

Smoke-free policies in outdoor areas. A potential cancer prevention strategy in Spain.

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Introduction

Exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) can increase the overall cancer risk for individuals who have never smoked. Smoke-free policies aim to protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of SHS, aligning with the guidelines set by the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC). The smoke-free policies implemented in 2005 in Spain have positively impacted smoking habits and its deleterious outcomes; nonetheless, the current restrictions on smoking in outdoor public places are still limited.

Aim

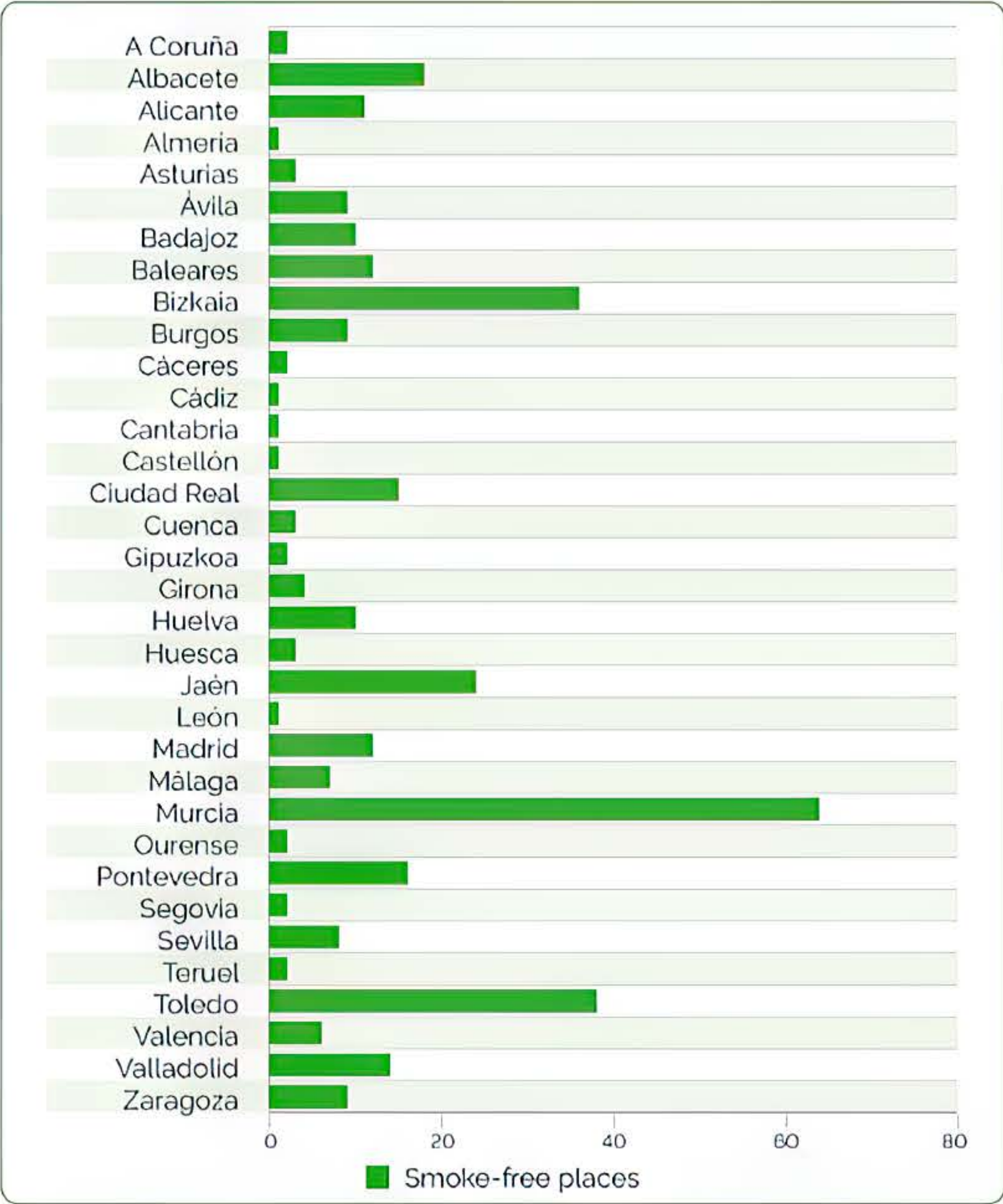
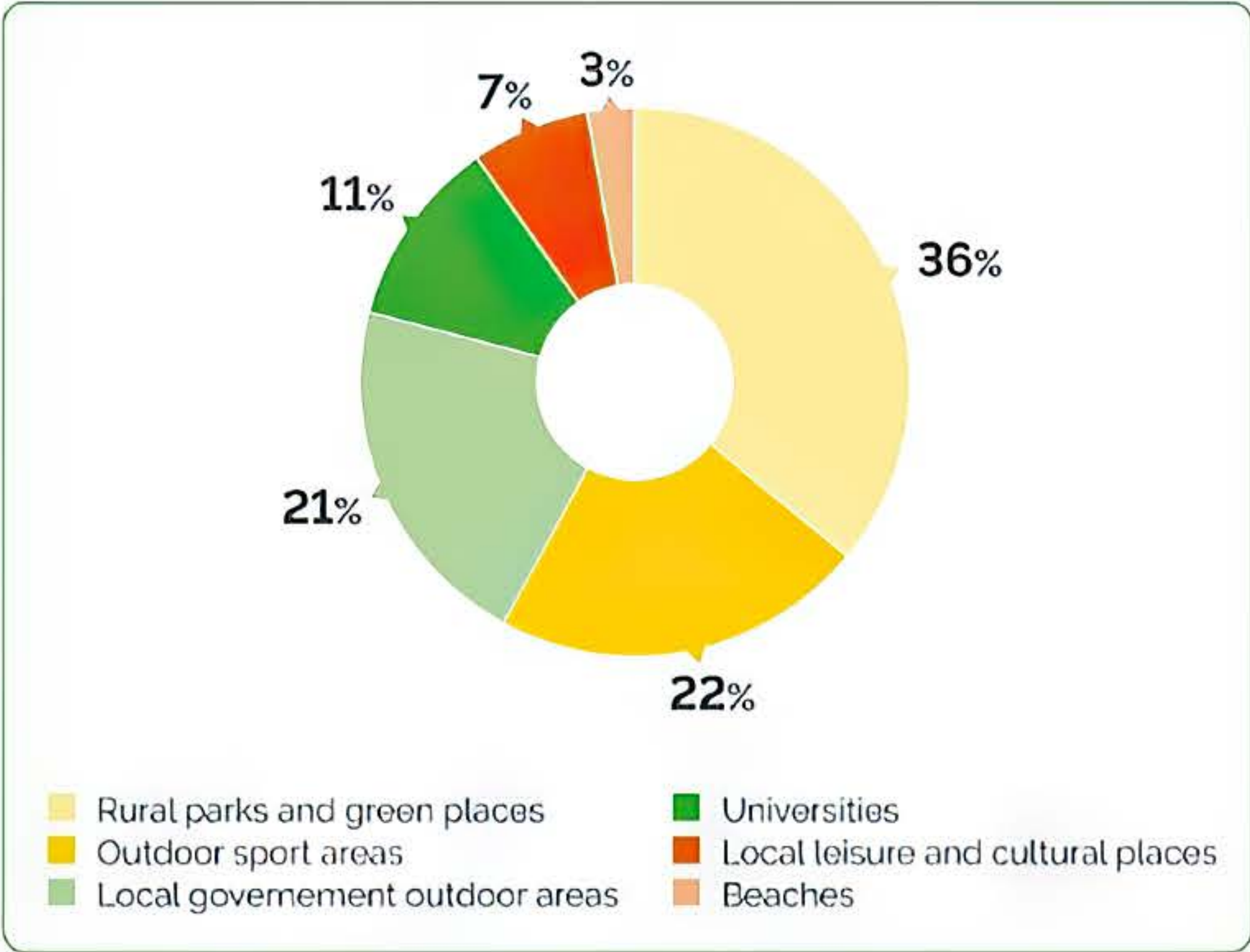
To promote smoke-free environments in outdoor areas not included in the current national smoke-free policies.

Methods

Between 2021 and 2024, the Spanish Association Against Cancer (SAAC) launched a program to enhance smoking prohibitions in outdoor areas. To do so, we first identified public places highly visited by smokers and populations highly vulnerable to SHS, such as children and young people. Collaboration agreements were established with city halls, public organizations, and institutions interested in the project. These agreements involved advertising prohibiting smoking and vaping, smoke-free events, and training programs for the personnel responsible for enforcing these recommendations.

Results

Since the program's implementation, 359 collaboration agreements have been signed with 235 city halls throughout the 52 provinces of Spain. Most agreements (n=129, 36%) were launched to free urban and rural parks and green places from SHS. Other included outdoor sports centers and sports grounds (n=79, 22%), universities (n=40, 11%), and beaches (n=10, 3%).



Conclusions

Regional legislative policies to promote smoke-free areas are still insufficient; however, our initiative presents a high interest among local/provincial institutions in increasing smoke-free environments. Promoting smoke-free policies in outdoor areas is a measure that raises awareness and reinforces the collaboration between public and private organisations to eradicate tobacco use.