

PERCEPTIONS OF NICOTINE IN CURRENT AND FORMER TOBACCO & TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION PRODUCT USERS FROM SEVEN COUNTRIES

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BACKGROUND

Nicotine is a strong stimulant and the main substance responsible for the addictive properties of tobacco. Tobacco harm reduction (THR) products such as e-cigarettes, Heat-not-Burn products, or snus were developed to provide adult consumers nicotine without the damaging health effects of combustible tobacco. However, the extent to which consumers can separate the harms of smoke from those of nicotine remains unclear.

METHODS

7 countries surveyed from June to September 2019:

- Online in Norway, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States
- Face-to-face computer aided interviews on a randomly recruited sample in India, Greece and South Africa
- Age range: 18-69 years
- Current users of tobacco and THR products and previous users who quit within the past five years
- Topics covered: perceptions of nicotine's harmfulness and addictiveness, scoring Nicotine and other products and substances in terms of harmfulness on a scale of 1 to 10 and scores were compared

RESULTS

		GREECE		INDIA		JAPAN		NORWAY		SOUTH AFRICA		UNITED KINGDOM		UNITED STATES		
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Total	N	743	1072	6158	35513	724	1503	794	905	671	1695	1210	1039	1073	1229	
Age	Mean, SD	43.4, 14.2	44.1, 15.0	43.6, 14.6	35.2, 12.7	45.2, 12.6	50.7, 11.7	36.7, 15.1	39.9, 12.9	38.6, 13.7	37.2, 13.1	39.2, 13.7	41.6, 13.8	43.4, 14.9	39.1, 12.9	
Education	High	N (%)	242 (32.6)	301 (28.1)	479 (7.8)	5558 (15.7)	340 (47.0)	959 (63.8)	512 (64.5)	689 (76.1)	25 (3.7)	93 (5.5)	519 (42.9)	582 (56.0)	424 (39.5)	580 (47.2)
	Middle	N (%)	427 (57.5)	646 (60.3)	954 (15.5)	8418 (23.7)	355 (49.0)	519 (34.5)	234 (29.5)	179 (19.8)	341 (50.8)	918 (54.2)	589 (48.7)	364 (35.0)	596 (55.6)	598 (48.7)
	Low	N (%)	72 (9.7)	124 (11.6)	4'467 (72.5)	21'159 (59.6)	27 (3.7)	23 (1.5)	45 (5.7)	34 (3.8)	305 (45.5)	681 (40.2)	84 (6.9)	90 (8.7)	51 (4.8)	50 (4.1)
SE status	High	N (%)	77 (10.4)	77 (7.2)	232 (3.8)	1546 (4.4)	75 (10.4)	201 (13.4)	118 (14.9)	128 (14.1)	63 (9.4)	212 (12.5)	222 (18.4)	380 (36.6)	301 (28.1)	398 (32.4)
	Middle	N (%)	251 (33.8)	428 (39.9)	3663 (59.5)	24051 (67.7)	276 (38.1)	697 (46.4)	497 (62.6)	575 (63.5)	226 (33.7)	668 (39.4)	579 (47.9)	405 (39.0)	363 (33.8)	395 (32.1)
	Low	N (%)	218 (29.3)	252 (23.5)	1882 (30.6)	7904 (22.3)	296 (40.9)	483 (32.1)	143 (18.0)	174 (19.2)	286 (42.6)	572 (33.8)	349 (28.8)	233 (22.4)	338 (31.5)	331 (26.9)
Employment status	Employed	N (%)	621 (83.6)	844 (78.7)	5446 (88.4)	32321 (91.0)	636 (87.9)	1237 (82.3)	644 (81.1)	704 (77.8)	345 (51.4)	989 (58.4)	939 (77.6)	853 (82.1)	728 (67.9)	921 (74.9)
	Unemployed	N (%)	110 (14.8)	209 (19.5)	299 (4.9)	1674 (4.7)	71 (9.8)	248 (16.5)	134 (16.9)	193 (21.3)	316 (47.1)	670 (39.5)	255 (21.1)	180 (17.3)	319 (29.7)	283 (23.0)

		GREECE		INDIA		JAPAN		NORWAY		SOUTH AFRICA		UNITED KINGDOM		UNITED STATES	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Current Users	Exclusive combustible	566 (89.3) 816 (89.7)		613 (14.0) 11389 (36.6)		239 (41.3) 483 (40.8)		331 (49.1) 288 (39.8)		459 (78.3) 1460 (94.2)		447 (45.2) 358 (40.1)		473 (51.1) 337 (30.7)	
	Cigarettes			186 (4.3) 4031 (12.9)											
	Bidis														
	Exclusive non-combustible	34 (5.4)	55 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	72 (12.5)	117 (9.9)	8 (1.2)	6 (0.8)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.2)	80 (8.1)	66 (7.4)	93 (10.0)	60 (5.5)
	Exclusive smokeless	1 (0.2)	5 (0.5)	2561 (58.6)	7928 (25.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	74 (11.0)	76 (10.5)	49 (8.4)	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	44 (4.0)
	Daily dual/poly	16 (2.5)	18 (2.0)	484 (11.1)	5600 (18.8)	144 (24.9)	423 (35.8)	119 (17.7)	133 (18.4)	22 (3.8)	34 (2.2)	325 (32.8)	363 (40.7)	256 (27.6)	508 (46.4)
	Non-daily single/dual/poly	11 (1.7)	12 (1.3)	471 (10.8)	1808 (5.8)	85 (14.7)	117 (9.9)	114 (16.9)	192 (26.5)	51 (8.7)	47 (3.0)	121 (12.2)	96 (10.8)	97 (10.5)	137 (12.5)
	Non-user	6 (0.9)	4 (0.4)	59 (1.3)	394 (1.3)	38 (6.6)	43 (3.6)	28 (4.2)	29 (4.0)	4 (0.7)	5 (0.3)	17 (1.7)	9 (1.0)	6 (0.6)	10 (0.9)
	Total	634 (100)	910 (100)	4374 (100)	31150 (100)	578 (100)	1183 (100)	674 (100)	724 (100)	586 (100)	1550 (100)	990 (100)	892 (100)	926 (100)	1096 (100)
	Quitters	Exclusive combustible	88 (80.7)	135 (83.3)			85 (58.2)	224 (70.0)	46 (38.3)	58	54 (63.5)	114 (78.6)	96 (43.6)	47 (32.0)	63 (42.9)
Cigarettes				166 (9.3) 1557 (35.7)											
Bidis				61 (3.4) 551 (12.6)											
Exclusive non-combustible		2 (1.8)	3 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (2.7)	6 (1.9)	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (2.3)	2 (1.4)	9 (6.1)	3 (2.3)
Exclusive smokeless		0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	1209 (67.8)	957 (22.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (3.8)
Daily dual/poly		5 (4.6)	4 (2.5)	97 (5.4)	472 (10.8)	12 (8.2)	50 (15.6)	22 (18.3)	16 (8.8)	4 (4.7)	2 (1.4)	64 (29.1)	67 (45.6)	39 (26.5)	44 (33.1)
Non-daily single/dual/poly		11 (10.1)	14 (8.6)	195 (10.9)	547 (12.6)	36 (24.7)	32 (10.0)	37 (30.8)	98 (54.1)	22 (25.9)	22 (15.2)	45 (20.5)	30 (20.4)	31 (21.1)	35 (26.3)
Non-user		3 (2.8)	5 (3.1)	56 (3.1)	272 (6.2)	9 (6.2)	8 (2.5)	13 (10.8)	9 (5.0)	1 (1.2)	7 (4.8)	10 (4.5)	1 (0.7)	5 (3.4)	6 (4.5)
Total		109 (100)	5 (100)	1784 (100)	4356 (100)	146 (100)	320 (100)	120 (100)	181 (100)	85 (100)	145 (100)	220 (100)	147 (100)	147 (100)	133 (100)

GR=Greece, IN=India, JP=Japan, NO=Norway, SA=South Africa, UK=United Kingdom, US=United States.
NRT: nicotine replacement therapy

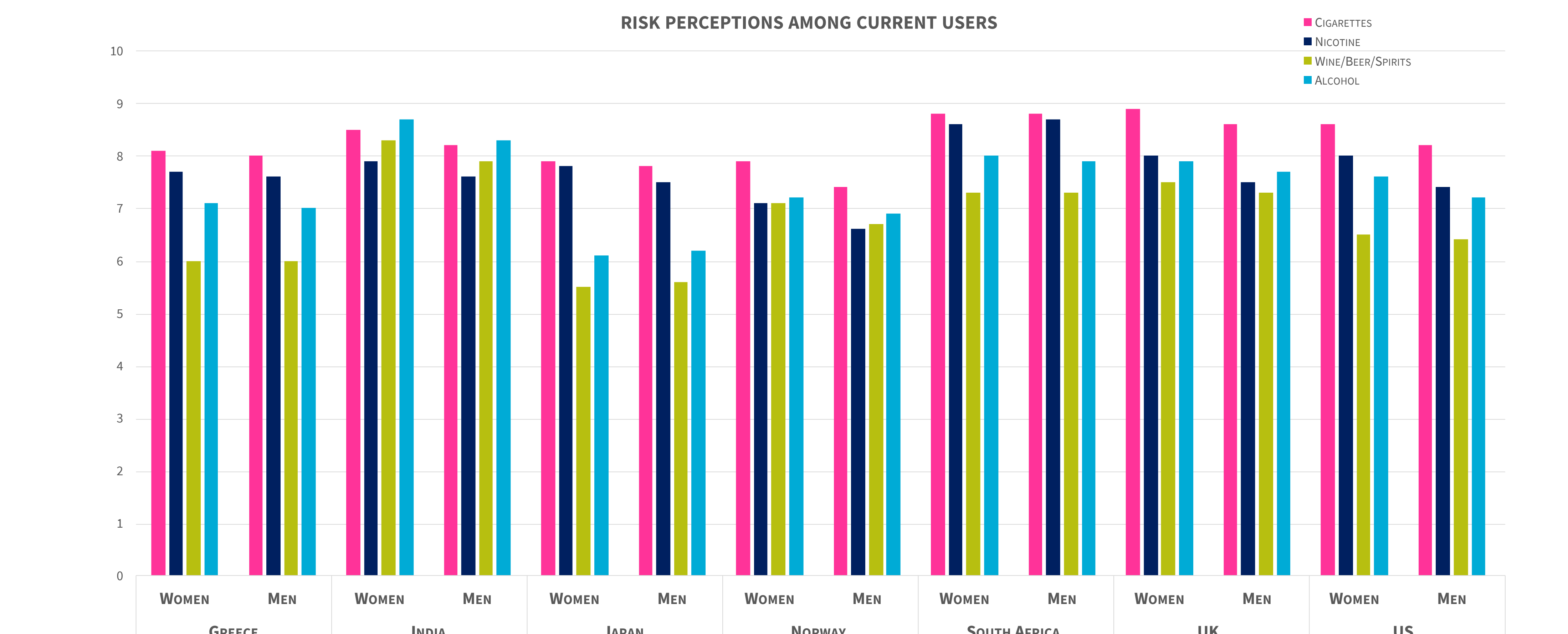
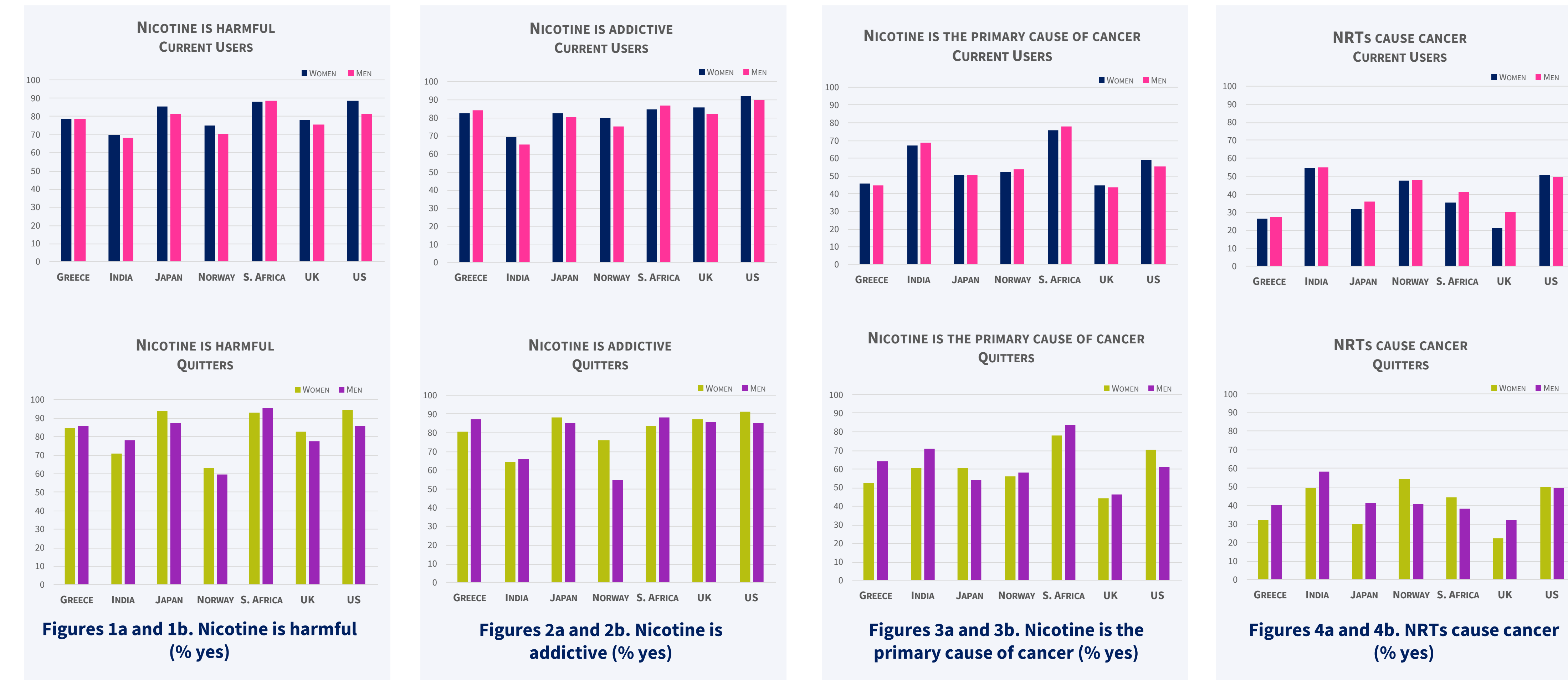


Figure 5. Comparative risk perception of a product and its substance on a scale of 1-10
Other products and substances evaluated: coffee, tea and caffeine, soda drinks, candy, sugar, salt, and fat; all of these were rated lower

CONCLUSIONS

- A large proportion of consumers across all surveyed countries view nicotine and tobacco as equivalents.
- Substances such as sugar, salt and caffeine are generally regarded as less harmful than nicotine despite limited clinical evidence of harms from nicotine in isolation.
- Clearer communication on the addictive and harmful properties of both nicotine and tobacco is needed to help consumers make informed decisions about products across the continuum of risk

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