



How does plain packaging influence consumers' perceptions about brand image? Two experimental studies

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14th World Conference on Tobacco or Health, Mumbai, India
8-12 March 2009

The power of packaging

- pack design, colour, brand descriptors can mislead smokers into thinking some cigarettes are less harmful than others

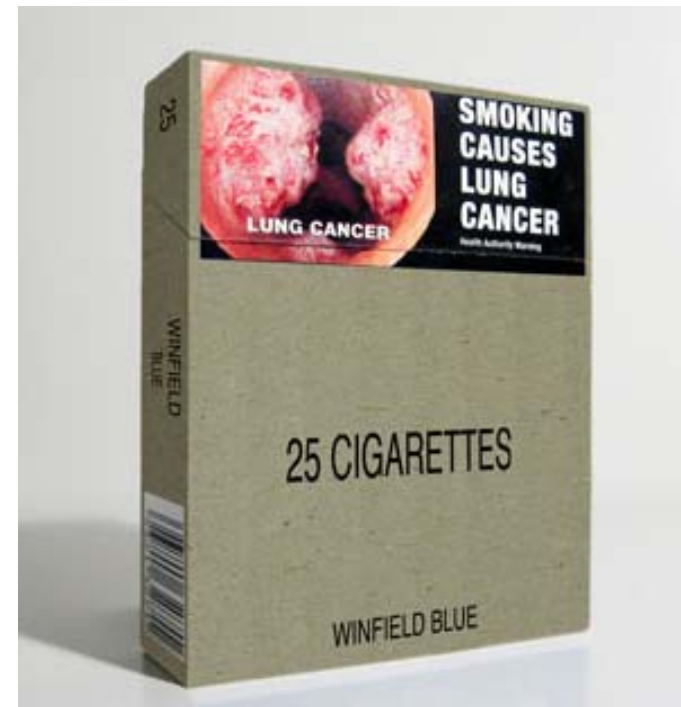


- tobacco companies design packs to obscure health warnings

Plain packaging

Previous research found it can:

- make health warnings more noticeable
- detract from brand imagery
- promote less positive smoker attributes



No previous research yet examined:

- Manipulation of design elements like fonts, trademarks
- Perceived sensory attributes

Aims

To explore how cigarette package design elements including **brand names**, **fonts** and **trademarks** might influence a smoker's perceptions of:

- attributes of the pack
- attributes of smokers of the pack
- perceived sensory features of the cigarettes inside

Pack conditions

Branded Pack



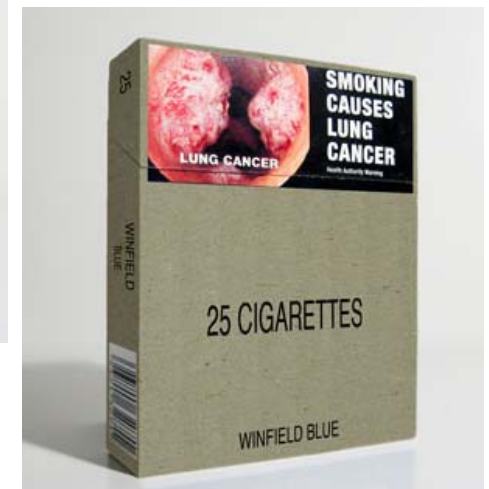
Plain Pack 1



Plain Pack 2



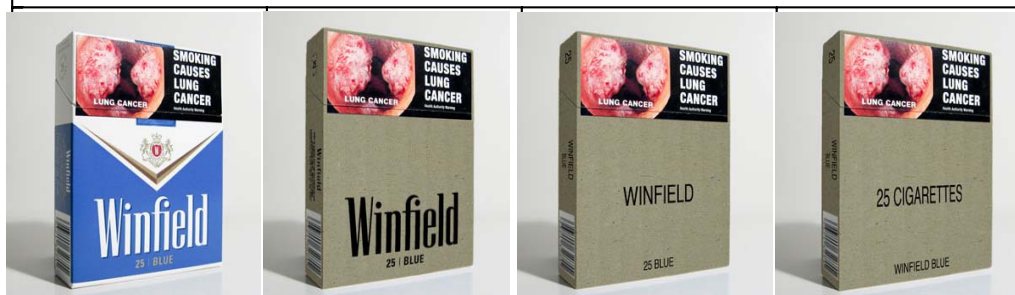
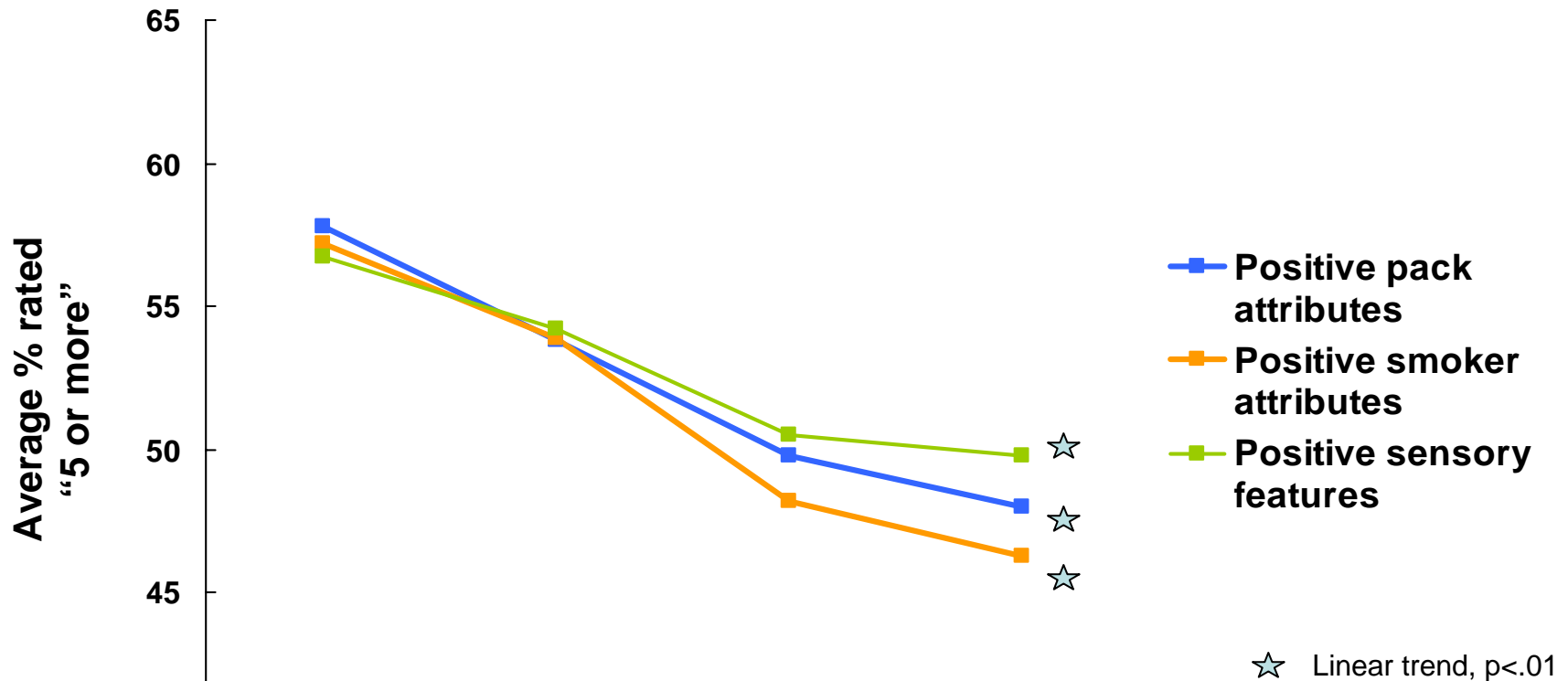
Plain Pack 3



Adult plain packaging internet study

- 813 regular smokers of factory made cigarettes recruited from existing on-line panel
- 5 minute internet survey
- Randomly assigned to view one pack of cigarettes and complete ratings
- Rating scales from 0 to 10

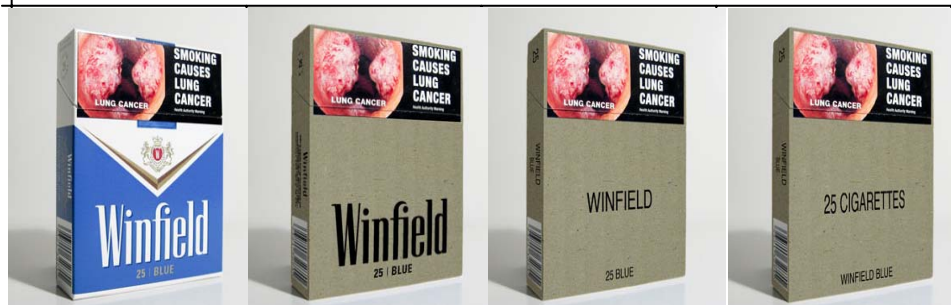
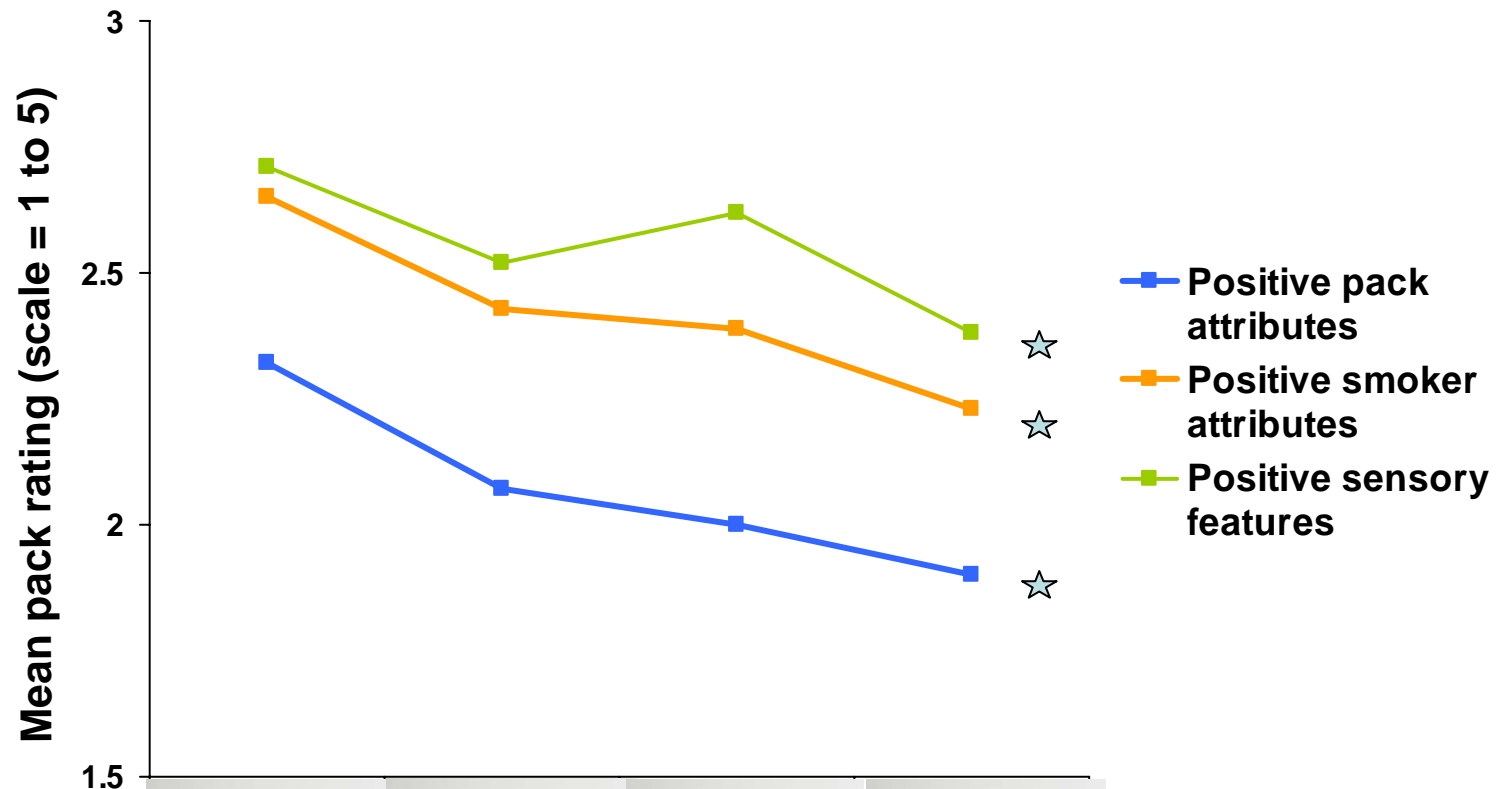
Adult smoker ratings



Youth plain packaging internet study

- 1,090 14-17 year olds recruited via parents from existing on-line panel
- 5 minute internet survey
- Youth (smokers and nonsmokers) randomly assigned to view one pack of cigarettes and complete ratings
- Rating scales from 1 to 5

Adolescent pack ratings



☆ Linear trend, p<.01

Strengths and limitations

Internet samples

- limitation: representativeness of adult and youth samples
- strength: randomisation of participants for experiment; efficient data collection

Viewing packs on screen

- only one fixed pack face shown which may have potentially underestimated effects

Conclusion

- For adults and adolescents, plain packs with the fewest branding elements were more effective in:
 - Reducing pack imagery and attractiveness
 - Minimising positive smoker attributes
 - Changing perceived sensory features – cigarettes in plainest packs expected to have more tar, be harsher, stronger, less smooth
- These results support the introduction of plain packaging policies



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