Tobacco plain packaging: is it effective in tobacco control?

Karine Galloplé-Morvan
Professor in social marketing, French School of Public Health (EHESP), Rennes (France)
Tobacco plain packaging?

A package on which the brand name is printed in a standardized font and type size and trademarks are prohibited (logos, decorative elements). Its color must be unattractive and the package must have no text other than (visual) warnings and information required by law.

Australia implemented plain packaging in 2012

Some other countries plan to implement it: France, UK, New Zealand, Ireland
Role of packaging in tobacco marketing

Examples
«In recent years, governments around the world have passed ever-greater restrictions on tobacco marketing and advertising. This trend is likely to intensify as signatories to the WHO’s FCTC [...] In many countries, the cigarette pack is now the ONLY remaining avenue of communication.»
«Some women admit they buy Virginia Slims, Benson & Hedges etc when they go out at night, to complement a desire to look more feminine and stylish»

Philip Morris, 1992, bates 2060037883-7936
(about a specific shape of a pack) : « Test concluded: pack has tremendous appeal among young smokers »

Philip Morris, 1990, bates 2044762173-2364
APPLE FLAVOR

Apples connote goodness and freshness and we see many possibilities for our youth-oriented cigarette with this flavor. Apple cider is also a possibility.

SWEET FLAVOR CIGARETTE

We believe that there are pipe tobaccos that have a sweet aromatic taste. It's a well known fact that teenagers like sweet products. Honey might be considered.
In the medium-term, we think plain packaging would go a long way to undermine the power of tobacco brands and it is the brands that make the industry so profitable. In our view, in cigarettes, the pack is the brand. Smokers handle their cigarette packs probably 20 times a day.
The pack conveys information
Role of PLAIN packaging in tobacco DEmarketing

What is the evidence?
More than 50 articles published in academic journals


ETC.
• Different countries:
  – Australia, UK, France, Canada, USA, New Zealand, Mexico, Norway, Spain, etc.

• Different methods to explore plain packaging effect:
  – qualitative (focus groups, in-depth interviews)
  – quantitative (surveys, questionnaires)
  – mixed methods designs
  – eye-tracking research
  – naturalistic approach (imitation of the experience of using plain packs in a country where it has not been introduced)
  – etc.

• Different targets:
  – teens, minors, young adults, adults
  – women, men
  – smokers, non smokers
Plain packaging of tobacco products: a review of the evidence

Prepared by Quit Victoria, Cancer Council Victoria, May 2011

Standardised packaging of tobacco

Report of the independent review undertaken by Sir Cyril Chantler
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- increases the salience and effectiveness of warnings (more credible, more serious)
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- reduces the ability of packaging to mislead consumers on dangers of tobacco
- increases consumers’ awareness about the harmful effects of smoking
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- reduces the appeal of tobacco products to consumers (young people, women)
- reduces the brand image and the positive image of tobacco products
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- increases negative perceptions of the cigarettes (e.g. poorer taste, less satisfying, less quality)
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- increases avoidant behaviors (hiding the pack, smoking less in front of others)
- reduces the visibility of tobacco packs in the environment (denormalization)
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- increases cessation-related smoking behaviours (e.g., greater feelings of reducing consumption, quitting and calling a quitline).
Plain packaging combined with warnings:

- motivates young people not to start smoking, not to buy a pack
To sum up: plain packaging is effective to

- increase the salience and effectiveness of warnings (more credible, more serious)
- reduce the ability of packaging to mislead consumers on tobacco dangers
- increase consumers’ awareness about the harmful effects of smoking
- reduce the appeal of tobacco products to consumers (young people, women)
- reduce the brand image and the positive image of tobacco products
- increase negative perceptions of the cigarettes (e.g. poorer taste, less satisfying, less quality)
- increase avoidant behaviors (hiding the pack, smoking less in front of others)
- reduce the visibility of tobacco packs in the environment (denormalization)
- increase cessation-related smoking behaviours (e.g. greater feelings of reducing consumption, quitting and calling a quitline).
- motivate young people not to start smoking, not to buy a pack
Thank you for your attention

Karine Gallopel-Morvan
French School of Public Health (EHESP)
Rennes, Brittany, France
karine.gallopel-morvan@ehesp.fr

Acknowledgements: French Health Ministry (Direction Générale de la Santé), French National Cancer Institute (INCa), Comité National Contre le Tabagisme (French NGO)