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The tobacco industry uses cigarette packaging to market cigarettes.

Industry documents reveal that:

1. Package design is a central strategy in the promotion of tobacco products.
2. Through pack design (both graphic and structure), the industry communicates specific attributes of a brand (e.g., certain colours mislead consumers to believe that a brand is less harmful).
3. The importance of the pack has increased as restrictions on advertising and promotion have increased.
Pack Design: du Maurier — Canada 2012

Colours
Plain packaging is a distinctly Canadian idea, with many benefits:

- Eliminates packaging as a form of advertising & promotion
- Denormalizes tobacco use
- Alters consumer perceptions of tobacco (Wakefield et al, 2002, Hammond et al, 2009)
- Directs smokers’ attention to health warnings (Munafò et al 2011, Hammond 2011)
- Potential to reduce consumption (Moodie et al 2012)
What is “Plain Packaging”

- Also known as standardized packaging or generic packaging
- Removes alluring and promotional imagery, brand logos and colours from all tobacco packages
- Base colour of all cigarette packs would be the same: dull and unappealing
- The structure of the pack is standardized (e.g., slim packs would be prohibited)
- Brand family and variety identified using a standardized font, font size and location on the pack
- However, pictorial health warnings will remain on plain packs
Plain Packaging — Australia 2012

Context
Plain Packaging
Importance
What is it?
Plain Packaging
Does it Work?
Research Objectives
Research Methods
Results
Limitations
Discussion
References
In a population survey of Australian smokers, Wakefield et al (2013) found that prior to the December 1st implementation deadline:

- about half of Australian smokers approved of the legislation
- support varied by whether smokers were currently smoking from a plain pack (52%) or a branded pack (42%)

Smokers’ perceptions of their cigarettes also differed by pack type. Plain pack smokers had significantly higher odds of:

- believing their cigarettes were of lower quality (OR = 1.66)
- believing their cigarettes were less satisfying than one year ago (OR = 1.70)

Plain pack smokers rated quitting as a higher priority than branded pack smokers.
1. To estimate recent levels of support for plain packaging among Canadian smokers

2. To examine whether support varies
   (a) internationally between Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia and
   (b) regionally within Canada

3. To examine the predictors of support for plain packaging
This study uses data from Wave 8 (2010–2011) of the ITC Four Country Survey. ITC is

- a longitudinal cohort survey that began in 2002
- nationally representative samples of adult smokers from Canada, the US, the UK and Australia
- smokers lost to attrition are replenished in subsequent waves
- smokers who quit are retained in the cohort

The ITC Survey uses standardized measures in all countries. Facilitates:

- international comparisons
- temporal comparisons
- natural experiments
## Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>UK*</th>
<th>AU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size (n)</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>1325</td>
<td>1513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-in-sample (months)†</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Recruited in Wave 8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age‡ (mean)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Ethnic minority</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Daily smokers</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Former smokers§</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No replenishment in Wave 8 in the UK.

† Elapsed time since recruitment for respondents not lost to attrition.

‡ Age at recruitment.

§ Quit for any length of time (< 1 month to > 1 year)
• Support for plain packaging, measured as agreement with

“Tobacco companies should be required to sell cigarettes in plain packages, that is, in packs without the usual brand colours and symbols, but keeping the warning labels.”

• Agreement measured using a 5 point Likert scale

1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

• and converted to a binary indicator of support (agree/strongly agree vs. otherwise)
### Other Measures

- **Socio-demographic**
  - Sex
  - Age (18–24, 25–39, 40–54, 55+)
  - Ethnicity (majority vs. minority group)
  - Income (low, moderate, high, not stated)
  - Education (low, moderate, high)

- **Behavioural**
  - Smoking status (daily, non-daily and quitters)
  - Cigarettes smoked per day (quitters assigned a value of zero)

- **Denormalization**
  - Composite scales of social and industry denormalization (higher scores indicated greater denormalization)
• Analysis conducted using current and former smokers
• Statistical methods for the analysis of complex survey data were employed
• Results were weighted and representative of adult smokers within each country
• Logistic regression to estimate
  – to estimate the prevalence of support for plain packaging
  – to examine predictors of support for plain packaging
• Differences were tested
  – between countries
  – between regions within Canada
Support for plain packaging differed by country (p < 0.01)
Support among Canadian smokers significantly higher than among smokers from the other countries (all p < 0.02)
Predictors of Support for Plain Packaging

- Age: Older smokers were more likely to support plain packaging
- Ethnicity: Minority smokers more likely to support plain packaging
- Education: Low education smokers were more likely to support plain packaging than moderate education smokers
- Industry denormalization: Those who believed that tobacco products should be more tightly regulated and/or that the government should do more to tackle the harm done by smoking were more likely to support plain packaging
• Support for plain packaging varied among current and former smokers across Canada (p < 0.01)
  - Highest in Quebec
  - Lowest in Ontario, Alberta and BC
Limitations

• Data come from a longitudinal cohort of smokers
  – Differential attrition across countries might limit the comparability of estimated levels of support (e.g., heavier smokers more likely to be lost)
  – However, the ITC sample is replenished in each wave
  – Estimates of support are adjusted for age, sex, smoking status and duration of participation

• Overall level of support for plain packaging might be over-estimated
  – Estimates based on current and former smokers
  – Former smokers tend to be more supportive of plain packaging
  – However, estimates are adjusted for smoking status
Plain packaging legislation eliminates the cigarette pack as a source of brand promotion

Australia was the first country in the world to introduce and enforce plain packaging legislation

This study demonstrates that in 2010–2011, 41% of Canadian smokers (current & former) agreed that cigarettes should be sold in plain packages

This level of support was significantly higher than it was among comparable cohorts of American, British and Australian smokers

Support for plain packaging differed across Canada, from 53% in Quebec to 30% in British Columbia
• Given:

1. That support for plain packaging was higher among Canadian smokers than among Australian smokers in 2010–2011 (prior to the implementation of the Australian legislation) and

2. That Australia has successfully implemented plain packaging legislation

• It is time to reconsider plain packaging legislation in Canada, learning from and building upon the Australian experience


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