

Are morbid graphic tobacco
label warnings effective
deterrents to tobacco
consumption in India?

Dr. Aditi Shastri

Graphic Label warnings- A tried and tested formula world-wide!

- ✚ Canada –the first nation to introduce graphic label warnings.
- ✚ The size of graphic warning labels increased gradually as many more countries implemented the law.
- ✚ Mauritius is the latest country-announced on February 12, 2009
- ✚ It takes over now as the world leader from Aus, New Zealand with a 65% warning size(average of pack front/back).

A story of India!



A story of India!

- ✚ Feb 2004 : India signed and ratified the FCTC, Article 11 states that warning messages should cover at least 50% of front and back and at the very least, 30%.
- ✚ The Indian Ministry of Health and Family welfare announced that pictorial warnings will be displayed on cigarette packs from February 2007 in keeping with the Cigarette and other Tobacco products act 2003.
- ✚ The decision has been deferred more than 5 times owing to strong pressure from the tobacco lobby. The latest announcement says that implementation has been deferred till May 2009.

Recent updates from the MoH

- ✚ Recession stubs out tobacco warnings! - The Times of India-November 26, 2008-postponed till May 2009.
- ✚ GoM including Mr.Pranab Mukherjee cited market recession for tobacco manufacturers as the reason to delay decision.
- ✚ Decision is also probably motivated by large vote banks among tobacco manufacturers in many Indian states and the looming General elections.
- ✚ Winning the election at any stake is obviously more important than the health of the common Indian citizen.

The Great Indian Railway Challenge-My Study

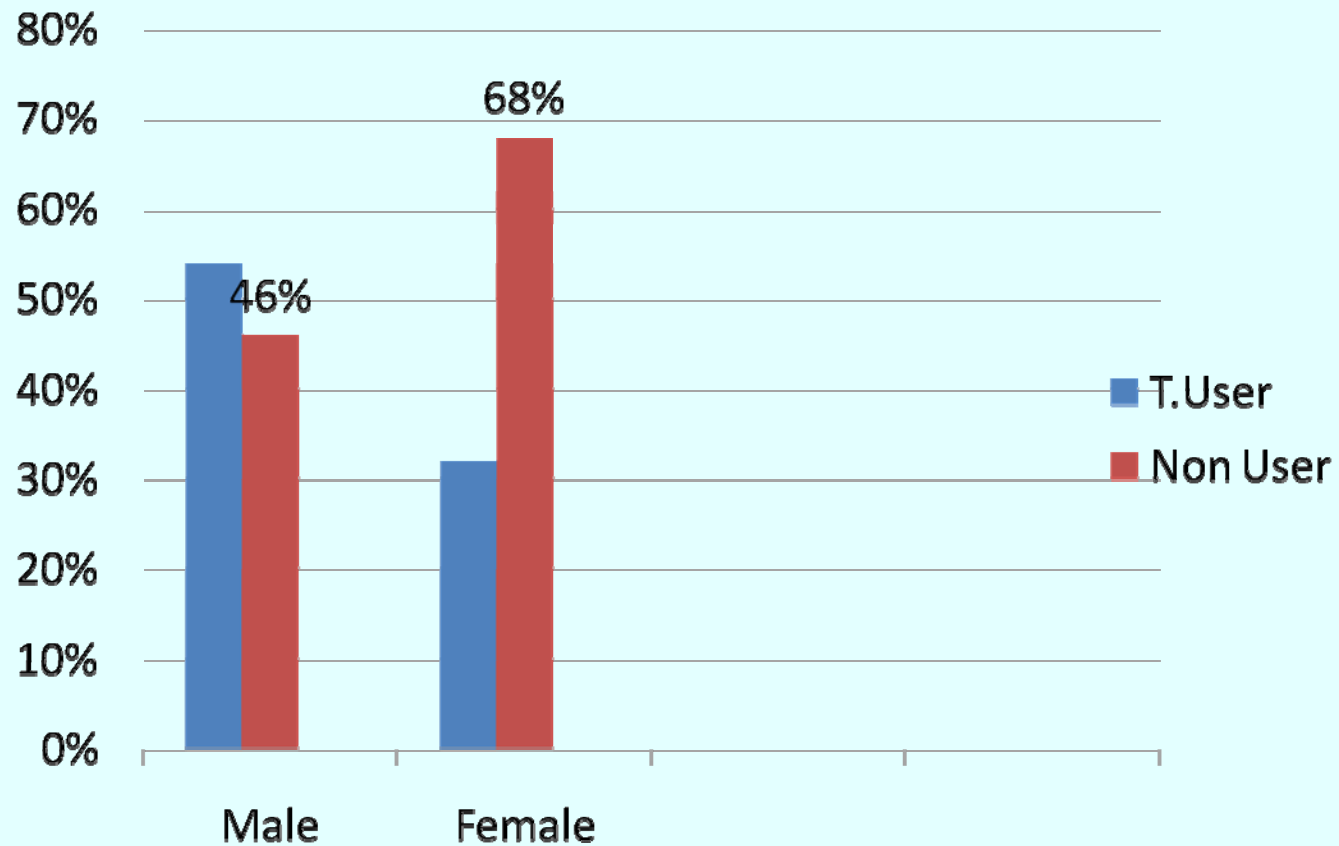




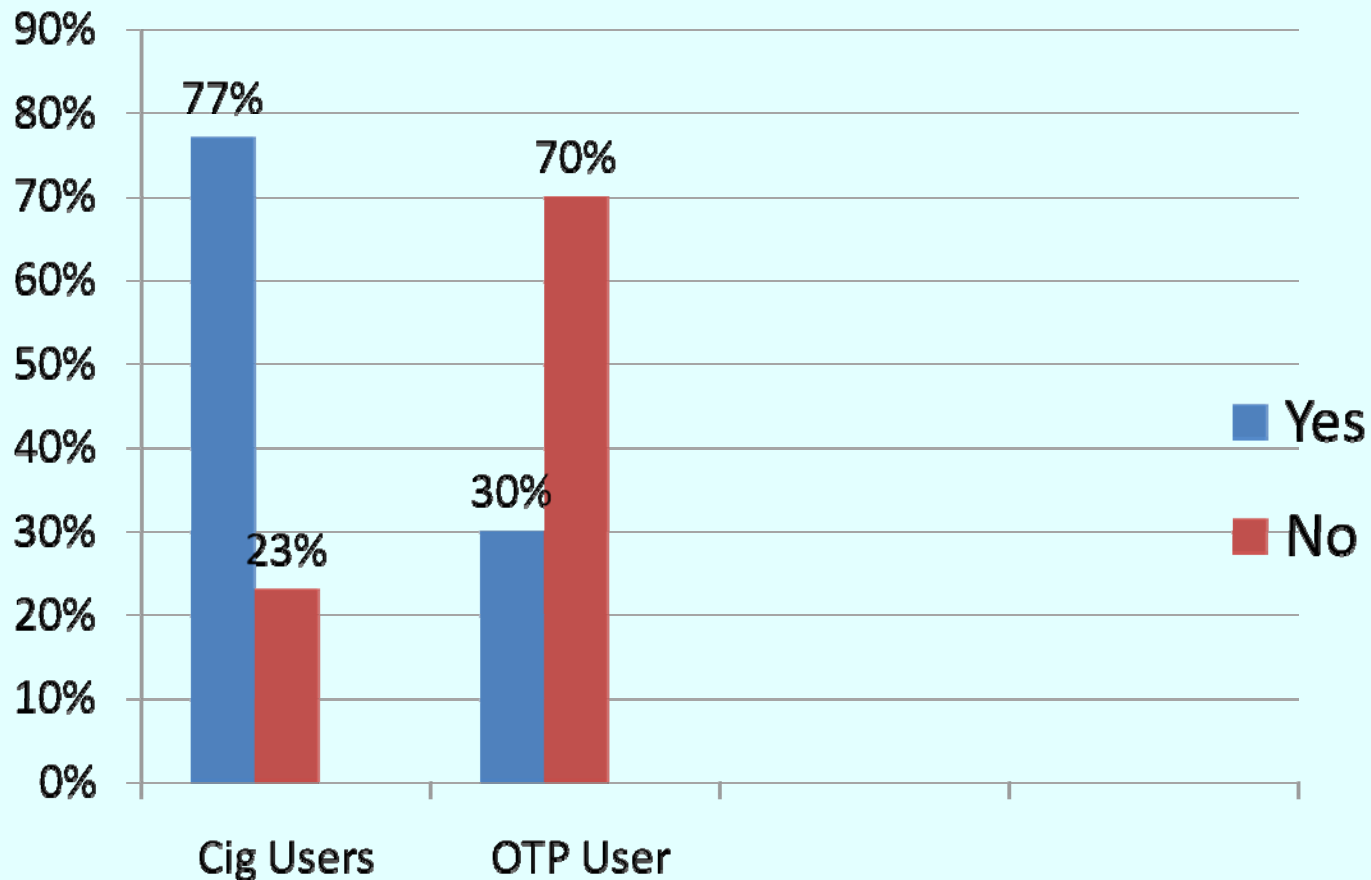
Methodology

- ✚ Cross-sectional survey with a sample size of 500.
- ✚ Railway stations were chosen for randomization which controlled for gender, age, education, religion and socio-economic status.
- ✚ Respondents were in the age range of 18-60 years.
- ✚ Interviewer based questionnaire was administered to study participants along with pictorial warnings.
- ✚ Pictorial warnings were of two types. One group(3 pictures were those which the MoH has proposed to use as tobacco label warnings.
- ✚ The second group(3 pictures) are pictorial warnings which are used by the Dept. of Preventive Oncology : Tata Memorial Hospital.

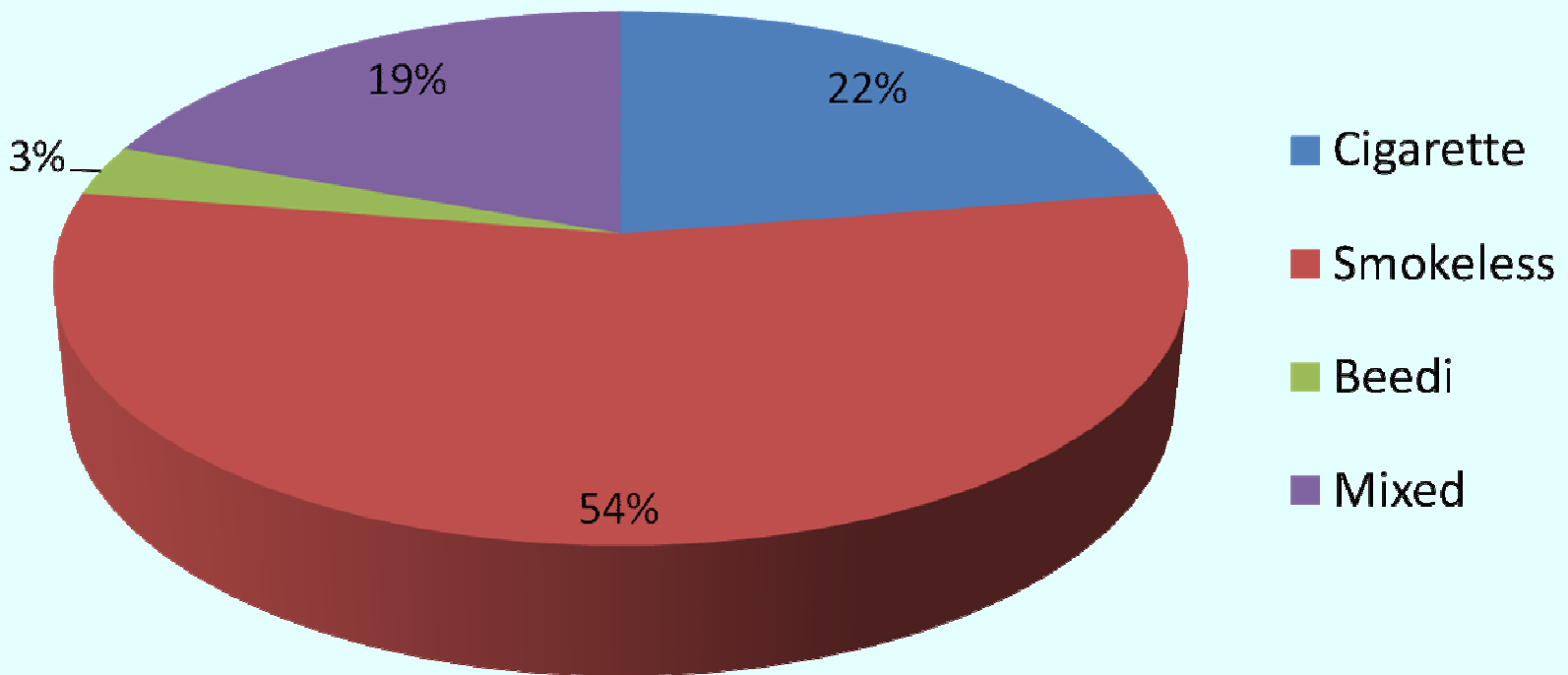
Gender wise distribution of Tobacco Use



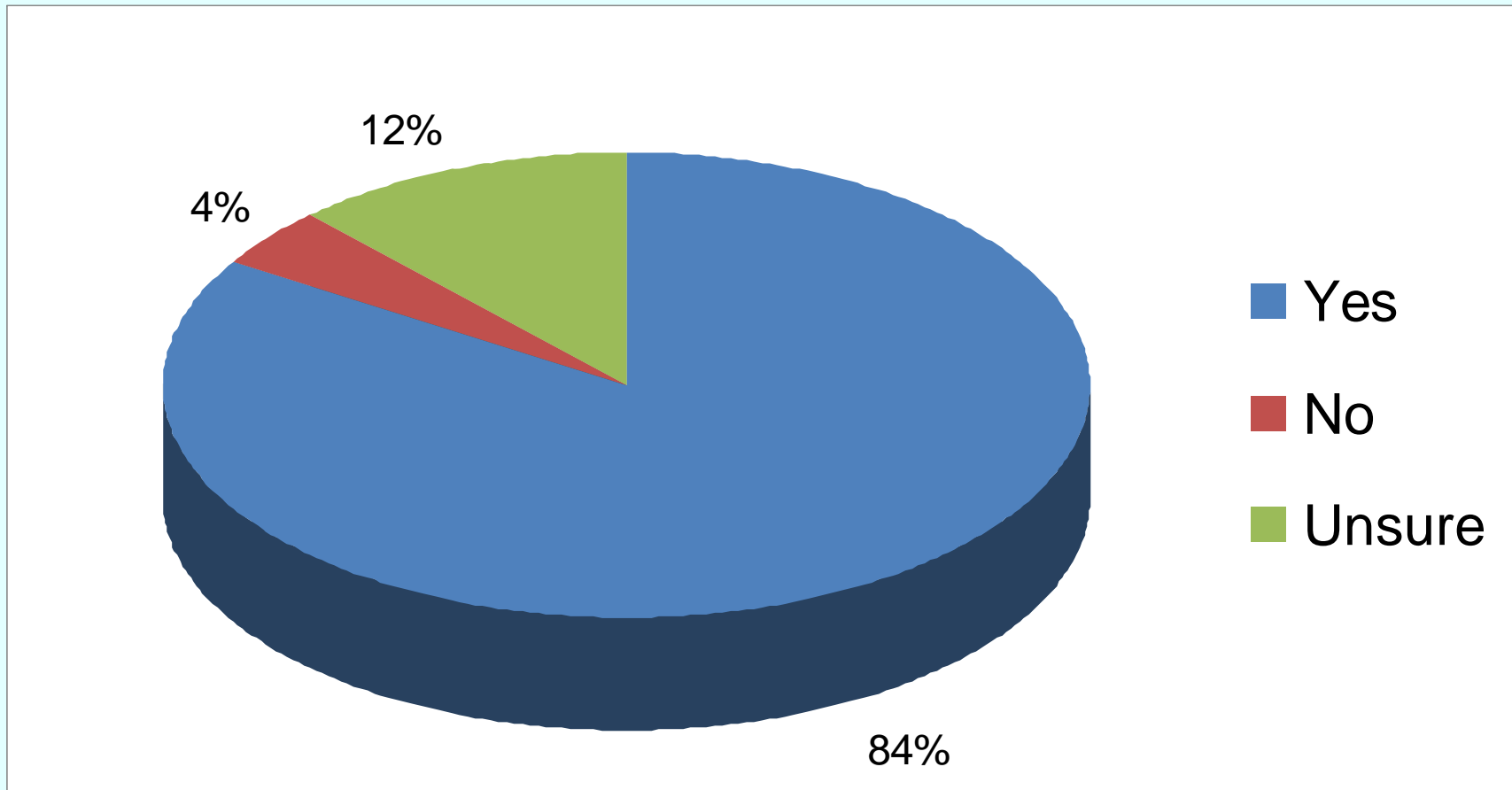
Can correctly recall the warning labels?



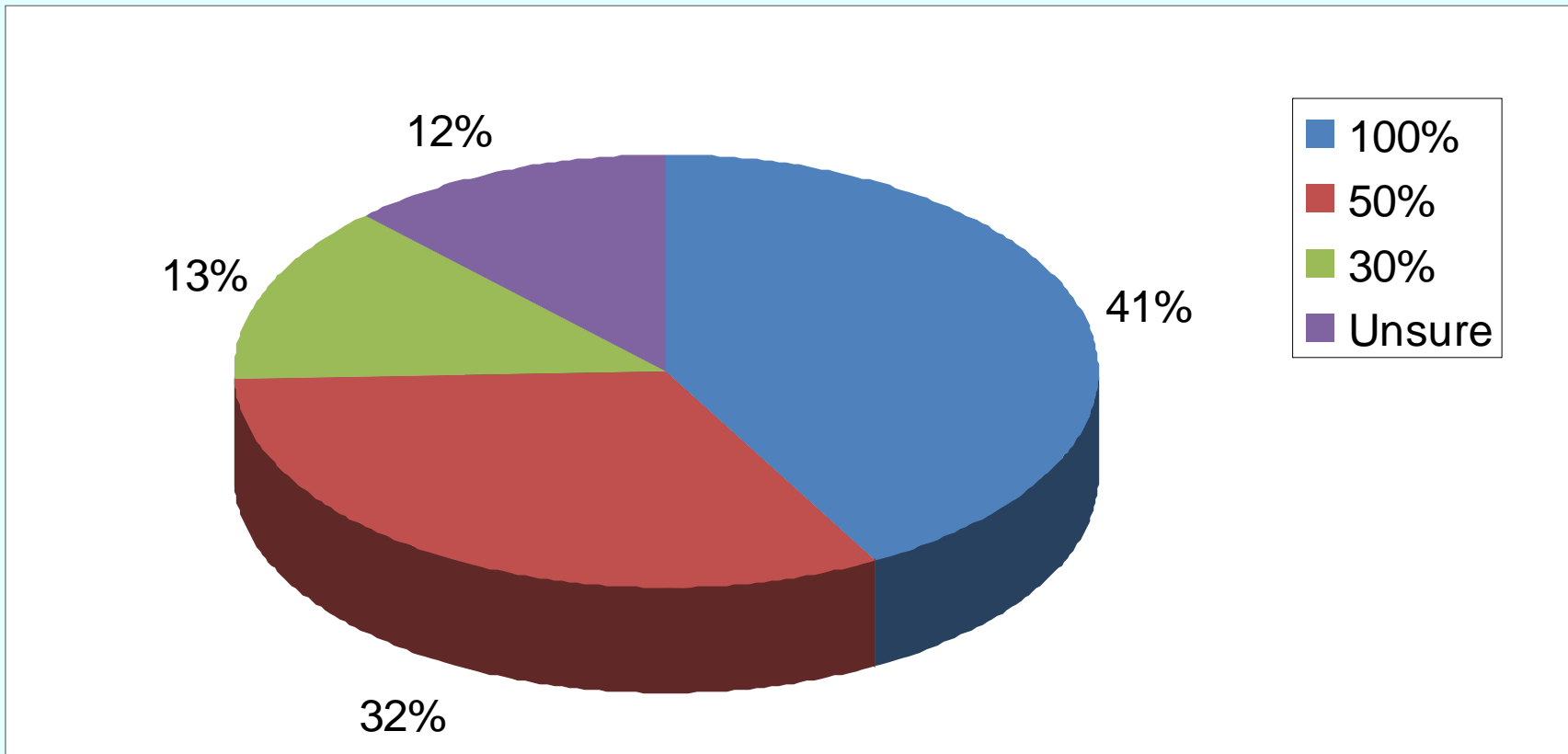
Forms of Tobacco Used



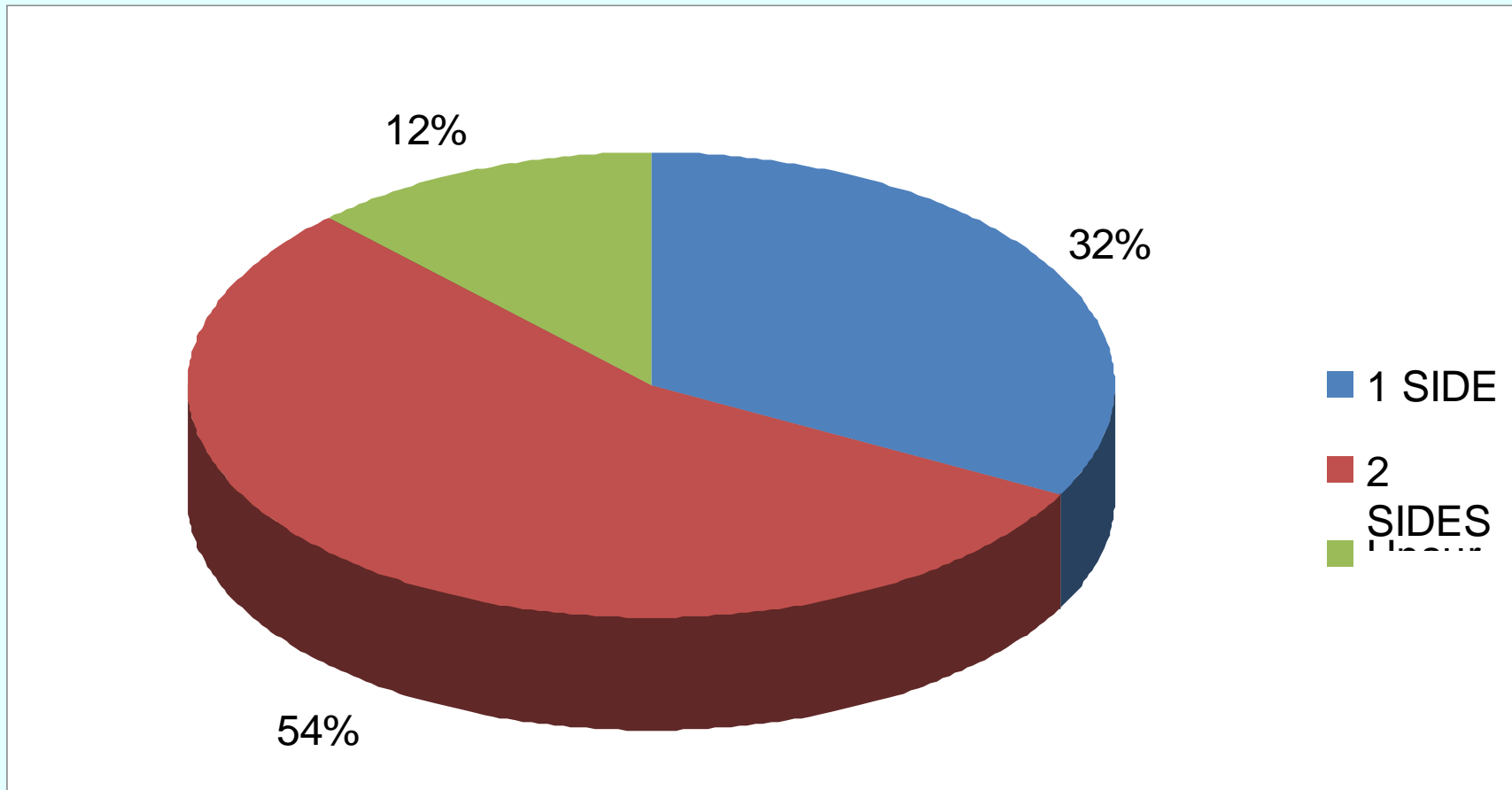
Will pictorial warnings be more effective than current warnings ?



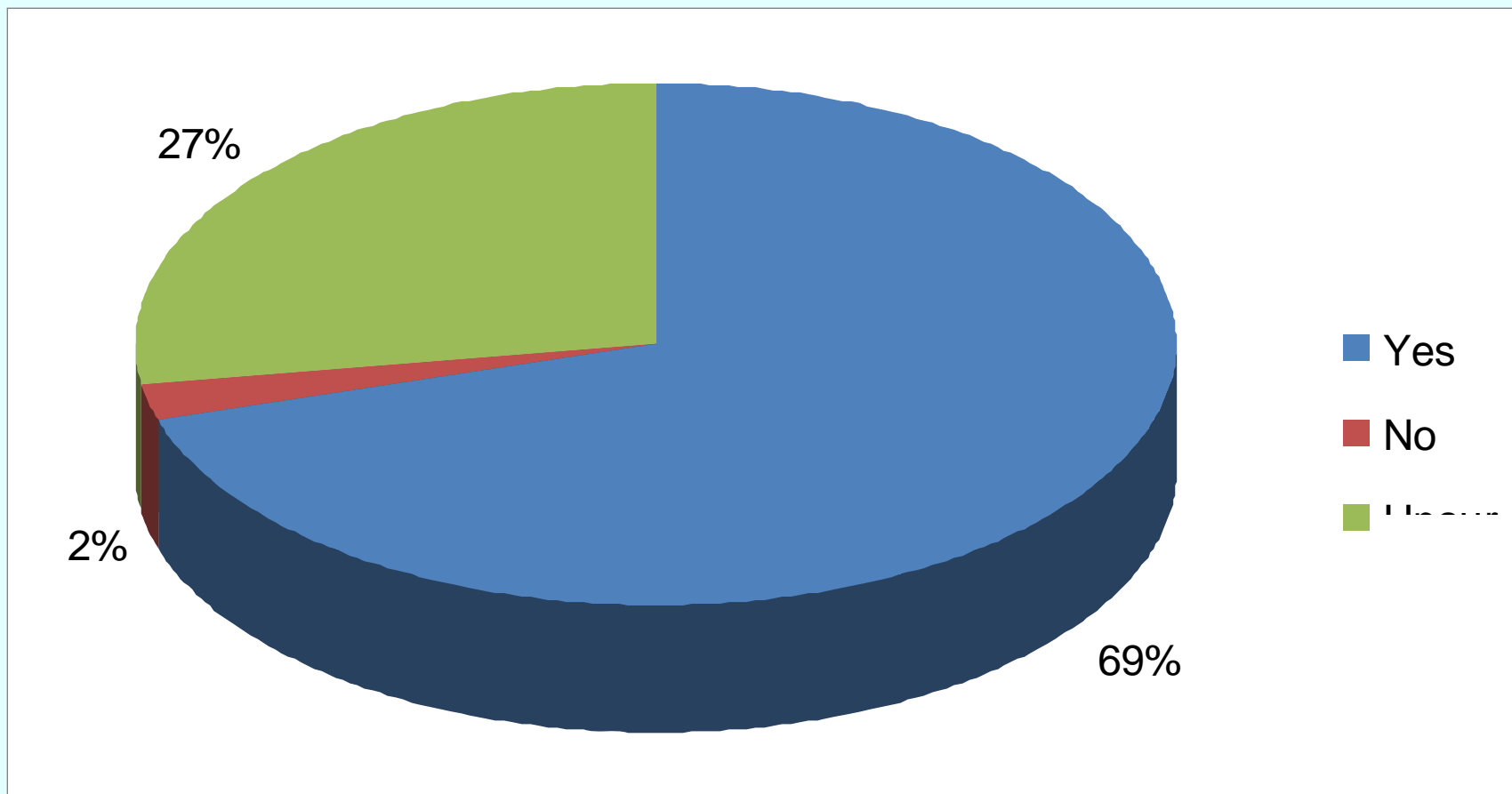
What size? If it covers one side only.



Should graphic label warning be one sided or two sided??



Should the law mandate pictorial warnings on tobacco products?



Which graphics caused the maximum impact?

धूम्रपान जानलेवा है



तम्बाकू
से
कैंसर
होता है।

Which graphics cause the maximum impact?

धूम्रपान जानलेवा है



तम्बाकू
से
कैंसर
होता है।

Which graphics caused the maximum impact?



**Tobacco
Causes
Cancer**



**Smoking
can cause
a slow
and painful
death**

Conclusions

- ✚ A very high percentage of Mumbaikars are convinced that graphic label warnings are more effective (84%) and should be made mandatory for all tobacco products by law(69%)
- ✚ A large fraction of current tobacco users (90%) support having pictorial warnings on tobacco products and also feel that this will reduce usage as well as prevent initiation.
- ✚ Those who use smokeless forms of tobacco(gutka,masheri,zarda etc) have a very low recall rate for health warnings on the tobacco products. No written as well as no pictorial warnings.)
- ✚ Smokeless tobacco manufacturers are going completely scot-free and are not subject to any of the regulations that cigarette manufacturers are.
- ✚ This is a shame considering that the average person on the street is more likely to be a smokeless tobacco user(54%) vs. a cigarette user(22%)

Conclusions

- ✚ The graphic warnings that the MoH-India plan to use are not effective enough and do not relay the true extent of damage to the consumers.
- ✚ The MoH should take the advise of experts while making the graphic label warnings as the people of Mumbai clearly felt that the pictures used at the Tata Memorial Hospital-Mumbai for patient education, were clearly more effective(79%) as opposed to the pictures used by the MoH(24%)
- ✚ 85% Respondents in the Healis , VHAI study felt pictorial warnings should be displayed within 3 months(in October 2008) and 65% said that they are highly concerned by the delay in implementation.

And the 10 million (1 crore) rupee question is...



- ✚ If the average person on the streets of Mumbai is pro graphic label warnings, wants it to be 100%(one sided), is sure it will cause a very positive health impact and is deeply concerned by so many delays in implementation, then why is the Indian Government failing him/her?
 - a. Strong pressure from the tobacco lobby
 - b. Vote bank politics
 - c. Our politicians apathy to the health of the Indian citizen.
 - d. All of the above

- Pictorial Warning -



From -
TOI - 16/2/09

pankaj

MINISTER NATION'S
SMOKING \ IS INJURIOUS TO \ HEALTH