

# Passive Smoking: Children Protest

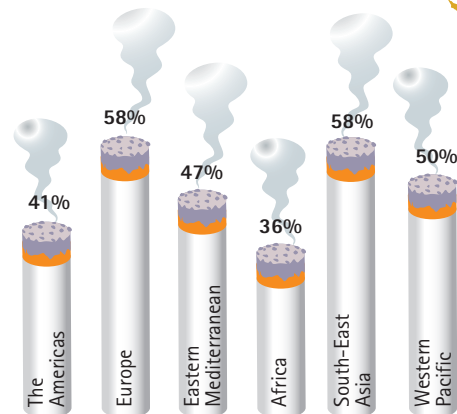
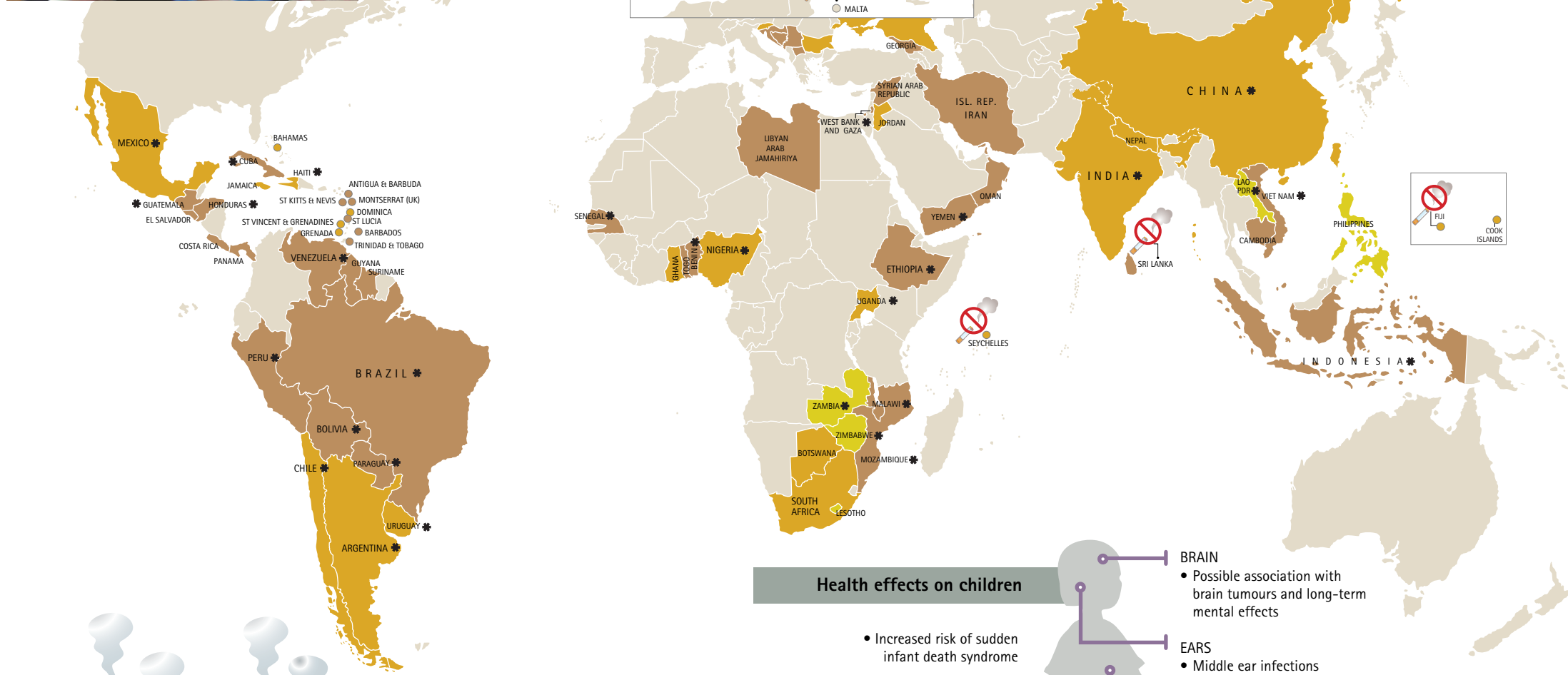
"Child abuse doesn't have to mean broken bones and black and blue marks. Young growing tissues are far more vulnerable to carcinogens than those of adults. Knowingly subjecting children to respiratory tract disease is child abuse."  
 Dr. William Cahan, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, USA, 1993



The burning of tobacco produces a cocktail of dangerous chemicals. Almost half the world's children (about 700 million) are exposed to smoke from burning tobacco and exhaled smoke at home. Environmental tobacco smoke has particularly harmful effects on foetuses and young children, causing respiratory infections and other illness.

Children do not choose to inhale a mix of over 4000 chemicals, including carcinogens. In fact, the majority of children worldwide urge people to stop smoking in public places. At home, it is the responsibility of parents to protect their children and stop smoking. Media campaigns, combined with smoking restrictions in public places and the workplace, can help make homes tobacco-free. Other tobacco control measures include taxation, bans on tobacco advertising and health warnings on cigarette packs. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, an international treaty instigated by WHO, is currently in the process of signature and ratification.

Children whose parents and friends smoke are more likely to become addicted themselves; 250 million children alive today will be killed by tobacco if current consumption trends continue.



## Health effects on children

- BRAIN**
  - Possible association with brain tumours and long-term mental effects
- EARS**
  - Middle ear infections (chronic otitis media)
- HEART**
  - Increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome
  - Adverse effect on oxygen uptake and arteries
- BLOOD**
  - Possible association with lymphoma
- BURNS**
  - From fires caused by tobacco
- LUNGS**
  - Respiratory diseases (including bronchitis and pneumonia)
  - Asthma induction and exacerbation
  - Chronic respiratory symptoms (wheezing, coughing, breathlessness)
  - Decreased lung function