tobacco spots to their youth-rated DVDs with smoking, distributed in the United States;

- Between 2005 and 2007, three MPAA-member companies — Disney, Warner Bros. and Universal — published corporate policies related to tobacco depictions. In 2012 and 2013, the three other MPAA-member companies — Fox, Sony and Paramount — followed.

- Most of these policies prohibit tobacco product placement deals with the companies themselves; none extend that stipulation to, or require certification of no payoffs from, the production companies contracted to make the films that the studios develop, finance, promote, and distribute.

- Subjective language allows any youth-rated film to justify inclusion of tobacco imagery.* None prohibits tobacco brand display in films they produce or distribute.

- Since 2007, the MPAA has added small-print "smoking" labels to 12 percent of all youth-rated films with smoking.

What is the US film industry really doing? | Since 2002, the University of California, San Francisco has collaborated with Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! (TUTD), a project of Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails, to analyze data that TUTD methodically collects on tobacco incidents in films (shots of tobacco use or implied use within each scene) since 1991. TUTD also reports tobacco brand appearances and identifies who uses tobacco in films.

This report analyzes data from the 1,714 top-grossing films in the domestic market from 2002 to 2013. Top-grossing films are those that ranked among the top ten films in box office gross in any week of their first-run theatrical release. With particular attention to changes since 2010, when smoking in youth-rated (G/PG/PG-

* For example, the policy of Paramount (Viacom) says: "Paramount discourages the depiction of smoking or tobacco in youth-rated films. Paramount will communicate this policy to its filmmakers, but also will take into account the creative vision of the filmmakers recognizing that there may be situations where a filmmaker believes that the depiction of smoking or tobacco is important to a film."

13) films hit its lowest level, this analysis addresses four questions, by film rating and by the company responsible for producing and distributing these films:

1) What percentage of films feature tobacco imagery? (Fig 1)

2) How many tobacco incidents are included in films? (Figs 2-4)

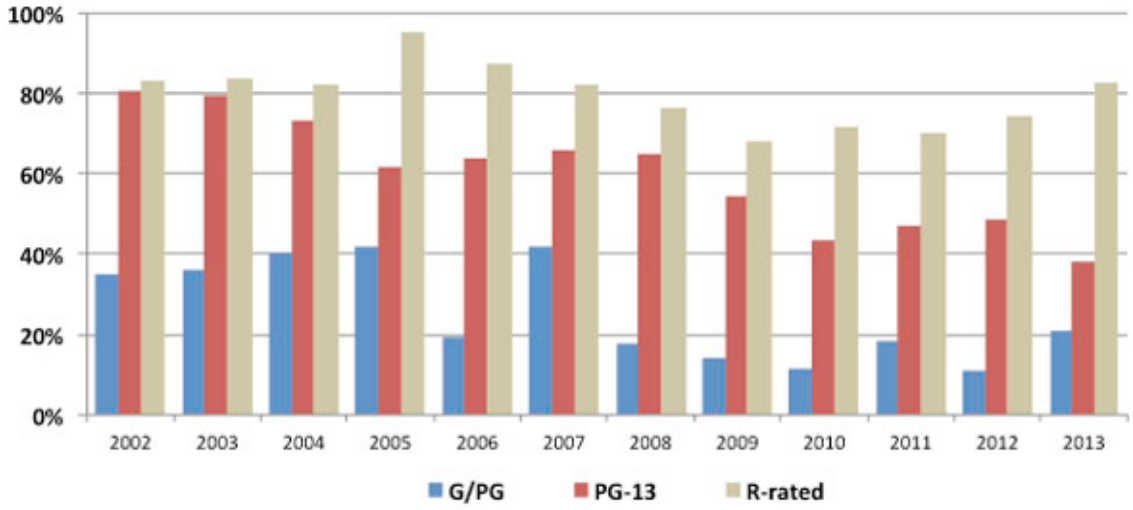
3) How much exposure do moviegoers receive? (Fig 5, Table 1)

4) Do some companies perform differently than others? (Figs 6-7, Table 2)

This report also presents data on topics related to on-screen smoking: tobacco brand display in films from 2002 to 2013 (Figs 8-10), and Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) implementation of "smoking" labels in some film ratings (Tables 3-4).

1 | What percentage of films feature tobacco imagery?

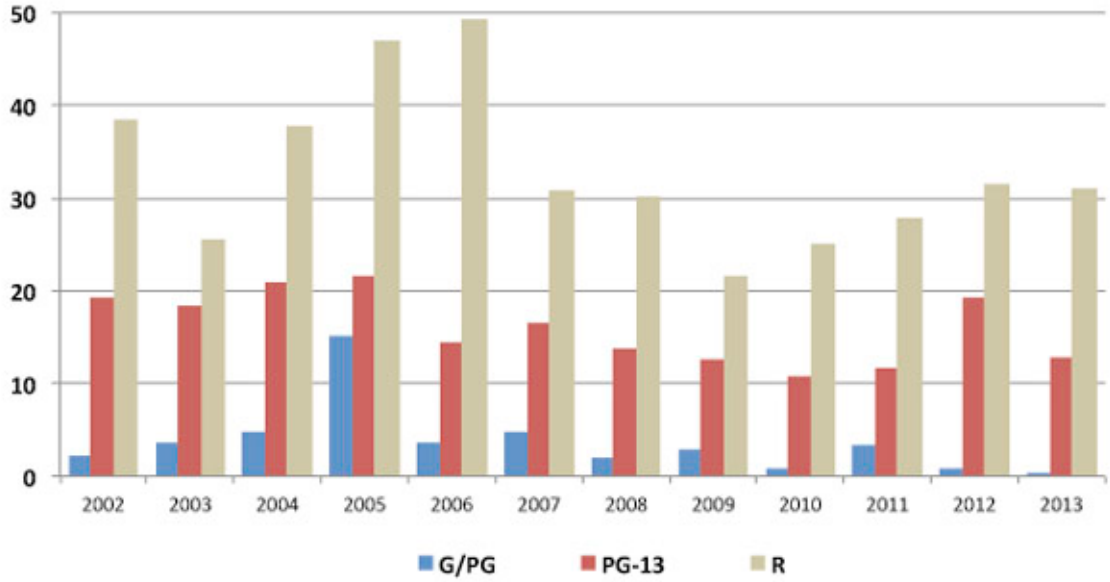
Fig 1 | Share of films with tobacco imagery, by MPAA rating (2002-2013)



Observation: From 2002 to 2013, the share of G/PG and PG-13 films with tobacco imagery fell by half (68%/34%). However, nearly 40 percent of PG-13 films (38%, 23/60) still featured tobacco imagery in 2013.

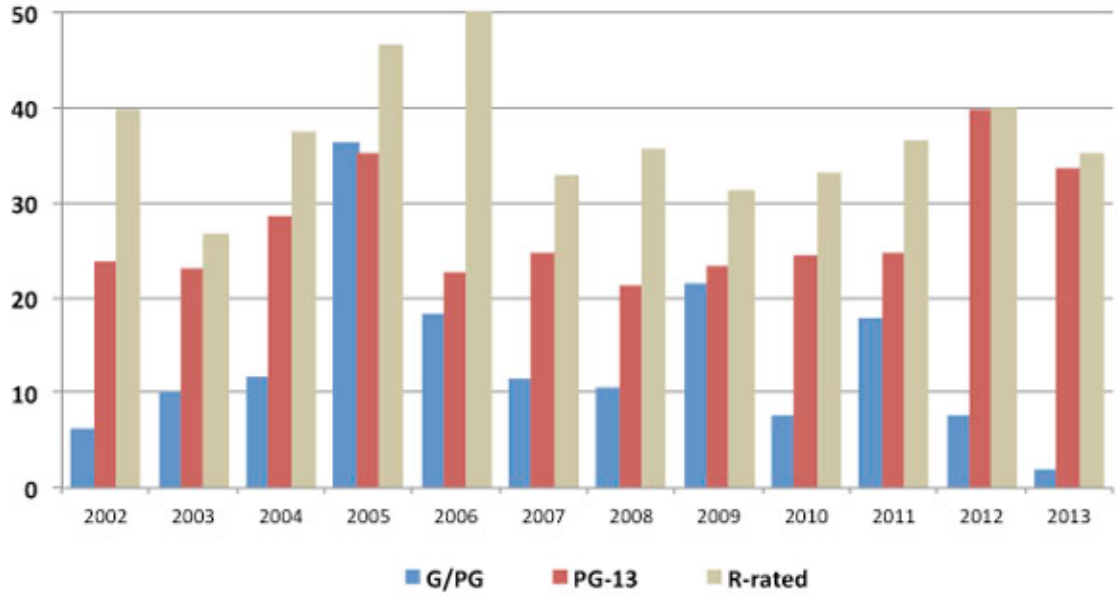
2 | How many tobacco incidents are included in films?

Fig 2 | Tobacco incidents per film (2002-2013)



Observation: To account for fluctuations in the numbers of films released annually, tobacco incidents are divided by the total number of films (regardless of whether they include smoking or not) in each rating class. From 2002 to 2013, G/PG films comprised about one-fifth of top-grossing films; smoking in G/PG films in 2012 and 2013 was very low, almost disappearing by 2013. PG-13 films comprise 45 percent of top-grossing films. Tobacco incidents per PG-13 film dropped 33 percent, from 2012 to 2013, but remained higher than in any year from 2009 to 2011.

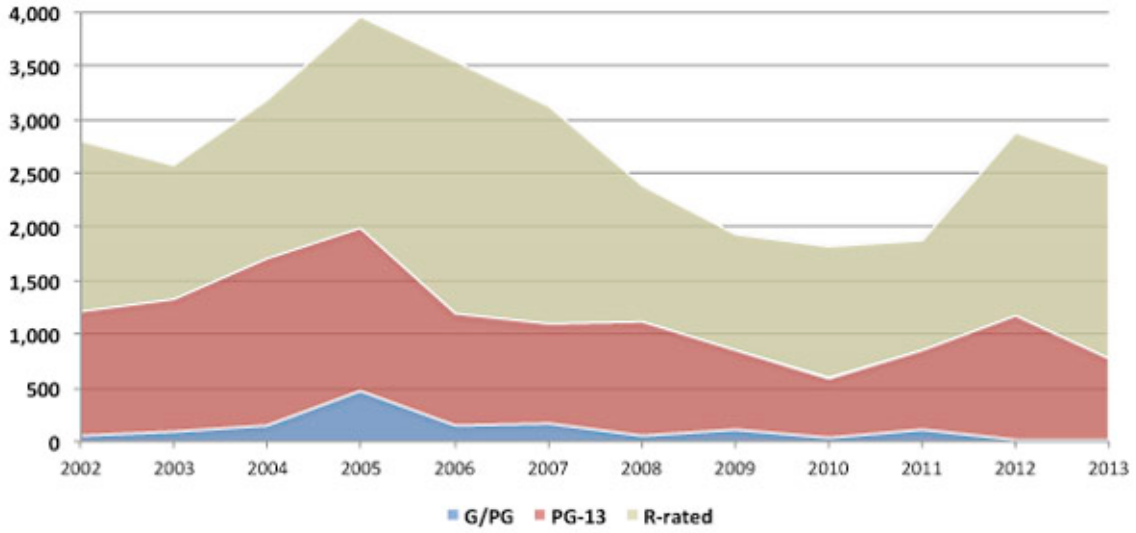
Fig 3 | Tobacco incidents per film with any smoking (2002-2013)



Observation: To track the annual average amount of smoking in films that feature any smoking, tobacco incidents are divided by the total number of films with smoking in each rating class. While the share of PG-13 films with any smoking has steadily declined (Fig 1) tobacco incidents per PG-13 film with smoking have increased. In 2012 the average PG-13 film with smoking included as many tobacco incidents as the average R-rated film (40) and nearly as many (34 in PG-13 and 35 in R) in 2013 .

The share of PG-13 movies with smoking with >50 tobacco incidents also increased. In 2010, these films comprised 17 percent (4/23) of all PG-13 films with smoking; in 2012 and 2013, they comprised 31 percent (9/29) and 29 percent (6/21), respectively.

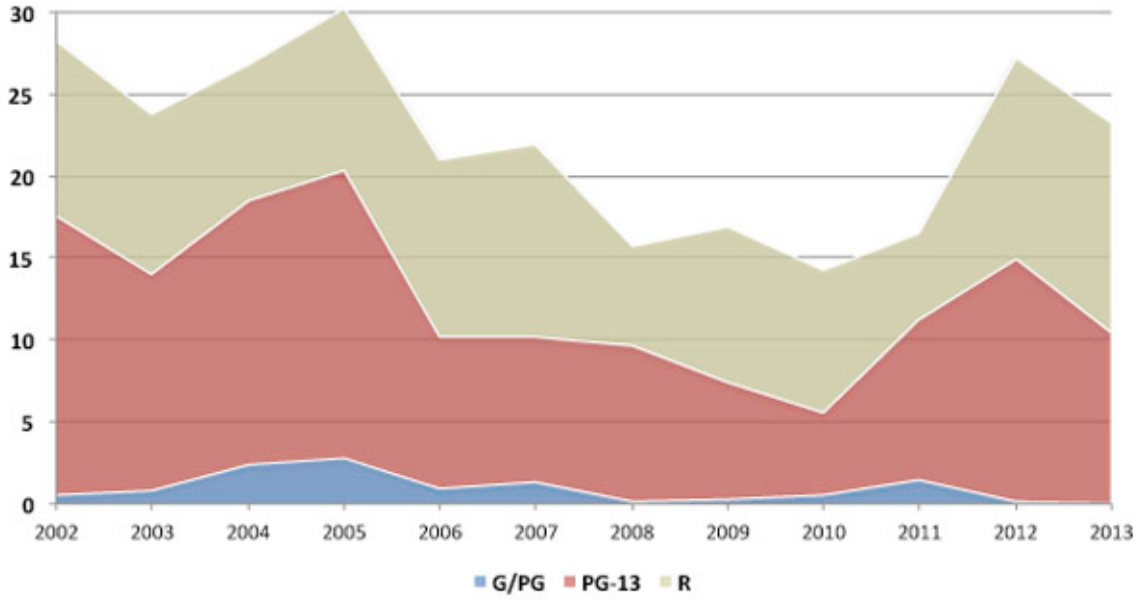
Fig 4 | Total tobacco incidents (2002-2013)



Observation: From 2012 to 2013, total tobacco incidents in youth-rated, top-grossing films decreased 34 percent (1,178/782). In 2013, youth-rated films contained 37 percent of all tobacco incidents, below the 2002-2013 average of 43 percent.

3 | How much exposure to moviegoers receive?

Fig 5 | Billions of in-theater tobacco impressions (2002-2013)



Observation: Tobacco impressions multiply tobacco incidents in a film by the number of viewings (paid admissions).* While R-rated movies averaged twice as many tobacco incidents as PG-13 films from 2002 to 2013 (Fig 2, 32/16), PG-13 movies delivered somewhat more tobacco impressions (139/127 billion) than R-rated films. This is because there were 1.3 times as many PG-13 films as R-rated films (775/575) over those years and the audience for a PG-13 film averaged 1.7 times as large (10.6/6.4 million).

From 2010 to 2013, theater audiences received nearly half (49%, 40/81 billion) of their tobacco impressions from PG-13 films; R-rated films delivered 48 percent (39/81 billion); G/PG films made up the difference. In 2013, youth-rated films delivered 30 percent fewer (14.8/10.4 billion) impressions than in 2012, but nearly twice as many tobacco impressions as they did in 2010 (10.4/5.5 billion).

A handful of companies account for top-grossing films released each year. Some of the companies are more prolific than others, but the amount of tobacco exposure their youth-rated films deliver to theater audiences also depends on the amount of smoking in each film released, the amount of advertising budgeted for the film, and the size of the audience this promotion attracts. Table 1 lists the major film companies that control the MPAA and, as a group, the independent companies whose youth-rated films were top-grossing from 2010 to 2013.

Table 1 | Youth-rated tobacco impressions delivered by MPAA-member and Independent film companies (2010-2013)†

Company	Impressions (in millions)	Percent
Comcast (Universal)	4,404	5%
Disney	8,477	10%
Fox	9,584	12%
Sony	14,617	18%
Time Warner (Warner Bros.)	20,159	25%
Viacom (Paramount)	13,439	16%
Independents	11,016	13%
TOTAL	81,697	100%

Observation: Overall, from 2010 to 2013, films from MPAA-member companies delivered 91 percent (38/42 billion) of all youth-rated tobacco impressions. Independent films delivered 9 percent (3.9/42 billion).

* Only in-theater impressions can be calculated because in-home viewership data for individual films is not publicly available. UK data suggest that films are seen seven times more often at home than in theaters.
† Revised April 16, 2015

4 | Do some companies perform differently than others?

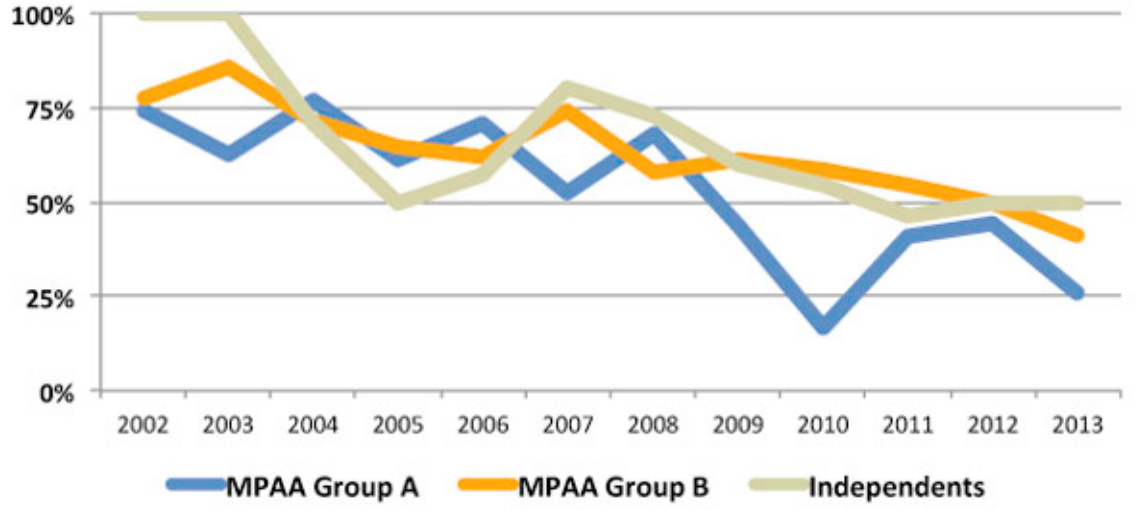
Have company policies on tobacco depictions adopted by individual companies made a substantial difference in their practices? Does the timing of these policies' adoption make a difference?

The six so-called "major" studios control their trade group, the Motion Picture Association of America, and the rating system it co-manages with theater owners. Between 2004 and 2007, three of the major studios — Comcast (Universal), Disney, and Time Warner (Warner Bros.) — published individual corporate policies on tobacco depictions in their movies; we will refer to this group of early-adopter companies as "MPAA Group A." Between 2012 and 2013, the three other major studios — Fox, Sony, and Viacom (Paramount) — published similar corporate policies; we will call these recent-adopter companies "MPAA Group B."

So-called "independent" film companies such as Lionsgate, Relativity, and Weinstein do not belong to the MPAA. Together, independents are taking an increasing share of the US film market. Each year since 2006, independents have released more top-grossing films than any major studio; in 2011 and 2012, for the first time, their collective audiences were larger than any major studio's. No independent is known to have published a corporate policy on tobacco depictions; we will call this sector without published policies "Independents."

Figure 6 shows that MPAA Group A, MPAA Group B, and Independents traced essentially the same path in reducing the share of their PG-13 films that have tobacco imagery until 2009 and 2010, when MPAA Group A had less smoking in their films with smoking than the others. Given the fact that it takes several years to make a film, this result suggested that the individual company policies were having an effect. However, MPAA Group A rebounded in 2011 and closely matched the performance of the other two groups in 2012 and 2013.

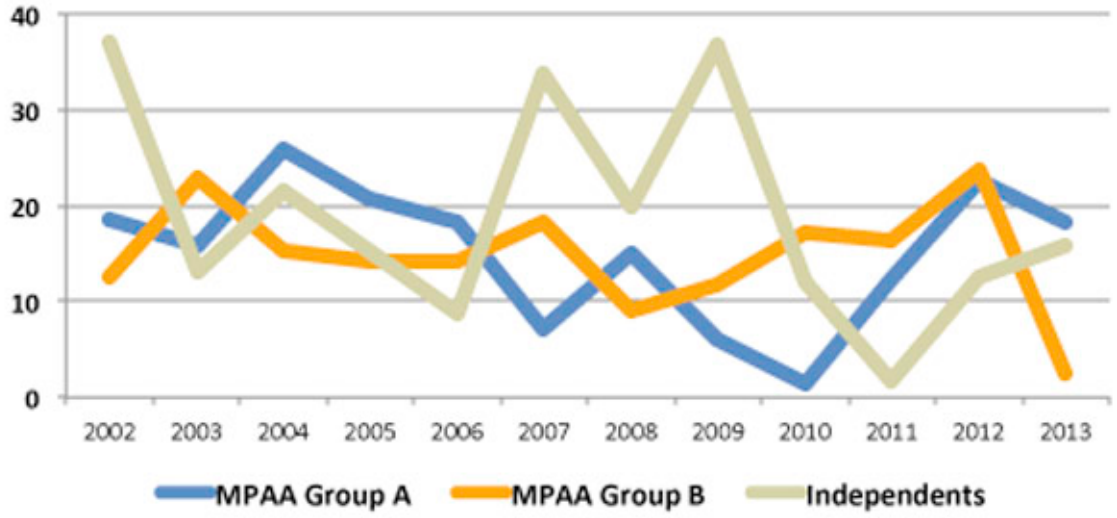
Fig 6 | Percent of PG-13 films with tobacco, by policy status (2002-2013)



Observation: From 2002 to 2013, all groups of companies reduced the share of their PG-13 films with tobacco from 75 percent or more to 50 percent or less. MPAA Group A companies, early adopters of studio policies on smoking in the movies, made substantial reductions by 2010 that other companies did not match, but rebounds quickly followed:

- Disney (policy adopted: 2004) made all of its PG-13 films smokefree in 2008, 2009, and 2010 before its rate rebounded to 60 percent smoking (3/5 PG-13 films) in 2011.
- Time Warner (2005) reduced its share to 45 percent (5/11) by 2009 and 22 percent (2/9) in 2010 before rebounding to 44 percent (4/9) in 2012.
- Comcast (2007), reduced its share to 50 percent (5/10) by 2009 and 17 percent (1/6) in 2010, rebounding to 50 percent (3/6) in 2012.

Fig 7 | Tobacco incidents per PG-13 film, by policy status (2002-2013)



Observation: By 2013, all groups of film companies — early policy adopters (MPAA Group A), later adopters (MPAA Group B), and non-adopters (Independents) — had shown it was feasible to eliminate nearly all smoking from their PG-13 films, the films that adolescents see most, for at least one year.

- MPAA Group A averaged 1.3 tobacco incidents per PG-13 film in 2010.
- MPAA Group B, which published policies in 2012-13, averaged 2.4 incidents per PG-13 film in 2013.
- Independents, which have no published policies, averaged 1.7 incidents per PG-13 film in 2011.

For MPAA Group A and Independents, substantial rebounds followed immediately. (Group B's persistence is unknown, because their minimum is in 2013, the last year for which we have data.) (Table 2)

Table 2 | Tobacco incidents per PG-13 film, by company (2010-2013)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2010-13
MPAA Group A					
Comcast	3.2	7.8	6.5	7.6	+ 139%
Disney	0.0	29.6	34.0	11.2	+ Infinite
Time Warner	0.4	8.8	29.4	28.1	+ 6220%
MPAA Group B					
Fox	12.0	29.0	41.0	0.5	- 96%
Sony	16.6	13.8	17.8	3.7	- 78%
Viacom	28.8	8.3	18.4	3.0	- 90%
Independents	12.0	1.7	12.5	15.8	+ 31%
TOTAL	10.7	11.6	19.3	12.9	+ 21%

Observation: Comcast, Disney, and Time Warner came close to eliminating smoking in their PG-13 films in 2010; Independents in 2011; and Fox, Sony, and Viacom in 2013. Despite substantial improvements by those three companies in 2013, the average amount of smoking in all PG-13 films was 21 percent higher in 2013 than it was in 2010.

The rebounds in tobacco incidents per PG-13 film add to the evidence that individual company policies cannot be relied upon to protect young audiences on a continuing basis.

TOBACCO BRAND DISPLAY

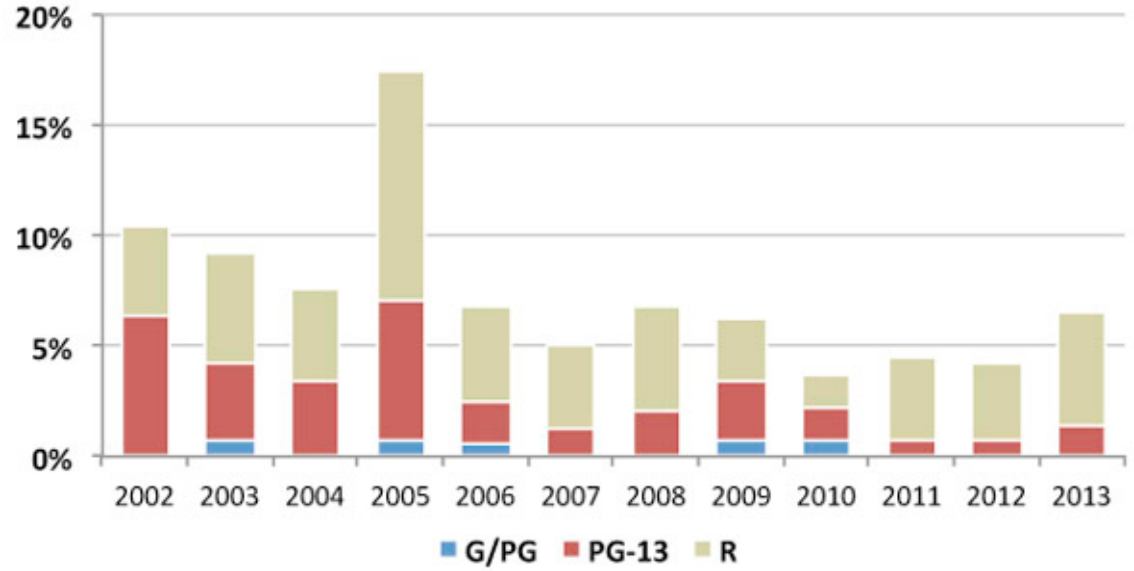
Exposure to on-screen smoking promotes young people to smoke whether the film displays a specific tobacco brand or not. At the same time, tobacco companies have competed for decades to cross-promote and place their brands in Hollywood films.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, a period in which all brand placement was banned by the forerunner of the Motion Picture Association of America, tobacco companies bartered with major studios to use their contract stars in national cigarette advertising campaigns. These campaigns intentionally linked Lucky Strike, Chesterfield, and other cigarette brands with the actors' smoking on screen.[9]

After tobacco ads were barred from TV and radio in 1970, and Hollywood lifted prohibitions on product placement, tobacco companies launched systematic, covert brand placement campaigns with film studios and producers, touching many youth-rated films.[10] Tobacco industry documents show that US tobacco companies continued to retain product placement agents until at least 1994. From the late 1980s onward, it appears that tobacco companies failed to report their product

placement-related expenses to the Federal Trade Commission, as required.[11] To this day, tobacco brands persist on screen (Fig 8).

Fig 8 | Films that showed tobacco brands (2002-2013)

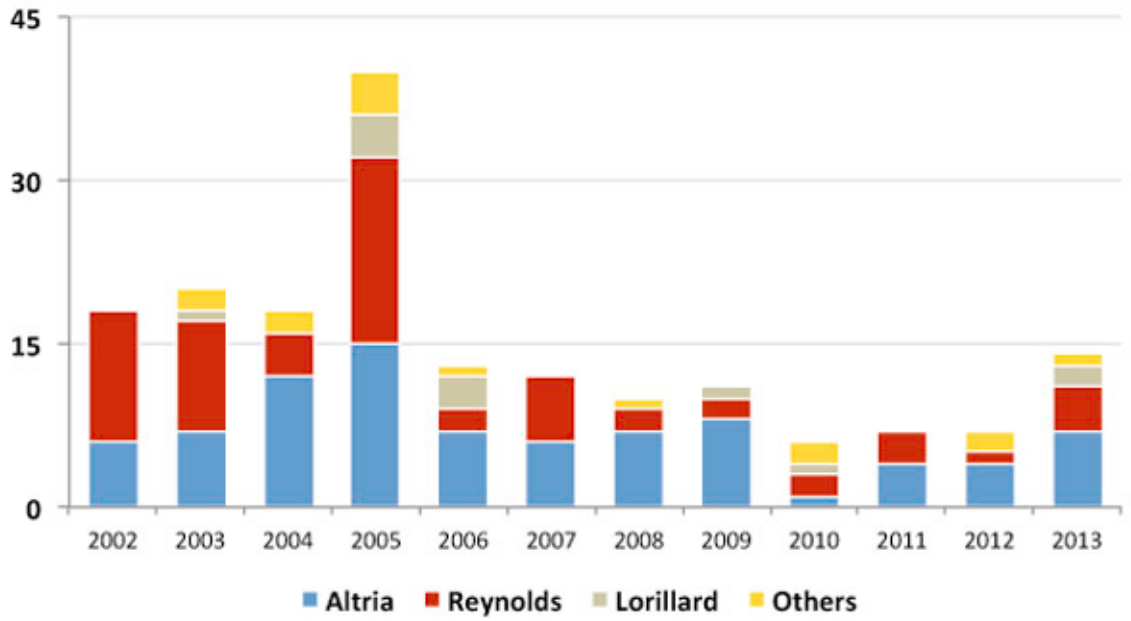


Observation: From 2002 to 2013, 7 percent of top-grossing films (126/1,714) showed tobacco brands. From 2010 to 2013, 5 percent (26/549) of all top-grossing films displayed tobacco brands:

- <1 percent (1/17) of G/PG films
- 3 percent (6/237) of PG-13 films
- 10 percent (19/198) of R-rated films.

From 2002 to 2013, 40 percent (50/126) of films showing tobacco brands were youth-rated. The share of films with brands that were youth-rated increased from 17 percent (1/6) in 2012 to 29 percent (2/9) in 2013.

Fig 9 | Tobacco brands in films, by tobacco company (2002-2013)



Observation: Tobacco brands or brand collateral appeared (or the brand was mentioned) in 126 top-grossing films from 2002 to 2013. In 90 percent (114/126) of these films, tobacco use was also shown.

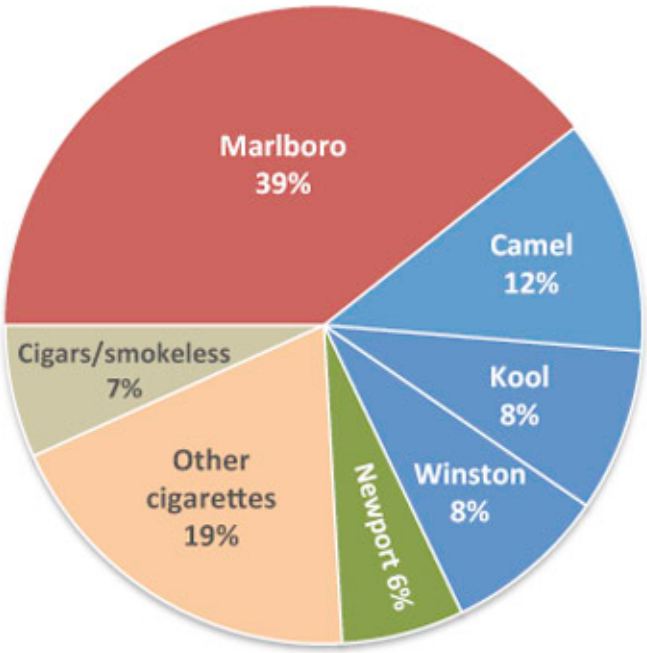
Nearly 90 percent (87%, 109/126) of films that showed tobacco brands either identified a single brand (86/126) or multiple brands from the same tobacco company (23/126).

In all, 31 different tobacco brands appeared at least 193 times. Four tobacco companies own the trademarks for 84 percent (26/31) of the brands: Altria (9 brands), Reynolds American (10 brands), and Lorillard (3 brands).*

Except for an eruption of brand occurrences in 2005 (n=40), brands in films steadily declined from 2003 until 2010. Brand occurrences in 2013 were more than double the total in 2010 (6/14) and were higher than in any year since 2005.

* The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement prohibits domestic tobacco companies from paying to place their brands in films. It should be noted that Marlboro, Camel, and Newport brands are licensed to tobacco companies outside the United States, as are other US-trademarked cigarette brands identified in recent top-grossing films. If they do not already do so, US tobacco trademark holders might reasonably be expected to stipulate that their brand licensees not engage in product placement in any market.

Fig 10 | Tobacco brands' share of films with brands (2002-2013)



Observation: Five cigarette brands from three tobacco companies comprised 73 percent of brands identified in top-grossing films from 2002 to 2013. Marlboro (Altria) occurred 39 percent of the time (76/193), followed by three Reynolds American brands — Camel, Kool, Winston — with 28 percent of occurrences (55/193). Lorillard's Newport brand was identified 6 percent of the time (12/193).

Other Altria brands (including Chesterfield, Doral, L&M, and Parliament); Reynolds American brands (including Lucky Strike, Pall Mall, and American Spirit); and Lorillard brands (Old Gold and Kent) made up most of the other cigarette brand occurrences (17%, 33/193).

Swedish Match (two brands) and Imperial (one brand) account for the cigar brands seen and heard in these films; the same brands, when manufactured in Cuba, are more difficult to obtain.

The actors' role | In nearly half (48%, 55/114) of the films showing both tobacco use and tobacco brands, actors were shown actually using a brand. Of 173 occurrences of tobacco brands in these films, actors were associated with 43 percent (74/173).

Altria brands comprised more than half (53%, 39/74) of the brand occurrences involving actors and Reynolds American brands comprised 34 percent (25/74). Marlboro was the brand most often associated with an actor on screen (46%, 34/74) followed by Camel (12%, 9/74). Marlboro and Camel are the brands

most heavily advertised in other media and are the most popular brands among new, young smokers.[12]

From 2002 to 2013, 61 actors were associated with tobacco brands on screen. In the top-grossing films surveyed, the actors most often associated with tobacco brands were the late Seymour Phillip Hoffman (4 brand occurrences); Antonio Banderas (3); Keira Knightley (3); Jude Law (3); and Brett Cullen, Johnny Depp, Terrence Howard, and Rosie Perez (2 each).

Stars and credited non-star actors accounted for 55% of all smoking roles in top-grossing films from 2002 to 2013 (stars: 21%, 784/3,713; credited non-stars: 34%, 1,255/3,713). Uncredited extras accounted for 45 percent (1,674/3,713). In contrast, stars and credited non-stars accounted for 99 percent (73/74) of the smoking roles that involved an actual tobacco brand. Only one tobacco brand was associated with an uncredited extra.*

For whatever reason, tobacco brands were associated with well-known actors, much as they were when tobacco companies' paid popular actors to participate in national cigarette advertising campaigns from the 1920s into the 1950s.[13]

MPAA "SMOKING" DESCRIPTORS

In a non-binding public statement on May 10, 2007, the Motion Picture Association of America declared that tobacco would henceforth be considered a "factor" in rating all films. The statement continued:

> Additionally, when a film's rating is affected by the depiction of smoking, that rating will now include phrases such as 'glamorized smoking' or 'pervasive smoking.' This ensures specific information is front and center for parents as they make decisions for their kids.[14]

The MPAA's accompanying letter to the National Association of Attorneys General claimed it had "updated and clarified the motion picture rating rules [so that] the rating board is now considering smoking as a factor along side [sic] other factors."[15] However, the latest edition of the *Classification and Rating Rules* of the MPAA and the National Association of Theatre Owners does not name "smoking" or "tobacco" as a factor in ratings.† The rules do name "adult activities (*i.e.*, activities that adults, but not minors, may engage in legally)" as a rating factor:

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* The only top-grossing film from 2002 to 2013 in which an uncredited extra was associated with a tobacco brand is *Escape Plan* (2013, Lionsgate, R-rated: Marlboro).

† The MPAA, which closely supervises the advertising of films before and after they are rated, mentions "tobacco products" in its *Advertising Administration Rules* (2014). Under these rules, restrictions on media and venue apply if the advertising for a film shows:

> An R-rated motion picture may include adult themes, *adult activities*, hard language, intense or persistent violence, sexually-oriented nudity, drug use or other elements, so that parents are counseled to take this rating very seriously. [Sec. 3(c)(4); emphasis added][16]

From May 2007 to 2013, no top-grossing film with an R-rating has cited "smoking" as a reason in its rating descriptor. Rather, "smoking" has appeared as a descriptor in ratings of some PG and PG-13 films with tobacco imagery. Whether any PG-rated film carrying a "smoking" descriptor has been elevated from a G-rating because of the smoking, or if any PG-13 film has been elevated from a PG rating is unconfirmed. There is no evidence that small-print descriptors alone reduce adolescent exposure to on-screen tobacco imagery.

Deployment of "smoking" labels, in the absence of an R-rating for smoking, contradicts recommendations that the MPAA itself commissioned from the Harvard School of Public Health prior to the MPAA's May 2007 announcement. After studying the issue, the dean of the school told the major studios:

> Take substantive and effective action to eliminate the depiction of tobacco smoking from films accessible to children and youths, and take leadership and credit for doing so. Don't ignore the issue or put a fig leaf on it, like a descriptor on DVDs, that would be the equivalent of the tobacco industry cynically putting smoking warnings on cigarette packages.[17]

In the month that followed the MPAA's May 2007 announcement, leading national health and medical organizations, along with US Senators Richard Durbin, Ted Kennedy, and Frank Lautenberg, denounced the MPAA's ratings announcement as "highly subjective" and "not enough."[18]

Analysis of the 247 youth-rated, top-grossing films released from May 2007 to 2013 indicates that the assignment of "smoking" labels grossly understates the persistence of and risk from smoking in youth-rated films (Table 3).

> Children or adolescents in adult situations or engaging in illegal activity, such as minors using alcohol, drugs or *tobacco products*, or adults influencing or enticing minors with alcohol, drugs or *tobacco products*; and depictions of minors in sexual situations. [Appendix A, emphasis added]

(Source: Motion Picture Association of America. Advertising administration rules. Effective date January 1, 2014. Available at www.filmratings.com/downloads/advertising_handbook.pdf)

Table 3.1 | Youth-rated films with "smoking" labels, by tobacco incident range (May 2007-2013)

Tobacco incident range	Number of films	Films with labels	Percent
1 - 9	116	4	3%
10 - 29	75	9	12%
30 - 49	14	6	43%
50 - 99	25	6	24%
100+	17	5	29%
TOTALS	247	30	12%

Table 3.2 | Tobacco incidents in youth-rated films with "smoking" labels, by tobacco incident range (May 2007-2013)

Tobacco incident range	Tobacco incidents	In films with labels	Percent
1 - 9	419	21	1%
10 - 29	1,303	160	12%
30 - 49	507	224	44%
50 - 99	1,696	441	26%
100+	2,144	672	31%
TOTALS	6,069	1,518	25%

Table 3.3 | Tobacco impressions from youth-rated films with "smoking" labels, by tobacco incident range (May 2007-2013**)**

Tobacco incident range	Tobacco impressions (billions)	From films with labels	Percent
1 - 9	3.2	0.2	5%
10 - 29	14.6	3.2	22%
30 - 49	4.9	1.3	27%
50 - 99	17.4	3.6	21%
100+	24.4	3.8	16%
TOTALS	64.5	12.0	19%

Observation: Since announcing its optional labeling scheme in May 2007, the MPAA has assigned "smoking" descriptors to 12 percent of youth-rated, top-grossing films with smoking. The films that the MPAA has labeled accounted for 25 percent of all youth-rated tobacco incidents and 17 percent of all tobacco impressions from youth-rated films.

From the consumers' point of view, 88 percent of all youth-rated, top-grossing films with smoking were *not* labeled, including nearly three-quarters (31/42) of the youth-rated films with >50 tobacco incidents. In all, the MPAA neglected to label films delivering 52 billion tobacco impressions to domestic audiences, 81 percent of the total in-theater exposure from youth-rated films from May 2007 to 2013.

The film company most likely to have a "smoking" label applied to its youth-rated films with smoking was non-MPAA member The Weinstein Company (33%, 3/9), followed by Disney (18%, 2/11). (Table 4)

Table 4 | MPAA "smoking" labels, by company (May 2007-2013)

Company	Youth-rated films with tobacco	% of all such films	Films with smoking labels	% of all the films with labels	% of company's youth-rated films with tobacco
Comcast	27	11%	2	7%	7%
Disney	11	5%	2	7%	18%
Fox	33	13%	5	17%	15%
Sony	47	19%	5	17%	11%
Time Warner	38	15%	3	10%	8%
Viacom	22	9%	3	10%	14%
Independents (12)	71	28%	10	33%	14%
Lionsgate	34	14%	5	15%	15%
Weinstein	9	4%	3	10%	33%
TOTAL	247	100%	30	100%	12%

There is no research evidence that labeling a film for smoking will reduce adolescent exposure to smoking on screen. (In contrast, awarding an R rating for smoking would likely lead producers to simply leave the smoking out in order to secure a youth rating — usually PG-13.) The device of labeling one out of eight youth-rated films with smoking may lead the public to believe mistakenly that it can rely on the MPAA's ratings to inform parents about the presence of and risk from smoking on screen. In contrast, the 2014 Surgeon General report stated that an R rating for smoking would reduce youth smoking by 18%.[19]

CONCLUSION

The US film industry has known for more than a decade that their films with smoking put young audiences at substantial risk of addiction, disease and premature death. So far, the industry's response has been temporizing and inadequate. Progress has been moderate at best and has frequently reversed. As the share of PG-13 films with smoking has declined, the amount of smoking in PG-13 films with any smoking has increased. Updating the existing rating system to R-rate tobacco imagery is the only evidence-based method to set a transparent,

enforceable, uniform standard that protects young people from toxic tobacco exposure on screen.

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