Smoking cessation medications and cigarettes in Guatemala pharmacies

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Background
Guatemala, a party to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), is obliged to promote the wider availability of smoking cessation treatment and to restrict tobacco advertising. Pharmacies are fundamental in providing smoking cessation medications but also might increase the availability of cigarettes.

Purpose
To assess availability of cessation medications and cigarettes and their corresponding advertising in Guatemala pharmacies. Methods In Guatemala City a representative sample was selected from a list of registered pharmacies classified by type (non-profit, chain, independent). In addition, all pharmacies in the neighboring town of Antigua were included for comparison. Trained surveyors used a checklist to characterize each pharmacy with respect to availability and advertising of cessation medications and cigarettes.

Results
A total of 505 pharmacies were evaluated. Cessation medications were available in 115 (22.8%), while cigarettes were available in 29 (5.7%) pharmacies. When available, medications were advertised in 1.7% (2) and cigarettes in 72.4% (21) of pharmacies. Chain pharmacies were significantly more likely to sell cessation medications and cigarettes, and to advertise cigarettes than were non-profit and independent pharmacies.

Conclusion
Most pharmacies in Guatemala do not stock cessation medications or cigarettes. Cigarette advertising was more prevalent than advertising for cessation medications. FCTC provisions have not been implemented in Guatemala pharmacies.