


# New Initiatives on Package Warnings

Packaging for specific target groups,  
plain packaging,  
banning colors schemes,  
inserts and onserts



# Contribution of Thea Emmerling



14th WCTOH in Mumbai, India,  
8 – 12 March 2009

# Structure of presentation

---

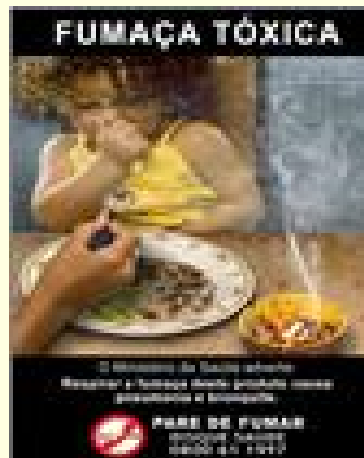
- Article 11 guidelines – the "consider" family
- From guidelines to action:
  - Packaging for specific target groups,
  - plain packaging
  - banning colour schemes,
  - inserts and onserts
- Outlook

# 1. The "consider" family – targeting population subgroups

---

- Point 38 of Article 11 guidelines:
- "Parties should consider designing warnings targeted at subgroups, such as youth, and adapting the number of health warnings and their rotation accordingly."

# Targeting population subgroups – ETS and children

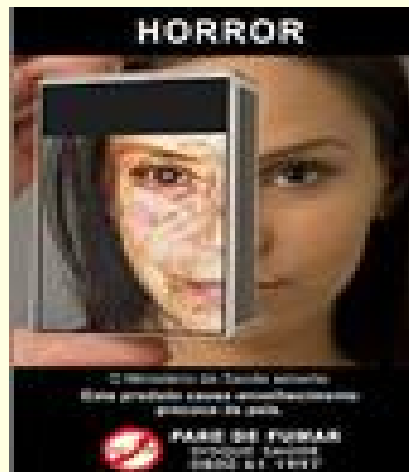


# Targeting population subgroups – pregnant women





# Targeting population subgroups – women and ageing



# Targeting population subgroups

---

- Several jurisdictions already target population subgroups in their warnings, different effect of warnings on different age-groups
- Australian research:
  - more impact of warnings on 25—49 years old than on younger people, who did not personalise most of the messages;
  - however, descriptive or emotive messages had impact on 15-17 years old, f.ex. "living, breathing hell";
  - women early 20s receptive to emotive and visual and to quoted statistics, f.ex. "4000 chemicals", "doubles your risk of stroke", also warnings on pregnancy
- Least impact: smokers 50-70 years old
- Loophole: hardly any youth-specific warnings
- Point 68 of Article 11 guidelines suggest to assess impact of package and labelling measures on target populations; more knowledge on impacts expected in future

## 2. The "consider" family – plain packaging

---

- Point 46 of Article 11 guidelines:
- "Parties should consider adopting measures to restrict or prohibit the use of logos, colours, brand images or promotional information on packaging other than brand names and product names displayed in a standard colour and font style (plain packaging)."

# The « consider » family – plain packaging

---

- Points 15-17 of Article 13 guidelines with Recommendation:
- « Packaging and product design are important elements of advertising and promotion. Parties should consider adopting plain packaging requirements to eliminate the effects of advertising or promotion on packaging. »

# Plain packaging – what is it?

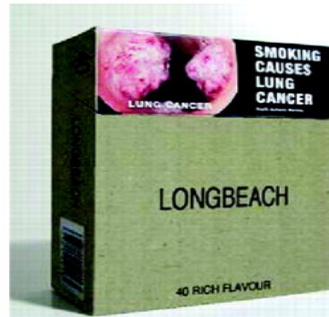
Original pack



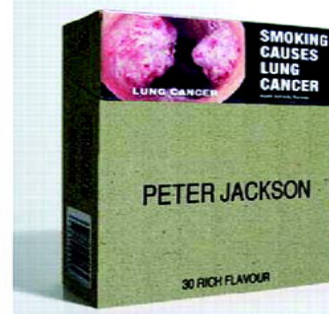
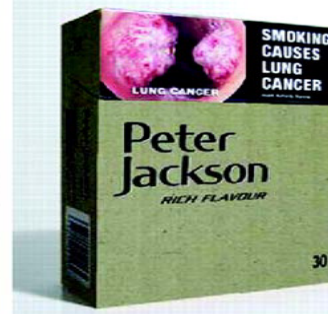
Plain pack 1



Plain pack 2



Plain pack 3



# Plain packaging – who discusses it?

---

- **New Zealand** 1989: DoH Toxic Substances Board recommended white packs with simple black text and no colors or logos
- **Australia** 1992: Center for Behavioural Research in Cancer recommends legislation over colours, design and wording of entire exterior of packs
- **Canada** 1994: Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Health recommended legislation
- **UK** 2008 consultation on future of tobacco control
- **EC** 2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> report on tobacco products directive

# Plain packaging – evidence (I)

---

- Never legislated
- Research body small and experimental
- Most evidence about possible impact from experimental studies with mock-ups of plain and branded packs
- Most comprehensive review from Canada mid 90s

# Plain packaging – evidence (II)

---

- Smokers perceived packs with **progressively fewer branding design elements as increasingly unfavourable** (Wakefield et al 2008)
- Health warnings are **more noticeable** when presented on plain packages (Goldberg et al, Rootman et al 1995)
- Plain packaging **likely increases smoking cessation** by teens and adults (University Toronto): 40% of teens thought fewer would smoke if cigarettes were sold in plain packs ("wimpy, boring, loser" for plain packs instead of "smart, fun, popular" for branded packs)

# Plain packaging – main questions

---

- Right of governments to improve health against right of companies to use trademark brands
- How much advertising do governments still allow on packs? – the package is a mini-billboard
- Profits

# Plain packaging – Pro arguments

---

- Increases impact of warnings (more serious; no detraction)
- Takes away advertising space (could also decrease effectiveness of sponsorship promotions)
- Decreases impact of shelf display
- Reduces positive imagery of smoking a particular brand
- Wipes out misleading differences between various tobacco products
- Likely decreases youth uptake
- Reduces profits of tobacco industry
- Package variety is used to increase consumption, this is in direct conflict to health policy
- Life-saving drugs regulated heavily, life-harming drugs not
- Conventions on intellectual property rights allow specific exemptions for health
- Industry frequently changes packs to remain attractive

# Plain packaging – contra arguments

---

- Infringes trademarks (TRIPS 1994, NAFTA 1994, Paris Convention 1883)
- Drives down prices
- Ends premium cigarettes market (which have higher profits)
- Increases illicit trade in cigarettes
- Takes away last advertising possibility
- Right to know of consumers: How much information to be removed without violating this right?

# Plain packaging – some thoughts

---

- Plain packaging creates negative brand imagery instead of a product proudly displayed – can completely change perception of tobacco products and end marketing-via-the-package strategy
- Plain packaging – remove cigarettes from view in retail outlets
- Plain packaging likely to reduce profits, but industry saves millions
- Plain packaging already used for other products: Australia has de facto generic packaging for prescription medicine (only colours used to distinguish between different strengths)

# Banning color schemes – what is it?



# Banning color schemes – what is it?

---



# Banning color schemes – experiences

---

- After prohibiting "mild/light", colour coding came up (Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, EU); also use of numbers (the higher the stronger)
- **Red** - full strength
- **Blue** - light
- Silver – extra light
- **Green** – menthol
  
- Colours/numbers associate that one brand presents less risk than another

# Banning colour schemes – evidence

---

- New Zealand, University Otago, study 2007:
  - Green associated with menthol
  - Blue associated with light
  - Red/orange associated with regular
- Colour needs to be taken into account when making decisions to ban "mild" and "light"

# The "consider" family – inserts and onserts

---

- Point 9 of Article 11 guidelines:
- "Parties should consider requiring, in addition to the health warnings and messages referred to in paragraph 8, further health warnings and messages on all sides of a package, as well as on package inserts and onserts."

# Inserts and Onserts – what is it?

## If I have lung cancer, what are my chances of surviving?

- Your chances of surviving this disease are low.
- 60% of lung cancer victims die within one year.
- Less than 15% of lung cancer victims will be alive 5 years after diagnosis.
- Smoking causes 85% of all lung cancers.

Quitting smoking reduces your chance of getting lung cancer.

For more information on tobacco, its health effects and ways to overcome a tobacco addiction, talk to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist or visit [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco)

Health Canada

9

## You CAN quit smoking!

### *Without gaining weight*

- Many people are afraid to quit smoking because they worry about gaining weight. But you can quit without a lot of weight gain.
- Remember: each smoke must be replaced by something — be prepared for the cravings.
- You need to find ways to stay away from tobacco while staying away from fattening foods.
- Being more physically active can help.
- It will be easier to be active as your lungs recover their health.

For more information on tobacco, its health effects and ways to overcome a tobacco addiction, talk to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist or visit [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco)

Health Canada

8

## Can second-hand smoke harm my family?

- Yes.
- The smoke from the burning tip of your tobacco product and the smoke you exhale are dangerous. They can harm your family, especially your children.
- Children who breathe second-hand smoke suffer more chest infections, bronchitis, ear infections and asthma attacks.
- Second-hand smoke also contributes to death from lung cancer in non-smoking adults.

The best solution is to stop smoking. If you do smoke, smoke outside!

For more information on tobacco, its health effects and ways to overcome a tobacco addiction, talk to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist or visit [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/tobacco)

Health Canada

10

# Inserts and onserts

---

- Printed inside of the package carton – industry already does it in other cases
- Printed on a leaflet inside the package
- Printed on the side of the pack
- Warnings on tobacco product itself
  
- Inserts do not have same impact as exterior messages, but can be more precise and longer
- Smokers not exposed to them as much as to outside warnings

# Outlook

---

- Packaging is part of an overall tobacco control strategy
- Article 11 gives current best practice, development does not stop, moving target
- Exhaustive list of prohibitions impossible
- Packaging and visibility at retail outlets
- Political will decisive
- Where to put energy in? **A bundle of minimum measures: introduce big pictorial warnings, raise tobacco taxes, ban advertising, restrict sales practices**