What is already known on this topic

The state of California has had a comprehensive tobacco control programme in place since 1989

Analyses of smoking prevalence and cigarette consumption indicate significantly greater declines in California than in other US states since programme inception.

What this study adds

Analysis of a well funded, comprehensive tobacco control programme in Massachusetts shows that, since its inception, the rate of decline of adult smoking has been significantly steeper than that in other US states except California

This study confirms that consistent, long term spending on antismoking advertisements, programmes to help people stop smoking, and promotion of tobacco control policies can reduce tobacco use in a population

analysis of the programme based data and wrote the sections of the paper that gave details of that methodology and the results. JEH performed the regression analysis of trends in prevalence of adult smoking using the BRFSS and Massachusetts data, wrote the description of this analysis, and prepared the figures related to the analysis. All three authors participated in drafting, editing, and revising the paper. Tory M Taylor helped gather data on expenditures for tobacco control and performed the literature review on the international health burden of tobacco use. Amy L Nyman managed the Massachusetts survey databases and performed analyses related to these surveys. Giulia Norton managed the Abt Associates data collection, prepared analysis files, and programmed the data analysis. The three authors are guarantors for the study.

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Competing interests: LB and WH work for organisations that are contractors to the Massachusetts tobacco control

programme. JEH has received compensation and research support through a public contract with the state of Massachusetts.

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Targeting the kids

On p 362 Klein and St Clair present evidence indicating that some tobacco companies have allowed manufacturers of candy cigarettes (cigarette sweets) to use cigarette pack designs. Similar trademark infringement has been seen for many other products targeted at children. For example, the Tricked Squirt Cigarettes (shown here), which have a striking resemblance to Marlboro packaging, are intended for ages "5 and up." Instructions on the package tell users how to fill the "cigarette pack" with water and how to squirt it "at your target." The product was made in Hong Kong and distributed in 1999 by Air Host Inc (Memphis, Tennessee) to airport gift shops throughout the United States.

Whenever they are asked about this kind of trademark infringement, cigarette companies deny involvement in it and claim that they are aggressive in protecting their trademarks and copyrights. These companies, which spend hundreds of millions of dollars defending themselves in lawsuits, certainly have the means to protect their trademarks and to punish those who would dare to expropriate their valuable images and icons. Why, then, do so many companies fearlessly infringe on cigarette trademarks? Could it be that the cigarette makers' claims about protecting their copyrights don't hold water?

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We welcome articles of up to 600 words on topics such as *A memorable patient*, *A paper that changed my practice*, *My most unfortunate mistake*, or any other piece conveying instruction, pathos, or humour. If possible the article should be supplied on a disk. Permission is needed from the patient or a relative if an identifiable patient is referred to.