Package
Health Warnings:

WHO FCTC Requirements, Recommendations, and Best Practices
The importance of the tobacco package
Link between advertisements and product

- To tobacco companies:
  - critical link between advertisements and product
  - link becomes more important as advertising is banned
Link between advertisements and product

- The least expensive form of advertising
- The manufacturer’s last chance at a customer
- No single factor is as important at the point of sale as the package itself.

M. Gershman, 1987

- “The answer to the question whether pack design can beat restrictions on cigarette advertising must be a very positive ‘yes.’”

Kevin Sheridan, representative of packaging firm supplying Canadian tobacco companies
A “badge” product

- To tobacco companies:
  - critical link between advertisements and product; more important as advertising is banned
  - cigarettes are a “badge” product
A “badge” product

“A cigarette package is unique because the consumer carries it around with him all day ... it’s a part of a smoker’s clothing, and when he saunters into a bar and plunks it down, he makes a statement about himself.”

John Digianni, cigarette package designer
(Source: Wakefield et al., 2002)
Influences product perceptions

- To tobacco companies:
  - Critical link between advertisements and product; more important as advertising is banned
  - Cigarettes are a “badge” product
  - Creates perceptions about the product
"The product itself …
the discrimination in product terms,
pure blind product terms
without any packaging or name around it is very limited. You can tell if it’s very mild or very strong …
But it’s very difficult for people to discriminate, blind tested.

Put it in a package and put a name on it, and then it has a lot of product characteristics."

Don Brown, Vice-President of Marketing
Imperial Tobacco, Canada
Testimony in Canadian court, 1989
“... even with the use of panellists who are trained to be objective in their evaluation of cigarettes, that both brand identification and pack imagery variables have a significant effect on the individual’s perception of the sensory attributes of the product.”

BAT study, 1980
(Source: Wakefield et al., 2002)
The importance of the package

To tobacco companies:
- critical link between advertisements and product; more important as advertising is banned
- cigarettes are a “badge” product
- creates perceptions about the product

To the public health community:
- an important source of health information
- unparalleled opportunity to reach smokers
Package warnings as a public health tool

- Warnings on packages reach all smokers
- A pack-a-day smoker would see the warnings at least 7300 times per year
- Graphic warnings detract from the pack image, inform smokers and motivate quitting
- Cost-effective: little cost to governments and minimal costs to industry
- Excellent complement to communication campaigns
WHO FCTC health warning requirements for packaging: Article 11.1(b)

Each Party shall..... ensure that:

...(b) Each unit packet and package of tobacco products and any outside packaging and labelling of such products also carry health warnings describing the harmful effects of tobacco use, and may include other appropriate messages. These warnings and messages:

(i) shall be approved by the competent national authority,
(ii) shall be rotating,
(iii) shall be large, clear, visible and legible,
(iv) should be 50% or more of the principal display areas but shall be no less than 30% of the principal display areas,
(v) may be in the form of or include pictures or pictograms
Implications

- Warnings on ALL products (cigars, cigarettes, loose tobacco, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, leaf tobacco, bidis, etc) and on ALL packaging at retail (packages, cartons, other containers)
- Tobacco industry cannot voluntarily print warnings without approval from government
- Must be more than one warning; each warning should appear equally often
- Must appear on front and back of the pack, not sides
- “Large, clear, visible and legible” – impacts size, design and content
- 30% minimum, but 50% or more is desirable
- Images are desirable
Guidelines for implementing Article 11 of WHO FCTC (packaging and labelling of tobacco products)

- Guidelines for implementation of Article 11 were developed by a working group of the COP

- Guidelines were presented and adopted with minor amendments at COP3 in November 2008
Article 11
Principles of the guidelines

• Every person should be informed of the health consequences, addictive nature and mortal threat posed by tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke.

• Well-designed health warnings and messages are a cost-effective means to increase public awareness and reduce tobacco consumption.

• The evidence and the experience of others should be considered.

• International collaboration and mutual support - fundamental principles for strengthening the capacity of Parties.
COP3 decision to adopt guidelines also requests the Convention Secretariat to...

- Make available, via a website, studies, research and other reference material used in the development of Art 11 guidelines
- Invite WHO’s Tobacco Free Initiative to establish and maintain an international database of pictorial health warnings and messages
- Facilitate, upon request, the granting of licences between Parties for use of pictorial health warnings and messages
Why health warnings on packaging?

- They are wide-reaching and cost-effective
- They work. They:
  - inform smokers
  - motivate quit attempts
  - motivate smoking away from family members
Evidence: Brazil (Round 2)

- 54% of smokers had changed their opinion on the health consequences of smoking as a result of the warnings
- 67% of smokers said the warnings made them want to quit
- Impact was greater among groups with lower levels of income and education

Data: Datafolha Instituto de Pesquisas, 2002
Evidence: Canada

- 58% of smokers thought more about the health effects of smoking as a result of the warnings
- 44% of smokers said the warnings had increased their motivation to quit
- 27% of smokers smoked less inside their homes as a result of the warnings

Data: Environics, on behalf of Canadian Cancer Society, 2001.
Evidence: Singapore

- 71% of smokers said they knew more about the health effects of smoking as a result of the warnings.
- 28% said they smoked fewer cigarettes as a result of the warnings.
- 14% said they avoided smoking in front of children as a result of the warnings.

Data: Health Promotion Board, evaluation data 2004
Evidence: Thailand

- 81% of youth (age 13-17) said the new pictorial warnings made them think more about the health impacts of smoking.
- More than half of smokers (53%) said the pictorial warnings made them think "a lot" about the health risks.
- Nearly half (44%) of smokers said the pictorial warnings made them "a lot" more likely to quit over the next month.

Images: WHO FCTC HealthWarnings Database, 
http://www.who.int/tobacco/healthwarningsdatabase/en/index.htm
What makes package warnings most effective?

- Large size
- Prime location (front of pack, top of pack)
- Variety of messages, rotated equally
- Images and other elements that connect emotionally
Size and location
Article 11: Guidelines for implementation

- Warnings and messages should cover more than 50% of principal display areas and should aim to cover as much as possible.
- On all main faces or principal display areas of packages, at the top of those faces.
- Additional health warnings and messages on all sides of a package, as well as on package inserts and onserts.
Size and location
Evidence behind the recommendations

- Larger messages are more effective – like headlines versus fine print
- Larger size = higher visibility; competes better with other package elements
- Larger size = greater perceived credibility of messages and greater perceived risks from tobacco use
- Latest research from Canada shows that increasing warnings from current 50% size to 90% or 100% would increase effectiveness
Location, location, location

Main faces and top of the pack are the “prime real estate” on the tobacco package

Images: WHO FCTC Health Warnings Database,
Warning on all main faces

- Warnings on all main faces are more visible at point of sale

- Harder for smoker to ignore warnings on all sides

Uruguay pack display. Source: Heather Selin
Message content and rotation

Article 11: Recommendations on the guidelines

- Variety of messages is best, including information about:
  - harmful health effects of smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke
  - adverse economic and social outcomes (e.g. cost of tobacco products)
  - impact of tobacco use on loved ones (e.g. premature illness of a parent due to smoking; death of a loved one due to exposure to tobacco smoke)
  - advice and resources on cessation (e.g. website or telephone “quit-line”)

- Generate unfavourable emotional associations with tobacco use (fear) combined with information to increase motivation and confidence to quit

- Regular rotation of messages: multiple health warnings appearing concurrently; regular refreshment of series of warnings

- All required warnings must appear on an equal number of retail packages for each brand within the brand family for each package size and type
Message content and rotation
Evidence behind the recommendations

- Specific, meaningful content that engages emotionally (including images) is more likely to be noticed and to motivate behaviour change
- Multiple, rotating warnings:
  - provide more information to the consumer
  - reach different target audiences
  - delay the effect of “wear-out”
  - prevent tobacco companies from choosing the least effective warnings for particular brands and from avoiding the most effective ones
Use of images (pictorials)
Article 11: Recommendations on the guidelines

- Full-colour pictorial health warnings are recommended on all main faces or principal display areas.
- Picture warnings, when compared with text-only messages:
  - are more likely to be noticed
  - are rated by tobacco users as more effective
  - will be noticed for longer periods of time
  - better communicate health risks
  - provoke more thought about health risks and
- Picture warnings also may disrupt brand imagery and decrease the overall attractiveness of the package.
Use of images
Evidence behind the recommendations

- Warnings with images are many times more effective than text-only warnings
- Images communicate much more emotively than text: emotional engagement is critical for impact
- Images compete better with the rest of the package to draw attention to the warning
- Images can better communicate information to illiterate populations
Images and the myth of the “scare” factor

- Image warnings graphically showing the health consequences of smoking are often discouraged as ineffective
- **EVIDENCE SHOWS THE OPPOSITE:** Warnings that arouse emotions have a bigger impact in changing behaviour; graphic labels do this
- Scary images are most effective when combined with messages about action that can be taken to minimize the risk
Evaluation of Brazil’s messages

- Most effective at motivating quit attempts: strong images
  - 79.0%
  - 77.9%

- Much less effective: these images don’t communicate risk effectively

Source: Brasil – Advertências Sanitárias nas Embalagens dos Produtos de Tabaco
Cutting edge research on images: Brazil

- Measured emotional reaction in 18-24 year olds to warnings used from 2003 to 2008
- Developed new warnings based on results
Brazil, 2008

- shocking images
- variety of messages and tactics
- specific risk information
- quitline referral

Images: WHO FCTC Health Warnings Database,
## Global legislative developments

### Africa
- Mauritius (2009)

### Americas
- Canada (2000)
- Colombia (2009)
- Mexico (2010)
- Panama (2007, 2009)
- Peru (2009)
- Venezuela (2004, 2009)
- United Kingdom, British Overseas Territories/Cayman Islands (2009)

### Eastern Mediterranean
- Djibouti (2009)
- Egypt (2008)
- Islamic Republic of Iran (2009)
- Jordan (2005)
- Pakistan (2010)

### Europe
- Belgium (2007)
- France (scheduled April 2011)
- Latvia (2010)
- Malta (scheduled April 2011)
- Norway (scheduled Jan 2011)
- Romania (2008)
- Spain (scheduled May 2011)
- Switzerland (2010)
- Turkey (2010)
- United Kingdom (2009)
- United Kingdom / British Islands, Guernsey (scheduled Aug 2011)

### Southeast Asia
- India (2008)

### Western Pacific
- Australia (2006)
- Brunei Darussalam (2008)
- China, Hong Kong SAR (2007)
- China, Taiwan (2009)
- Cook Islands (2008)
- Malaysia (2009)
- Mongolia (2010)
- New Zealand (2008)
- Philippines (2010)
- Singapore (2004, 2006)
Examples of best practices

Graphic images

Personalized messages (testimonials)

Quitline number

Size & placement: 60% of main faces, top of pack

Images: WHO FCTC HealthWarnings Database,
Summary

• Tobacco packaging is an effective marketing tool: for tobacco companies and for public health

• Health warnings with graphic images work: they inform smokers and increase motivation to quit

• Pictorial warnings have been successfully implemented in all WHO regions

• WHO FCTC Article 11 guidelines recommend picture warnings and other effective implementation measures to Parties to WHO FCTC

• Non-Parties can also use the guidelines – excellent tool for implementing packaging and labelling measures