

Compliance with Health Warning Requirements on Cigarette Packs: A Nine-Country Study

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Background

- Health warning labels (HWLs) on cigarette packs are important for communicating the risk of using cigarettes
- We assessed whether HWLs are being implemented as required by law in nine low- and middle-income countries

Methods

- Cigarette packs systematically purchased in nine countries in 2013: Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam
- In each country, bought one of every unique cigarette pack from sample of vendors in 36 low-, middle- and high-socioeconomic areas across three major cities
- Two independent coders assessed packs for compliance with four components of HWL requirements in force at time packs were purchased: warning location, warning size, warning text colors, warning text font
- To determine compliance with coverage requirements, used cutoff of one percentage point less than what was required (e.g., if HWL had to cover 30 percent of front panel, coverage greater than 29 percent was categorized as compliant)
- Packs had to meet coverage requirements for both front and back panels (where appropriate) to be considered coverage compliant
- Descriptive statistics conducted using Stata 13

Discussion

- Compliance with all four key HWL requirements was high for packs from all countries except for India where 47 percent of the packs were compliant and the Philippines where 17 percent of packs were compliant
- In most instances of non-compliance, warnings or warning text were found to be smaller than specified by country requirements
- Continual surveillance of tobacco packaging can inform advocacy efforts to strengthen implementation of packaging and labeling laws
- Since data collection, Viet Nam, Thailand and Indonesia have implemented new HWLs; India, Bangladesh, Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines have passed new HWL regulations

Results



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