

Compliance of Tobacco Packs with Health Warning Requirements

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Background

Article 11 of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) requires that parties implement effective tobacco packaging and labeling measures to increase public awareness of the negative health impacts of tobacco products. The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) documents the variety of tobacco packs available in 14 low- and middle-income countries and monitors whether health warnings are being implemented as intended.

Methods

- Tobacco packs, including bidis, systematically purchased in 14 countries in 2013 (n=3,328)
- Three sample cities selected in each country, based on population and diversity; in each city, 12 vendors selected from different socioeconomic neighborhoods
- Cigarette packs displaying health warning labels (HWL) in rotation at time of purchase coded for key HWL requirements by two independent coders for 10 countries to date (n=1,199)

Results

Compliance with four key HWL requirements: 1) warning location; 2) warning size; 3) warning label elements (e.g. color of warning and warning content); and 4) warning text size



Conclusions

- Compliance with all key HWL requirements high for packs from all countries except India, where less than half of packs were compliant, and the Philippines where only 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, Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam have implemented new HWLs; Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Pakistan and the Philippines have passed new HWL regulations

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