Community enforcement in action: A comparative study of JomLapor smoking violation reports in Penang and Terengganu (Jan–May 2025)

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Track: Determinants of Health
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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Tobacco use remains a pressing public health issue in Malaysia. While enforcement of the Smoking Control Bill is primarily regulatory, community involvement plays an increasingly vital role. The JomLapor platform allows the public to report violations such as smoking in restricted areas, improper signage, and illegal sales. However, differences in reporting trends between states remain underexplored. **Objective:** To compare the type and frequency of smoking-related violations reported via JomLapor between a urban state, Penang and a rural state, Terengganu between January and May 2025, and to identify regional trends and enforcement gaps. **Materials and Methods:** A descriptive analysis was conducted using JomLapor data from Penang (n=82) and Terengganu (n=131). Reports were categorised into violations related to prohibited-area smoking, signage non-compliance, unlawful sales, advertising breaches, and others. The frequency and proportion of each category were analysed for both states. **Results:** Terengganu reported more violations (n=131) than Penang (n=82). In Penang, the most frequent violations were missing/outdated signage (26, 31.7%), smoking in restricted areas (16, 19.5%), and tobacco advertising (12, 14.6%). Terengganu recorded a broader range of issues: signage violations (55, 42.0%), prohibited-area smoking (20, 15.3%), and illegal sales at campuses, markets, or online (18, 13.7%). Lesser-reported categories in both states included underpriced tobacco sales and free sample promotions. **Conclusion:** The data show clear differences in reporting volume and violation types. Terengganu's higher and more varied reports may reflect stronger community vigilance or greater non-compliance. Penang's data suggest concentrated enforcement challenges in urban commercial areas. Tailoring enforcement strategies and public education efforts to state-specific patterns may enhance tobacco control outcomes nationwide. Strengthening community reporting tools like JomLapor remains key to improving accountability and compliance.

Keywords: Smoking Control Bill, community enforcement, tobacco reporting, public health, Community health