

Killer stick: What will make you stub it out

expertview

Only 50% smokers look at warnings



The new graphic pictorial warnings are definitely better than the old ones. It is unfortunate that only one picture has been notified. More such warnings must be introduced. It is established that a single pictorial warning will lose its effectiveness much faster than multiple warnings. That is why Thailand has nine pictures and Brazil has 10. A study was conducted, that asked respondents to assess effectiveness of current pictorial warnings in comparison to labels that were originally proposed in India as well as those implemented internationally. Among all tobacco users, only 50% smokers read or looked at the warnings in the past month, a majority of them didn't think about the health risks associated with tobacco use. Only a third of them thought about quitting tobacco use because of the warning labels. The results of this study indicate that the current warning labels in India are limited in reaching tobacco users and need to be amended. In addition, the message should be disseminated among women that smoking is not trendy or stylish.

—Prakash Gupta, director, Healis Sekhsaria Institute

From June 1, cigarette packets and tobacco products will carry a new set of pictorial health warnings. **Speak Up** asks if it will deter people from smoking



Smokers don't even listen to kin

I don't think putting pictorial health warnings on cigarette packets will impact those who are chain smokers. They hardly listen to even their family members and kin who may keep on telling them to quit smoking, since it is not good for their health. Secondly the government always comes up with such initiatives, but with time it is phased out or loses steam. If they start such a campaign they must run it seriously till the mission is completed. Results must be monitored and assessed.

—Reena Singh, media professional



Campaigns haven't worked earlier

Time and again measures have been taken by the government to make people aware about the hazards of smoking. But there seems to be no impact, we don't find many giving up the habit. The individuals who are addicted to smoking don't care about any warnings. The pictorial health warnings on cigarette packets may deter those wanting to try it for the first time. — Prashant Salla, shopkeeper



Need an effective deterrent

There is a need for some deterrent, which can forbid people from smoking. Gory pictorial health warnings will work since it will be hard hitting. People will think twice while buying a packet carrying warnings which shows a picture of oral cancer. Pictures should be put on a rotational basis. Everytime more



gruesome pictures must be used. —Pooja Raut, PR exec

Smokers will get the right message

A majority knows that smoking is injurious to health. Moreover all cigarette companies put warning messages on the packets, but people hardly care for it. Horrific pictorial warnings always draw attention of people. In this way, smokers will be alerted and they will easily get the right message. It will help in curbing the habit and halt spread of life-threatening diseases. —Farzana Tamboli, social worker



Illustrations can be understood even by illiterate

New warnings which show a picture of oral cancer can transmit the message better and effectively. It is superior than other



forms of communication like written text messages. Moreover pictorials can be understood by people who are illiterate too. If the pictures will be gruesome than the present ones, then people will think twice and will be reluctant to try cigarettes. It may even discourage people from carrying such packets on them.

—Sandeep Kothawade, engineer

Sellers may ingeniously wrap the cartons

I was a chain smoker.



Pictorial warnings on cigarette packets never stopped me. So I don't think that having new

repugnant pictures are going to deter people, because smokers have an option of not looking at them. Sellers may wrap the products in cloth or plastic. I tried to kick the habit for more than a decade, but I wasn't successful. Later my willpower prevailed over my craving. So a person's willpower to quit and awareness of hazardous effects will help the individual to tide over the habit. The tobacco lobby is so strong that cigarette packets will never go out of the market.

—Ajay D'souza, instructional designer