

## A Qualitative Study Exploring Facilitators and Barriers to Implementing Smoke-free Homes in Georgia

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Georgia is a middle-income country with high male smoking rates and recently implemented public smoke-free policies. In contexts like Georgia, smoke-free homes (SFHs) can play crucial roles in reducing secondhand smoke exposure and use prevalence.

**Objectives:** This study examined barriers and facilitators to SFHs among Georgian adults.

**Methods:** In February-March 2024, focus groups were conducted separately with smoking and nonsmoking adults in 2 rural communities (n=25; Mage=42.92, 52.0% female, 48.0% married). Data were examined using thematic analysis.

**Results:** Smoking participants (n=13) were primarily (84.6%) male; nonsmoking participants (n=12) were primarily (91.7%) female. Despite 72.2% reporting complete SFH restrictions, several exceptions and implementation challenges were noted. Smoking was commonly allowed for certain people (e.g., guests) or rooms/spaces (e.g., kitchen, balcony). Salient challenges included prevalent male smoking, difficulty changing behavior (smoking in general and smoking in the home), noncompliance, and accommodating guests, older extended family members, and important traditions and celebrations. However, important SFH motives were the health of non-smokers, particularly children, and serving as good role models for children.

**Conclusions:** Effective SFH interventions for Georgian households must address specific characteristics (e.g., high male smoking rates, hospitality, accommodating important traditions) and may serve as models for other countries with similar characteristics.

**Keywords:** Secondhand smoke exposure; Smoke-free homes; Tobacco.



SUPPLEMENTARY TABLE 1. Themes, subthemes, and representative quotes by country and smoking status

	Participants who smoke	Participants who do not smoke
<b>The magnitude of the problem of secondhand smoke</b>		
Big problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As far as I know, passive smoking is more harmful [than smoking];</li> <li>It is undoubtedly very harmful to health;</li> <li>This is quite serious, especially if children are in the family. Under no circumstances should you bring it home;</li> <li>Our community] is suitable for many people as a resort zone; the air is excellent, but some people, especially children, suffer respiratory failure. I used to blame the humid climate. However, one day, when my husband and I decided that we should no longer smoke at home, no matter which room we were in, that health problem reduced in children. I realized that I was making a huge mistake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When a family member smokes in the house, it is terrible, and secondhand smoke harms other family members;</li> <li>I think it is a problem for everyone. Well, the problem is in a way that harms himself, and others do not like it either to inhale the smoke.</li> </ul>
<b>Who smokes in the home</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I smoke cigarettes, nothing else;</li> <li>There are two of us smokers at home, and we never smoke inside;</li> <li>I am the only smoker, and I go out...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kids did not know that their dad was a smoker; he would go out to smoke, and they were surprised once they saw him. We have a big family, and my grandmother smokes. In summer, she would go out with the kids. My small kid saw it and imitated her. He put a cigarette in his mouth, and I got angry. Mom and Dad do not smoke, and he imitates his grandmother.</li> </ul>
<b>Smoke-free home rules</b>		
There are no rules; allowed everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All my friends smoke, and we smoke at home;</li> <li>Almost everyone around me is a smoker, and I sometimes allow them to smoke at home. No one gets harmed because everyone smokes;</li> <li>I am against smoking at home, but I live alone, and sometimes I smoke inside, sometimes outside.</li> </ul>	
Complete ban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoking is strictly forbidden at our place. Anyone who comes knows it, including guests. In summer, friends and smokers prefer to sit outside. In winter, they go out to smoke. It is crystal clear;</li> <li>They do not smoke inside my house in any way. I have children at home, and they cannot smoke. I try not to smoke, either.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even if a guest comes, [husband] does not smoke at home. They do not smoke at home, and we will not let them either;</li> <li>No one smokes at my place. All guests go outside.</li> <li>If guests come to our house, they must go to the balcony. No one smokes in the house.</li> </ul>
Partial restrictions		
Rules/exceptions for certain people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can smoke inside alone;</li> <li>You cannot tell a guest. We can tell each other if it is a friend, but you cannot tell a stranger not to smoke at home;</li> <li>When a guest arrives, it seems incorrect to tell him to go out to smoke; he smokes inside. To me, it is the biggest problem – a guest needs to know the rules in the house. Without warning, he should get up and go outside to smoke. When I am a guest, I go out to smoke.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My husband smokes; he goes on the balcony. When there is a guest, they would go out in the entrance hall at the stairwell;</li> <li>It is awkward to ask guests to go out to smoke. Sometimes, they smoke inside without asking permission. If he asks, we tell him to go out;</li> <li>I cannot tell a guest to go out and smoke there.</li> </ul>
Not allowed around children present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sure, if a child is at home, no smoking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is partially prohibited because there are children in the house.</li> </ul>
Allowed only in certain places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When we are in another room without family members, I allow them to smoke in the room at home;</li> <li>I have to have my space. My rights must also be protected. At home, I created a space where I could smoke. It should be that way everywhere;</li> <li>If the kitchen is a gathering place, they can smoke where people gather;</li> <li>In specific places with a window where the room can be aired.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have partially tamed him. He is too lazy to go outside, so he smokes in the toilet, and smoke enters the house;</li> <li>We have guests smoking by the window, and my husband also smokes by the window. Most of the smoke goes outside, but it also comes inside.</li> </ul>
Porches, patios, balconies, gardens, stairs, garages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is appropriate to smoke in the yard, but where there is a child, it is not desirable to smoke there;</li> <li>They may not smoke in our house but can smoke in the garage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have a private house. It is convenient to smoke. My husband smokes on the balcony but is so close that half the smoke gets inside....</li> <li>Nobody smokes at my place. If smokers come, they go on the balcony;</li> <li>Guests, too, smoke in the yard.</li> </ul>
Allowed when the weather is terrible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very rarely, when it is too cold, I may smoke in the kitchen. I open the window when everybody is asleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In winter, yes ... right;</li> <li>When the weather is nice, [husband] goes out. When it is cold, he gets lazy.</li> </ul>
<b>Discussions about smoking/SHS in the home or creating SFH</b>		
Who initiates conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I thought they should not stay in the room to smoke but go outside because children are running around. I suggested we go outside to smoke, and they reacted positively, so they went out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I ask him if he cannot quit, at least to try to smoke less;</li> <li>I ask them, if they do not, that is probably their problem, but I ask: 'Could you please go outside to smoke and then come back?'</li> </ul>

TABLE 2. Themes, subthemes, and representative quotes by country and smoking status (continued)

	Participants who smoke	Participants who do not smoke
<b>Discussions about smoking/SHS in the home or creating SFH (continued)</b>		
Results of discussion		
Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We also have a guesthouse, and we warn everyone. However, it is useless with Georgians. They still smoke inside, and an uncomfortable smell remains when they leave.</li> </ul>	
Arguments/tension		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We just had a conversation this morning. I want to talk about it, but it might cause trouble in the family, so I refrain.</li> </ul>
<b>Motives for creating an SFH</b>		
Health of non-smokers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are responsible to our children and the elderly. I have an old mom, children, and wife, and I know that smoking is harmful. I think it is mainly for family members. For me, that is the reason: not to harm the health of my children and family members;</li> <li>Most smokers know that they are harming people around them and go outside to smoke.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When a family member smokes in the house, it is terrible, and secondhand smoke harms other family members.</li> </ul>
Health of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was a period when I smoked at home, and it affected my children's health, which I discovered later on;</li> <li>I agree; we have to save future generations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In our case, when our third child was born, [husband] quit smoking inside. Before that, he would smoke inside. With a small child in the home, he changed.</li> </ul>
Set a good example for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have children: my boy is 14. I tell him, 'Do not smoke, do it this way, play that way.' He asks me to be an example and not smoke. 'You tell me what to do, so do it yourself.' I feel ashamed;</li> <li>Even if I wanted to, I would not smoke at home. My children would be angry. There is no way I smoke at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When grandchildren are at our place, [husband] smokes outside. Children help in that case, so he does not smoke inside the house;</li> <li>If you do not respect yourself, you have to care about children, and he might restrain himself for kids.</li> </ul>
Keep the house clean/smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I cannot tolerate the smell. Cigarette smoke has a different smell;</li> <li>I wash curtains and brush everything. It is very harmful to health, and the smell.... That is very bad;</li> <li>I am a smoker, but I would not say I like the unpleasant smell of places where people smoke. It is full of smell, all the more impressive for a non-smoker. Moreover, ashtrays full of cigarette butts are disgusting;</li> <li>It is an unbearable smell. My children are already students and are not at home at all, and I could not harm anyone, but the smell is awful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The toilets are mainly terrible because there is smoke there. The worst thing is that I am allergic and cannot stand it; in the end, the smell comes out;</li> <li>- Imagine the smoke mixed with food is terrible. After a dinner of 20 people, when I would come home, there was a terrible smell....</li> </ul>
<b>Sociopolitical facilitators</b>		
Public smoke-free policies prompted smoke-free homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think new regulations immensely helped closed spaces restaurants. Even though I am a smoker, I would not say I like the smell in spaces where smoking is allowed. Walls keep the smell; there is nothing that helps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Georgia, when it got banned and fines started, they no longer smoke in gathering places.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges to implementing a smoke-free home</b>		
Smokers do not want rules or to quit smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almost every day: Why don't you quit? It is enough; you smoke too much, etc. I am used to it. I am trying, but so far, no success;</li> <li>In our homes and families, I always go out to smoke wherever I go. We all do that way. We could not stop smoking, however.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I had conversations about quitting tobacco with my mother-in-law, who smokes. We have an extraordinary relationship and have discussed this topic a lot. She has smoked since she was 15. Whatever information you bring, she does not quit. Health problems have been identified, and then we avoid talking so as not to cause trouble in the family. We discuss this topic all the time, but it does not work.</li> </ul>
Smokers are likely to ignore the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For some, no agreement matters. Some smoke in bed; nothing can help there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This problem is obvious. We have a ban, but they do not pay attention to it;</li> <li>This is noticeable even in our building. When we enter our room next to those who smoke, there are bans, but they still smoke.</li> </ul>
Culturally specific challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Georgian traditional feast does not go well with leaving, returning, smoking, or getting inside, so toasts are missed.</li> </ul>	