Evaluation of the effectiveness of health warnings on cigarette packs in China

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Abstract

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[Abstract] Objective To evaluate the effectiveness of health warnings on cigarette packs among Chinese residents. Methods 1169 individuals, including adult smokers, adult non-smokers and youth, balanced on gender, were selected from Beijing, Shanghai, Kunming, Yinchuan cities. The participants rated and ranked 10 real-size photographs of cigarette packs with a health warning. In addition to the two Chinese text warnings (one old and one new), there were 4 Chinese versions health warnings from foreign countries and the same 4 warnings with the picture removed. Results Regarding the effectiveness of motivating smokers to quit and convincing youth not to start smoking, the picture warnings were consistently ranked or rated in the top positions, followed by the 4 foreign text-only warnings. The old Chinese text warnings were consistently ranked or rated in the bottom. Results were very consistent across subject groups, cities and gender. Conclusion The new Chinese warning gained a small enhancement in term of effectiveness. It is necessary to use powerful health warnings on cigarette packs following the Article 11 of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to improve the effectiveness of the communication of health harm knowledge to the publics.

[Key words] Cigarette package; Health warning; Health knowledge

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