Smokers’ Responses to Graphic Warnings in New Zealand by Ethnicity and Deprivation

Judy Li¹, Nick Wilson¹ (presenter), Janet Hoek², Deepa Weerasekera¹, Richard Edwards¹

(1) Department of Public Health
(2) Department of Marketing (Dunedin)
University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand
NEW ZEALAND
Investigators and Funders

Key agencies involved
University of Otago
University of Auckland
Ministry of Health

Funding
Health Research Council of New Zealand

In-Country Investigators
Nick Wilson  University of Otago  nick.wilson@otago.ac.nz
Richard Edwards  University of Otago  richard.edwards@otago.ac.nz
And 8 other team members (see our website: http://www.wnmeds.ac.nz/itcproject.html)

International Investigators
Geoffrey Fong (Canada)  University of Waterloo  gfong@watarts.uwaterloo.ca
Mary Thompson (Canada)  University of Waterloo  methomps@uwaterloo.ca
Mike Cummings (United States)  Roswell Park  michael.cummings@roswellpark.org
Objectives

• To assess changes in smokers’ reactions towards on-pack warnings, after the introduction of graphic health warnings (GHWs)

Front – 30%  
Back – 90%
Methodology

- Sampling frame: NZ Health Survey
  - Representative national sample
  - Boosted sampling of Maori, Pacific and Asian

- Telephone surveys (CATI)

- Wave 1: 1376 smokers
- Wave 2: 923 smokers

- Includes responses from those who completed both waves

- Further details of the methods are online:
  http://www.wnmeds.ac.nz/itcproject.html
Methodology

• Standard ITC questions to assess reactions towards on-pack warnings *in the last month*

• Same questions used in both survey waves

• The extent the warning labels had…
  1) made them think about the health risks of smoking?
  2) made them think they are more likely to quit?
  3) stopped them from having a cigarette?
  4) led to avoidant behaviours? (covering-up warnings, keeping warnings out of sight, using a cigarette case, or avoiding particular warnings).
NEW ZEALAND
Timeline of Tobacco Control Policies and ITC Surveys

January 2004
• FCTC ratification
• Smoking banned in buildings and grounds of schools

December 2004
• Smoking banned in all indoor workplaces and hospitality venues
• Cigarette displays restricted

March 2008
Graphic warnings introduced

2006
• Some smoke-free parks policies introduced by local councils
• Debate about PoS display ban starts

2007

Wave 1
March 07 - Feb 08

Wave 2
March 08 - Feb 09

2002  2003  2004  2005  2006  2007  2008  2009
Results

Figure 1: Reactions towards warning labels in wave 1 (text warnings only) and wave 2 (after the new GHWs were introduced)
Results

- Figure 2: Reactions towards warning labels in waves 1 and 2, by ethnicity
Results

- Figure 3: Reactions towards warning labels in waves 1 and 2, by deprivation (small area measure)
Discussion

- These GHWs stimulated stronger reactions than text warnings

- These GHWs had stronger effects on indigenous and more deprived populations: so may contribute to reducing smoking-related health inequalities

- Effects of GHWs may be under-estimated here since some respondents may still have been buying packs with text warnings (at W2 interview in early 2008)
Possible responses

• Further research on priority audiences:
  • NZ example: identify components that produce the strongest effects for Maori. The graphics? The indigenous language?

To optimize the impact of GHWs:
• Increase size and range of GHWs?
• Increase “fear arousal” themes?
• Reduce visual clutter?
Thank you

Dr Nick Wilson

Department of Public Health
University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

nick.wilson@otago.ac.nz

For more information on the NZ ITC Project and reports:
http://www.wnmeds.ac.nz/itcproject.html