
**WARNING LABELS FOCUS GROUPS:
RESPONSE TO CANADIAN WARNING LABELS**

**REPORT OF FINDINGS
FROM SMOKERS AND NON-SMOKERS FOCUS GROUPS**

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PREPARED FOR:

**OFFICE ON SMOKING AND HEALTH
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION**

PREPARED BY:



**ORC MACRO
11785 BELTSVILLE DRIVE, SUITE 300
CALVERTON, MARYLAND 20705
(301) 572-0200
WWW.MACROINT.COM**

**IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
OFFICE ON SMOKING AND HEALTH**

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I. Purpose Of The Study And The Research Objectives

A. EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Conclusive evidence has shown that tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of illness and death in the United States, causing more than 440,000 deaths each year.¹ Smoking leads to cancer, ischaemic heart disease, stroke, complications of pregnancy, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. More than 80 percent of lung cancer cases are directly related to tobacco use. An estimated 23 percent of American adults smoke and approximately 28 percent of young people less than 18 years of age are current smokers.^{1,2}

Health warnings have been present on cigarette packages in the United States since the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act of 1965 required that “Caution: Cigarette Smoking May Be Hazardous To Your Health” be placed in small print on one of the side panels of each cigarette pack. Between 1978 and 1980, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) conducted a review of literature on consumer’s knowledge of the health risks associated with smoking. Following the review, in 1981 the FTC concluded that the health warning is not effective in providing sufficient information to consumers about health hazards of smoking. Further, the FTC stated that the warning message was overexposed, outdated, abstract, and not personally relevant.³ The FTC also reported that the warning label on cigarette packages did not capture one’s attention, and the recall of the specific message was low.³ In the effort to make the warning label on cigarette packages more noticeable and informative to consumers the Commission recommended changes in both content and format.³ In 1984 four new messages on cigarette packages appeared as follows: 1) Surgeon General’s warning: Smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and may complicate pregnancy; 2) Quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health; 3) Smoking by pregnant women may result in fetal injury, premature birth, and low birth weight; 4) Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide.” The tobacco companies were required to use all four warning messages in a sequence approved by FTC for each brand of cigarettes.

Numerous studies have suggested that U.S. warning labels may not be effective in communicating health risks associated with smoking, especially among young people.⁴⁻⁸ Similar to findings in the FTC report, current U.S. warnings may fail to get the attention of smokers, an important first step in communicating health risks.⁴ This conclusion was supported by a recall and eye-tracking study with sixty-one adolescents to determine viewing time and duration of fixation on warning messages on cigarette packages.⁵ Fischer and colleagues found that only 8% of the advertisement viewing time was spent on the warning message.⁵ Further, in 43.6% of the cases participants did not view the warning labels at all.⁵ Studies have also reported that although persons can generally recall seeing health warnings on cigarette packages, they do not remember specifics.^{4,7} Additional criticism of warning labels on cigarette packages includes their uninformative and irrelevant content,^{4,7} vague wording,⁷ inadequate graphic design,⁷ and high readability level.⁸

Several qualitative and quantitative studies have examined major elements of warning labels to increase their noticeability and believability.^{4,7-17} Based on the results of these studies recommendations emerged to increase the effectiveness of warnings on cigarette packages, such as increasing the size,^{4,9-13} adding color images,^{4,7,9-11} using strong, personalized messages,^{7,10,13} using plain packaging,^{10,14} and including the tobacco ingredients on the packages.¹⁵

Australia and Canada had some success in enlarging and changing their warning labels in order to increase their impact.¹⁶⁻²¹ Australia implemented new warning labels in 1995, occupying 25% of the top of the front panel and 33% of the top of the back panel.¹³ In addition, toxic constituents were listed on a side panel.¹³ Post implementation surveys demonstrated high awareness of new labels.^{16,17} Sixteen percent of smokers reported mentioning these warnings and 6% reported avoiding buying cigarette packs with warnings.^{16,17} Canada implemented new warnings in 1994 which were black and white, occupying approximately 35% of the front and back of the main panels, as well as listing toxic constituents on a side panel.¹⁸ In 2000, Canada passed new regulations enlarging warnings to occupy 50% of front and back, and including 16 different messages (for cigarettes), some of which include color photos.^{18,19}

The new warning labels introduced in Australia and Canada attract attention of smokers,²⁰ increase awareness of health hazards of smoking,^{17,20} increase beliefs about the risks associated with smoking,^{16,18} and decrease cigarette consumption.^{16,17} Most importantly, smokers have reported that these warnings motivate them to quit smoking.^{20,21}

The purpose of the present study was to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and predicted behavior of young adults in the U.S. to the Canadian warning labels. During January and February of 2002, 12 focus groups were conducted in Detroit with youth adults between 18 and 24 years of age. Separate focus groups were held for current smokers, some college educated and non-college educated persons, and men and women. Detroit was selected because of proximity with the Canadian border and possible familiarity of participants with the Canadian warning labels.

B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this research project were to investigate and assess the following:

- Perceptions of current U.S. warning labels
- Reactions to current Canadian warning labels
- Perceived effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the Canadian labels
- Suggestions for modifications to the Canadian labels for U.S. purposes
- Potential impact of the labels on smoking cessation.
- Differences/similarities by educational status and gender.

II. Methodology

In order to address the research objectives outlined above, OSH contracted with ORC Macro to conduct a series of focus groups with young adults (ages 18-24 years). Focus group discussions provide a flexible tool for exploring respondent awareness, behavior, concerns, beliefs, experiences, motivation, operating practices, and future plans related to a particular topic and sub-issues. They are particularly useful for generating an in-depth understanding of issues, since a skilled moderator can amplify individual responses through group comments and feedback. In addition, a skilled moderator can follow up or probe certain tangents or views that were unanticipated in the design of the moderator's guide, often yielding new information or additional nuances of existing information. Thus, focus groups represent a critical method for generating promising directions for new areas of research for the development of a wide range of health communication activities, and were selected as the most appropriate research technique for this study.

While focus groups can be used to provide information about motivations and attitudes, they provide qualitative rather than quantitative data. Thus, it is important to remember when evaluating data from focus groups that the findings from focus group discussions are not necessarily generalizable to the population as a whole.

The maximum number of groups that could be conducted with the resources available was 12. The focus on 18-24 year olds was determined in order to obtain in-depth information from that group as they are legally able to purchase tobacco products and their prevalence rates have not been declining as they have in other age groups (MMWR, 2002). In addition, differences/similarities by smoking status, gender and educational status were of interest so the study population was segmented by dividing the groups into smokers and non-smokers, male and female, and to differentiate between those with at least some college experience and those without. While other segmentations were possible (smaller age spreads, race/ethnicity, income level), it was necessary to prioritize segmentation factors for purposes of this study, and those selected were the segmentations of greatest concern to OSH for this initial look at attitudes toward warning labels.

A decision also was made to conduct all of the focus groups in the Detroit, Michigan metropolitan area because it is located directly across the Detroit River from Windsor, Ontario. The assumption was made that at least some of the participants would have been exposed to the Canadian warning labels. The groups were held at a facility located in Oakland County, a suburb of Detroit, and participants were drawn from throughout the Detroit metropolitan region.

The study made an attempt to answer the following questions:

- What was the prior exposure of focus group participants in the Detroit metropolitan area to Canadian warning labels?
- What were the group participants' reactions to Canadian warning labels? Were there differences in responses by different segments, based on smoking status, gender, education status?
- What were the perceptions of Canadian warning labels in terms of their graphic images and content?

- What were the smokers’ reactions to these warnings in terms of providing incentives/motivations to quit?
- Did smokers think that any of the warning labels would keep young people from smoking?
- How did non-smokers react to the warnings? Did they think that any of the labels would encourage current smokers to quit, or prevent young people from beginning to smoke?

AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION

Focus groups rely on purposeful sampling, which requires convening relatively homogenous groups of people with something in common that is relevant to the study. A combination of exclusionary and segmentation criteria are necessary to identify these relatively homogenous groups. In all, four focus groups were conducted with college attendees/recent graduates and eight were conducted with respondents who had no more than a high school diploma or GED. Smokers were those individuals who responded that they smoked cigarettes in the past and had smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days. Non-smokers were individuals had not smoked a cigarette in the past six months, and did not plan on smoking in the next six months.

Table 1: Summary of Groups

Smokers <i>6 groups</i>	Male <i>3 groups</i>	College Students/Recent Graduates <i>1 group</i>
		Not in College <i>2 groups</i>
	Female <i>3 groups</i>	Not in College <i>2 groups</i>
		College Students/Recent Graduates <i>1 group</i>
Non-smokers <i>6 groups</i>	Male <i>3 groups</i>	College Students/Recent Graduates <i>1 group</i>
		Not in College <i>2 groups</i>
	Female <i>3 groups</i>	Not in College <i>2 groups</i>
		College Students/Recent Graduates <i>1 group</i>

All groups included a mix of race/ethnicity reflective of the racial and ethnic composition of the area. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Oakland County consists of 82.8% Caucasians, 10.1% African Americans, 4.1% Asians, 2.4% Hispanic or Latino origin, and 1% of others. The bordering Wayne County (Detroit City) consists of 51.7% Caucasians, 42.2% African Americans, 3.7% Hispanics or Latino origin, 1.7% Asians and 1% of others. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population, Public Law 94-171 Redistricting Data File. Updated every 10 years.

(<http://factfinder.census.gov>.)

RECRUITMENT

Participants were randomly selected from the Crimmins and Forman database of 35,000 households in Oakland country. The database is one that this recruitment facility has developed for over 11 years and contained demographic information, which reduced the number of calls that it was necessary to make. Crimmins and Forman staff used a screening questionnaire, developed by OSH and ORC Macro staff, to recruit participants (see Appendix B).

The recruitment calls began two weeks prior to the first focus group. When an individual agreed to participate, he or she was sent a flyer that briefly described the purpose of the discussion and stated the day, date, time, and location, as well as directions to the focus group facility. After agreeing to participate, they were told they would receive \$50.00 for their time and travel. The disposition of calls can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Call Dispositions for those who did not participate

Disposition	Number of Phone Calls
Total phone calls made	412
Business/Government	11
Initial Refusals	211
Language Barriers	1
Call Backs	35
Not eligible to participate based on Q.1 of the screening questionnaire (Work for CDC, tobacco industry, or market research firm)	22
Not eligible to participate based on Q.3 (Age)	67
Not eligible to participate based on Q.7 (Smoked past 6 months)	37
Not eligible to participate based on Q.8 (Plan on smoking in next 6 months)	28

The recruiters also encountered 46 busy signals and 6 disconnected numbers.

Table 3: Eligible Recruits

Category of Recruits	Number of Recruits
Smokers	82
Non-smokers	78
Total	160
College Degree/Recent Graduate	51
Not in College	109
Total	160

Category of Recruits	Number of Recruits
African American	49
Caucasian	110
Asian	1
Total	160

Respondents who arrived at the facility but were not needed for the groups, because the recruiting goal for the group had been attained, were reimbursed \$50 for their time and travel. Individuals who arrived at the facility last were those who were eliminated from participation, if sufficient numbers had been achieved.

A total of twelve groups were conducted for this study. However, because of a technical problem with one of the female non-smoker/not in college groups, only 11 groups are included in this report. A preliminary comparison of this group with the other female non-smoker /not in college group that was retained, showed that the content of the discussions were similar.

Table 4: Composition of Smokers Groups

Group Composition	Male			Female			TOTAL
	College Stu/Gr	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	College Stu/Gr	
Respondents who participated in focus group	9	9	9	9	9	9	54
Respondents who showed up but were not needed for focus group	1	4	4	-	-	-	9
Respondents who were invited to focus group but did not show up	2	2	2	5	4	4	19
Total number of respondents recruited	12	15	15	14	13	13	82

Table 5: Ethnic Composition of Smokers Groups

Group Composition	Male			Female			TOTAL
	College Stu/Gr	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	College Stu/Gr	
Respondents who participated in focus group	4 AA 5 C	4 AA 5 C	3 AA 6 C	2 AA 7 C	2 AA 7 C	3 AA 6 C	18 AA 36 C
Respondents who showed up but were not needed for focus group	1 C	4 C	1 AA 3 C	-	-	-	1 AA 8 C
Respondents who were invited to focus group but did not show up	2 C	2 C	1 AA 1 C	2 AA 3 C	3 AA 1 C	2 AA 2 C	8 AA 11 C
Total number of respondents recruited	4 AA 8 C	4 AA 11 C	5AA 10 C	4 AA 10 C	5 AA 8 C	5AA 8 C	27 AA 55 C

AA – African American, C – Caucasian

Table 6: Composition of Non-smokers Groups

Group Composition	Male			Female		TOTAL
	College Stu/Gr	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	College Stu/Gr	
Respondents who participated in focus group	7	7	9	9	9	41
Respondents who showed up but were not needed for focus group	-	-	1	3	2	6
Respondents who were invited to focus group but did not show up	5	7	2	2	3	19
Total number of respondents recruited	12	14	12	14	14	66

Table 7: Ethnic Composition of Non-smokers Groups

Group Composition	Male			Female		TOTAL
	College Stu/Gr	Not in college	Not in college	Not in college	College Stu/Gr	
Respondents who participated in focus group	4 AA 3 C	2 AA 1 A 4 C	2 AA 7 C	1 AA 8 C	4 AA 5 C	13 AA 1 A 27 C
Respondents who showed up but were not needed for focus group	-	-	1 C	3 C	2 C	6 C
Respondents who were invited to focus group but did not show up	5 C	2 AA 5 C	1 AA 1 C	2 AA	1 AA 2 C	6 AA 13 C
Total number of respondents recruited	4 AA 8 C	4 AA 1 A 9 C	3 AA 9 C	3 AA 11 C	5 AA 9 C	19 AA 1 A 46 C

AA – African American, A – Asian, C – Caucasian

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Two guides were developed for this project, one for smokers and the other for non-smokers. The discussion guides were developed by ORC Macro and OSH staff using the research objectives and research questions as the basis.

The discussion guides were divided into five sections. The first sections of the guides were designed to provide insight into why young adults do or do not choose to initiate and continue smoking cigarettes and were, therefore, different for smokers and non-smokers. The remaining four sections of the discussion guides were virtually identical for smokers and non-smokers. The second and the third section briefly explored the groups’ perceptions of the United States and Canadian warning labels. Section four comprised the major part of the discussion and extensively investigated participants’ reactions to the Canadian warning labels. The last section asked respondents to provide their own ideas for “the ideal tobacco warning label.” Copies of the discussion guides are available in Appendix C and Appendix D.

The key questions included in the discussion guides were as follows:

Section 1: Smoking Initiation and Habits

Smokers' Version

- When did you start smoking? What made you start smoking?
- Why do you like to smoke?
- How many cigarettes a day do you smoke? When do you smoke?
- Have you ever tried to quit smoking? How common is smoking among your friends and the people you work with?

Non-smokers' Version

- What are your reasons for not smoking? What don't you like about smoking?
- How common is smoking among your friends and the people you work with?
- Do smokers ever try to encourage you to smoke?
- What do you think about second-hand smoke?

Section 2: General Discussion about U.S. Warning Labels

- Have you ever seen health warning labels on cigarette packs?
- What do these warnings say?
- How do people react to warning labels? What is your reaction?
- Do you think these kinds of warning labels should be on cigarette packs?

Section 3: General discussion about Canadian Warning Labels

- Have you seen the Canadian warning labels on cigarette packs?
- What kind of impression did you have after viewing the images?

Section 4: Specific discussion about Canadian Warning Labels

- What are your reactions to the warning label on that packaging?
- What is this warning label trying to tell you?
- Do you think this kind of message might make young people less likely to start smoking?
- Who might react to these warning labels?
- Which of these warning labels would keep you from smoking?

Section 5: Ideal Warning Label

- Do you think the U.S. should change the information on cigarette packs?
- How could the U.S. warning label be modified/improved?

CONDUCT OF THE GROUPS

All of the groups were conducted in a professional focus group facility equipped with one-way mirrors, an observer viewing room, and a client lounge. The focus groups were video and audio taped. A moderator who had received specific training in moderating focus groups and had experience applying this technique guided each focus group discussion.

To gather additional information on the specific smoking behaviors of participants, participants were asked to complete a brief, self-administered information sheet prior to the start of

each group. Two separate information sheets were developed, one for smokers and the other one for non-smokers.

Each discussion lasted approximately 90 minutes. The moderator reviewed an informed consent form prior to the start of each group. Each participant signed the form before beginning the discussion. A copy of the informed consent form is available in Appendix E.

DATA ANALYSIS

Transcripts of all of the focus groups were evaluated using a content analysis method, to fulfill the need for a tool for “making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context.”²² Specifically, content analysis was applied in this study in order to obtain greater clarity of themes and domains that appeared in group discussions, as well as to compare and contrast results and findings across different transcripts of different segments of respondents participating in the study.

Transcripts

As a first step of analysis, the data collected during the group discussions were documented in detailed transcripts provided in both hard copy and electronic form. The professional transcribing firm “Word for Word Reporters” was used to transcribe the audiotapes from all focus group discussions included in this study. The videotapes served as a back up for those parts of the discussions that were not discernible on the audiotape or when multiple participants talked at the same time. The transcripts of all the focus groups have been provided to the OSH client.

Word Index

A word index included with the transcripts helped to identify themes and domains in the discussions. This process was used both to determine the frequency of words or phrases in order to develop themes, as well as to assess the frequency of themes and domains that had already been identified.

The word index provided with the transcripts listed each word used in the discussions, tallied the number of times the particular word was used, and provided the location of the word in the transcript by specifying the page and line number.

The themes and data were identified, labeled, and categorized so that primary patterns could be detected. These patterns were then further examined to determine whether certain themes emerged. These themes could either be articulated directly by participants or identified by the study team.

Once the content and theme analyses were completed, we conducted a logical analysis, aimed at identifying patterns or themes that are not immediately obvious. The logical analysis also takes into consideration the outliers. A qualitative software package was not used to assist in this analysis.

When conducting content analysis, the researcher must first define the unit to be analyzed.²³ This unit can be as small as one word or as large as the whole document. Categories are then developed or defined, based on previous domains, and the units are coded based on the categories. A sample can then be analyzed and coded to assess the accuracy and reliability of the categories and

the coding process.²² The coding rules are revised to improve the system, and then all documents are coded, resulting in a quantitative frequency or measure of predominance of each category. This information can be very useful in validating the researcher's themes, or it can reveal that more analysis is needed to develop further, more contextually based themes. For example, a content analysis of the transcripts from the focus groups conducted for this project might discern that words like "addiction" and "addicted" were more commonly used by non-smokers than smokers. This might be the evidence that non-smokers do not attach the same emotional reaction as smokers do to the notion of the addictive aspect of tobacco use. It may be easier for non-smokers to state that smoking is an addiction.

III. Description of Participants— Key Demographic Information

A total of 105 respondents—54 smokers and 41 non-smokers—participated in the 11 groups used for analysis in this study. The average age of all participants, both smokers and non-smokers, was 21 years.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN SMOKERS GROUPS AND THEIR SMOKING HABITS

As expected, the broad definition of the term “smoker” resulted in the groups containing a mix of people who considered themselves to be social, occasional, and regular smokers as well as light, moderate, and heavy smokers. However, the unit of analysis in focus group research is the group itself and not the individuals within the group. Hence, themes and patterns by intensity and frequency of smoking can not be reported.

The greatest number of participants who identified themselves as smokers (19 out of 54) reported smoking their first cigarette at the age of 17 or older. Slightly more than half of the participants (28 out of 54) reported smoking a cigarette every day during the past 30 days. However, this pattern was more common in the not in college groups, than in the groups of those in college. Overall, 20 out of 54 participants reported smoking 11 to 20 cigarettes per day, followed by those who smoked 2 to 5 cigarettes per day (15 participants).

More participants said that they preferred non-menthol than menthol cigarettes, and the most frequently smoked brands of cigarettes were Marlboro® and Newport®.

The following chapters provide an analysis of the focus group discussions. Chapter IV provides information obtained from the smokers’ groups. Chapter V summarizes the results of the non-smokers’ groups. And, Chapter VI compares the findings from the smokers’ groups with those of the non-smokers’ groups.

IV. Smokers Findings

A. Smoking Initiation and Habits

When Did They Start Smoking?

We asked participants when they started smoking. While one person said she had tried smoking as young as eight or nine, most said that they started in middle or high school, with a few starting after high school. There were no discernible differences between men and women, or between college students/recent graduates and those participants who were not in college.

The following comments are representative of their responses to this question:

*“When I was about eight or nine, I ... would sneak and try to smoke cigarettes.”
Female Smoker, Not in College*

*“I started when I was 17, and I have smoked for probably close to four years.”
Female Smoker, Not in College*

*“I started in high school, probably like my freshman year. Just on and off at first. I started really smoking when I was a junior, probably, 17 years old.” Female Smoker,
College student/Recent graduate*

“I remember a couple of years ago, I started smoking with friends ... That was before high school actually.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

How Did the First Cigarette Smoking Experience Occur?

Each participant was asked to describe the first time they smoked a cigarette and what motivated them to do so. A variety of scenarios were described. For many, smoking was something that they said they started when they were with friends, often trying to “fit in.” Again, there were no discernible differences based upon gender or education level.

“[I started smoking because] all my friends in the neighborhood smoked. And the guy I liked smoked.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“It was trendy.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Trying to be cool.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Just being around it with friends smoking, you know. Things of that sort.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I started smoking ... because we were hanging out with kids that were in high school when we were in seventh and eighth grade, so we started smoking just to be cool. And then by the time I was a freshman in high school, I smoked because I had to.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Well, everybody around me was smoking. So that’s why I started. Yeah, I don’t think that I know anybody that doesn’t smoke.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I wanted to light one for everybody else. I just got curious.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

A second reason for smoking that was mentioned frequently in all of the groups was the influence of family members who smoked. Those who reported that family members smoked often said that they started smoking because they were following an example set by their parents or other family members. These participants also mentioned that the ease of smoking played an important role for them in deciding to smoke. People whose parents smoked did not have to hide the fact that they were smoking, and in many cases their smoking habits were accepted by the family members.

“Because they [parents] were doing it, so I tried.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I just used to see my dad. Every time he went in the bathroom, he took a cigarette with him. So every time I went in the bathroom, I started taking a cigarette.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“My parents smoked, and we lived next door to a party store and we knew the guys. We had a tab over there. So they let me get cigarettes for my parents all the time. I’d run over there and so I used to get my own and just started from there.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I started smoking because my mother and my grandmother smoked. And it was just like I tried it one day. And then somewhere down the line, I ended up doing it on a regular basis.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One person gave an “all-of-the-above” answer to the question of why he started smoking.

“I would say atmosphere. Measuring (sic) all my friends smoke, my family, my grandparents smoke. I knew I hang out (sic) in places, the atmosphere are ratty – clubs and bars, for smoking. I just gradually got into it.” Male Smoker, Not in College

We did not notice any discernable differences between male and female smokers, nor between those who are attending/had attended college or those who were in the “Not in College” group with respect to the ages, reasons, and circumstances in which they began smoking. Each person had his or her own story, and demographic differences did not appear to have been related to the reasons why people started smoking.

When Do They Smoke?

We asked smokers about when they smoked. Most of their responses fell into four main categories:

- As part of a daily routine
- With family and friends
- During breaks at work
- While using alcohol or marijuana

1. As part of a regular daily routine

For many of the participants, smoking was a part of their daily routine, incorporated almost unthinkingly into other activities. The activities themselves varied considerably from one person to another, but the consistent factor was that they occurred regularly for that person during that activity.

*“It’s just ... an urge I have after I get through eating. I have to have a cigarette.”
Female Smoker, Not in College*

“I started smoking [when I] was just commuting and driving, because[driving is] just boring. [Smoking] keeps me awake.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I can’t drive without smoking.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It keeps your hands busy, especially while you’re driving.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“And when you have your morning coffee.” Female Smoker, Not in College

2. With family and friends

Many participants described times that they were with family and friends as the primary situations in which they smoked. Some said that they smoked while out at bars with friends, or in other group settings. Others described a general atmosphere in which everyone around them smoked. Here are some of the comments that we heard about smoking with people who were close to them.

“I smoke because my girl smokes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Everyone [smokes] – at school, in my house, all my friends.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I think I’d quit if my best friend didn’t smoke. But she’d never do it. I mean, it’s hard when you’re around it.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em, you know? Because everybody I know smokes.” Female Smoker, Not in College

3. During breaks at work

Participants in several of the groups mentioned not only that they smoked regularly on breaks at work, but that they actually used smoking as an excuse to **take** a break.

“I use it to get out of working...” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Yes, sure. Like if you’re at work, it’s a reason to get out and not work for five minutes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Where I work it’s an excuse, because I waitress so it’s an excuse to go outside on break, pretty much.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I work with buyers and everybody smokes and that’s just what you’re around...” Female Smoker, Not in College

4. While using alcohol or marijuana

As mentioned previously, participants in all of the smokers’ groups mentioned that they smoked with family and friends. For some participants – those who said they did not consider themselves to be “regular” smokers – social situations were the only situations in which they said they smoked. And, for many of those who smoke in social situations, alcohol also was used. In addition to social situations, several participants mentioned that they combined the use of tobacco with marijuana.

“I only smoke when I drink really ... it makes me a little drunker. I mean, having it – it affects me and stuff like the nicotine. So, it puts me in a different state a little bit.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

In one Male Smokers Not in College group, the following exchange occurred –
 Moderator – *“Did any of you have any other reasons why you started smoking?”*
 Participant – *“Alcohol and drugs.”*
 Second participant – *“Alcohol.”*
 Moderator – *“So, it goes together?”*
 Participant – *“Yes, it does.”*

“I only smoke if I drink.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“If I go to a bar or to a party I probably smoke a pack and probably like 15 cigarettes a week.” Female Smoker, College/ Recent Graduate

“I don't smoke too often. It's just like maybe after smoking weed or something.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Just being around it with friends smoking, you know. Drinking. You got to smoke when you drink.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Why do People Smoke?

We asked participants why they smoked, and most of their answers reflected one of four reasons. They said that they smoked because of:

- Habit
- Addiction

- Social Influence
- Emotional Needs

One of the reasons given for “why” people smoke has a direct relationship to “when” they smoked, according to the participants. When asked “when” they smoked (see page 13), many smoking participants indicated that they smoked when they were with family members and friends who smoked. Similarly, when asked “why” they smoked, participants said that they smoked because of social influences – their family and friends were smokers (see page 17).

1. Habit

Most smoking participants, including those who smoke on a regular basis, said that smoking cigarettes is a habit. They tended to use the word “habit” when talking about smoking.

“I guess that's just a habit. It's just there. It's like brushing your teeth in the morning.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I'm not really proud of it. It's just a habit.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[It's] the habit that I have that I can't break.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“It's just out of habit, I think.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“So then I got older I could just do it [smoke] on my own, so it became a habit.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

2. Addiction

Others used the term “addiction” to describe why they smoked, and they tended to regard it as something stronger than a “habit.”

“It's expensive, but I mean, everything [is] an addiction. Once you try something, you're hooked on everything. Cigarettes, potato chips, pot. I'm not going to try no nico-raw (ph) patch. I ain't trying to stop.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I guess you just get so used to smoking, it doesn't feel right [not to smoke]. You might be sitting around and you start thinking about cigarettes and you might even smell it when nobody is around you. It's just real hard.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“It's like a must, the nicotine. You know? It's an addiction.” Male Smoker, Not in College

One person said that she smoked because, *“I am a weak human being. I need my nicotine.” Female Smoker, Not in College*

3. Social Influence

Participants in all of the groups indicated that smoking often had a social aspect to it. They tended to smoke because others around them smoked.

“I smoke because my girl smokes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“You don't want to be left out. You don't want to be square.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I do it as a social thing because my boyfriend smokes and it becomes sort of a habit.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Everybody doing it, so, you know, ‘Try this. Here man, here’s a cigarette. Oh, come on man, do it.’” Male Smoker, Not in College

4. Emotional Needs

Participants in several of the groups stressed the “calming” and “relaxing” feelings that they received when they smoked. Sometimes, they used the calming feeling as a substitute for stress of other “bad” feelings; at other times, people said that the calming feeling was a better alternative than boredom. Still others emphasized what they called a “high” feeling that they got from smoking.

I just get bored and need to occupy my time with something. Sometimes it just calms you down, you know.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Sometimes it calms your nerves, when people are bugging you. It’s your own personal time-out.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Calming your nerves. It’s relaxing.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It chills you out.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Like calms you down. Does something with your nerves. Does something.” Male Smoker, Not in College.

“For me, it depends on my day ... The only time I smoke is when I need to let out some stress and relax or something.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Have They Tried to Quit?

The question of whether or not they wanted to quit – or whether or not they had tried – was not an easy one for the smokers to answer. In all of the groups, ambivalence was expressed toward the idea of quitting. While some said they had tried seriously to quit, others said that their attempts to quit had been half-hearted, at best. In each of the smokers’ groups, at least one person said that he or she had tried to quit smoking. Some of them had tried to quit more than once. The specific reasons that they gave for trying to quit varied considerably from person to person.

“I tried, but it didn’t last. And my manager, she smokes like every five minutes, and she’s like, ‘Come on, take a smoke.’ So we go outside and she was always smoking out there. ‘No, I’m not going to smoke, I’m not going to smoke.’ But I couldn’t fight it, so...” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Several women said that they had quit smoking when they were pregnant, but then resumed smoking after the baby was born.

“I quit smoking when I was pregnant, you know, and for like two months after I had the baby. And then I was at home all day by myself, really, really super-bored. And so I’d go outside and smoke a cigarette.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I quit when I got pregnant. And then for three months after that, because I was breast feeding. His dad smokes, so I kind of just came back.” Female Smoker, Not in College

One woman admitted that her attempts to quit smoking were half-hearted at best.

“I never seriously tried. Like I would say, ‘I’m going to quit smoking.’ And then I wouldn’t smoke for three hours. I’d have a back-up pack just in case I lost it or something. I don’t know, I guess I’m just not ready to [quit].” Female Smoker, Not in College

Those who had tried to quit gave different reasons for their attempts.

“I was broke, and I couldn’t afford cigarettes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Because [I couldn’t] breathe when [I ran] up the stairs.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“[I try to quit] just because I sing, it’s bad for my voice.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[I tried to quit smoking] because I was sick of it, sick of smelling like smoke, sick of having stinky breath.” Male Smoker, Not in College

For a few of the respondents who were smokers, seeing close family members have serious health problems or die from smoking gave them additional reasons to consider quitting. However, despite their personal experiences with people who had become ill or died from smoking, these individuals continued to smoke.

“My grandma died of lung cancer. And sometimes I get like jittery about it and I’ll like throw my cigarettes out the window, stuff like that.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I would rather never have started – or quit tomorrow... My aunt died from lung cancer and she was a smoker for 20-some-odd years.” Female Smoker, Not in College

What Do Smokers Dislike About Smoking?

When asked what they disliked about their smoking habit, a common response was the smell that tobacco smoke leaves in the house, car, or on the clothes:

“I hate the way it smells.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I hate smoking in my car because it gets in the seats and the window gets a little film. It’s gross.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Even in clean clothes, you put them on and you’re like ‘yuck’.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

B. Perceptions of the U.S. Tobacco Warning Labels

What Did They Remember About U.S. Tobacco Warning Labels?

Participants in all smokers’ groups were asked whether they recalled seeing warning labels on cigarette packs and whether they paid attention to those warnings. Most participants said that they could recall seeing warnings on cigarette packs. However, most of them also indicated that they had not paid much attention to those warnings, and that they had difficulty remembering many of the warning messages.

“You see them, but I don’t think you read them. I don’t, at least.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If we paid any attention to it, we wouldn’t smoke, I’m sure.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“There’s warnings about everything. You can’t really be too concerned all the time.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Because you know the consequences when you start smoking, so you’re not going to really read it. You’ll be like, ‘oh my gosh, it does?’ And go on. Because you already know.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The words on the cigarette pack are nothing we don’t already know.” Female Smoker, Not in College

When asked about the content of warning messages on U.S. cigarette packs, participants referred most often to warnings about lung cancer, heart diseases, emphysema and pregnancy.

“They say about heart and lungs, heart disease or something like that. Emphysema.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Heart disease or lung cancer or those sort of things.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“...and this whole thing [warning] is about pregnancy.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Of all the warning messages mentioned, both male and female respondents most readily recalled the warning that women should not smoke during their pregnancy.

“Don't smoke if you're pregnant, it can cause birth defects.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Well, it says pregnant women should not smoke. It can cause damage to babies or whatever.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

How Effective Are U.S. Tobacco Warning Labels?

Despite the generally high level of awareness of the presence of warning labels, few participants in these smokers' focus groups said that they saw any connection between themselves and the warnings on cigarette packs. Most of the participants were able to rationalize why they thought the warnings were not applicable to them. In addition, most of the smokers (except for those female participants who were previously pregnant) said that they could not relate to the message about pregnancy, since they currently were not pregnant.

“It says pregnant women. I'm not a woman.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“You know, I'm not having a baby.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in the smokers' groups also were clear to point out that the warnings generally use the word “may” instead of “will” when describing the consequences of smoking. They interpreted this to mean that their chances of being adversely affected by possible consequences were less than if the warnings had said “will.” These sentiments were repeated later in the groups when the more strongly worded Canadian warning labels were discussed.

*“It says ‘Warning: **may** cause heart disease or birth complications.’ It's not definite.” Male Smoker, Not in College*

“[Saying] ‘May’ doesn't do anything.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Participants in the smokers' groups made numerous comments about the lack of impact that current warnings have upon them and their fellow smokers. The primary points that were brought up in group after group included:

- Smokers have already made the decision to smoke by the time they see a warning, so the warning will not affect them
- The labels tend to say the same thing, and smokers figure that they are excluded from the at-risk groups
- The warning labels are designed to blend in with the pack so that the user will not focus upon them.

Many of the participants in the smokers' groups said that people do not pay attention to warning labels placed on cigarette boxes. Some said that, even though they are aware of the fact that warnings are on the packs, they do not "care" about them. Gender and level of education did not appear to be factors in determining the level of impact that labels had on smokers. These sentiments were expressed in every single smokers' group.

"A lot of people just want a cigarette and they don't care about what it says on the box. They just open it and smoke it." Male Smoker, Not in College

"Because we all smoke, and we all have seen it, so obviously it's disregarded, you know." Male Smoker, Not in College

"I know they're there, but I don't think I've ever actually seen anyone sit down and read a pack of cigarettes...Unless the package looks odd, and you're like, man, those aren't my cigarettes." Female Smoker, Not in College

"If you've got the cigarette in hand, you're not thinking about it. You're really not. You're just thinking, 'I need to take care of this urge.'" Female Smoker, Not in College

"They may think about it once in a while, but they don't look at it and say, 'I've seen it on the label of this pack of cigarettes.'" Male Smoker, Not in College

"I don't look at them anymore. I used to for awhile, I want[ed] to see how many different types they had. But basically, don't smoke [if you're] pregnant, [have] heart disease, and that's about it." Male Smoker, Not in College

"A lot of people just want a cigarette and they don't care about what it says on the box. They just open it and smoke it." Male Smoker, Not in College

"The ones on the United States cigarettes there, it pretty much blends right into the pack." Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

"[They are not visible] on the side of the box." Male Smoker, Not in College

Who Requires Warning Labels?

When asked who requires warning labels on U.S. cigarette packs, some participants in all of the smokers’ groups were aware that the Surgeon General or “government” requires warning labels.

“That’s definitely the federal government, because if it was up to the cigarette companies, they wouldn’t put that on there.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“It has to have the Surgeon General warning.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

However, a few participants in both male and female smokers’ groups said that they thought tobacco manufacturers voluntarily place warning labels on their products to avoid lawsuit.

“To save their own butt. So they [smokers] can’t come back and sue them.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Whoever is making the cigarettes, they’re protecting themselves from not being sued or anything.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Should the Government Require Warning Labels?

Although most of the participants in these groups said that they did not pay much attention to warning labels, participants in all of the groups expressed the belief that cigarette packs should have warning labels on them.

“It should definitely tell you the bad.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“The warning should be there, just to let everybody know.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“[Warnings should be placed on cigarettes because] like he said, if something happens to you, that’s by your own choice. Like you can’t blame it on nobody.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I got little brothers and sisters, and if I could prevent them from smoking, I would. So I would want the warning labels, so I let them know don’t be like me.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Smokers also suggested that tobacco packs should list cigarette ingredients. They referred to the “Truth” anti-tobacco campaign that talks about ingredients present in cigarettes. Participants said they would like the same message to be conveyed by the packs of cigarettes.

“They should also put ingredients on the cigarette packs, like in the ‘Truth’ commercial.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Everybody should know, just like with diet tea. It has the ingredients, what's in there. Somebody might be allergic to something that's in there. So they should have it on there.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Only a few respondents from one group of males who were not in college questioned the need to require warnings on cigarette packs. Some of the participants in this group said that the warning would not change the behavior of smokers.

“I'm sure with some people it might make a difference, you know, one out of five, one out of ten, something like that. But I've never seen anybody throw a pack of cigarettes away just because there's a warning on the side. I've seen them throw it away because they're coughing too much off of them. They get tired of it and give it up.” Male Smoker, Not in College

C. Perception of Canadian Tobacco Warning Labels

Despite the fact that the focus groups were held in Detroit – across the Detroit River from Windsor, Ontario, Canada – only one or two participants in most of the smoking groups said that they had seen the Canadian cigarettes packs with the new warning labels prior to these focus groups. The exception to this rule was one group of female smokers who were in college or were recent college graduates. In that group, five of the nine participants had seen the Canadian warning labels. Those who reported seeing the Canadian cigarette packages also remembered seeing the warnings on them. In fact, they mentioned the warnings spontaneously and did not need to be probed about the presence of the warnings.

Participants who had seen the Canadian warnings said that the Canadian warnings convey substantially stronger messages than the U.S. warnings. Some of them also indicated that the Canadian-style warnings might actually discourage them from buying cigarettes that have such warnings on them.

“American cigarettes -- I've read the warning labels, and they all say the same thing. But Canada -- that makes me think a little bit more, because they're so blunt about it. They really say -- smoking is going to kill you (sic). That's on the label.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“When I was in Canada and I saw the cigarettes, it was just like, ‘I don't want this anymore. I don't want to smoke anymore. And I'll wait until I get back to America.’” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I didn't want a cigarette anymore, just looking at that picture because the pack that I had had the lady with the baby.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Some of them can be pretty distressing, actually.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“It just disgusts me, to be honest. I couldn't buy these cigarettes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in the smokers' groups stated that the Canadian warnings were more visible and more eye-catching than the U.S. warnings.

"[In the U.S.] warnings are like little on the side, and [in] Canada [they are] right there." Female Smoker, Not in College

"[In Canada] they are large, huge. They're on the front of the box, about that big. It just says 'Cigarettes cause lung cancer.' Some of them have pictures on them. I think brain tissue, pictures of the brains." Male Smoker, Not in College

D. Response to Canadian Warning Labels

Upon completion of the initial discussions about smoking habits and attitudes toward warning labels in general, respondents were shown six Canadian warning labels. The objective of this part of the discussion was to obtain participants' reactions to each of six very different labels. The labels were presented in each group in a different order to avoid any order bias. Differences between genders and educational status will be noted where applicable.

How Did They Respond to the Canadian Warning Labels?

It was clear from the reactions of the participants in all of the smokers' groups that the Canadian warning labels captured the attention of smokers in a way that the American warnings did not. Whether this strong reaction was due to the "newness" of the labels, the size of them, the visual images on them, or the actual wording of the messages was not immediately apparent. However, during the course of the groups, all of these factors were addressed individually.

The different Canadian warning labels evoked varying reactions from these smokers. Many of them expressed strong emotional reactions to the images that they saw and to the wording on the labels, including visible and audible expressions of disgust or surprise at some of the labels shown to them. One label (Tobacco use can make you impotent) resulted in laughter in all groups.

These smokers said that both smokers and non-smokers would react more strongly to the Canadian-style warnings than they react toward the current U.S. warnings. Typical comments were that the Canadian warnings were "eye-catching" and that they "stand out."

"It's really hard to ignore, because it's like half of the box." Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Many of the participants also expressed the belief that the Canadian warnings were informative because they provided facts, numbers and percentages. This, they said, made the Canadian warnings more convincing than the U.S. warnings, that do not cite facts and numbers.

"I think if our warning labels were more like those, people would read them once in a while. It would be better if [American warnings] had a message like that, and [gave] percentages and facts." Male Smoker, Not in College

Smokers in these focus groups also said that warnings that include pictures make a stronger impression on people than “just words.”

“It puts a visual picture in your head to go along with words that you've been hearing. So here's something like you can see, not just the words behind it. It's something you can see, so it's going to affect you maybe a little bit more.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“For most people it's easier to ignore something that's in writing, because they actually have to take the effort to read it. I mean, you just look at [the picture] and for the most part, people are pretty visual anyway, so if they see a picture, that's going to last with them a little bit longer than like statistics and facts and stuff like that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

They liked the idea that the Canadian warnings offer a variety of labels and that they are being rotated on the cigarette packs so “one person has a chance to come across any of them.” As one person said, “Any smoker can relate to at least one of them.”

“Well, I think maybe ... it has an effect on different people. ... It's good that they print all of them.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Smokers were divided over whether or not any warnings (even the Canadian-style) would have an impact on older, regular smokers and make them want to quit. The majority said that they believed, however, that warnings could influence teens who had not yet started smoking, people who smoke occasionally, or parents.

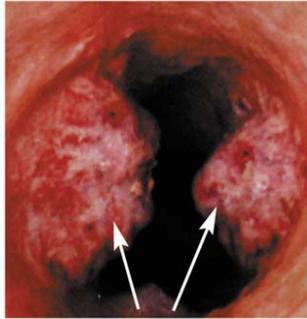
“I think that all these actually [would make] kids [teenagers] not start smoking, because kids believe everything they see, and they really take it to heart. And they really think ‘oh, my gosh, that's going to happen to me’ and it scares them.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It's good if kids see those on their parents' cigarettes. And then they look at something like this, or the one with the lungs or the one with the mouth, and they think that that's going to happen to their parents. And I'll tell you what, if you -- I mean, I have a son. ... three and a half, but if he came to me with, I mean, kids get really upset by stuff like that. And if he came to me 'Mom, this is going to happen to you and please stop', I would seriously consider quitting, you know, if he was to come to me and ask me that.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One person said, though, that even the more graphic, Canadian-style warnings would become familiar over time, and therefore less effective.

“I think there's a certain shock value. But like everything, once people see it enough, they're going to get used to it and it's not going to bother you any more.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

LABEL A – SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



lung cancer

WARNING

CIGARETTES CAUSE LUNG CANCER

85% of lung cancers are caused by smoking. 80% of lung cancer victims die within 3 years.

Health Canada

The overall message of this label – that smoking cigarettes causes lung cancer – was not new to smokers.

“Lung cancer, yeah. Just the fact that everyone knows about that.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Just because lung cancer is so prevalent with smoking.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The difference is with that one, you can't just look in a mirror and look inside your body and see if your lungs look like that.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“You could imagine that the lung cancer is a possibility, because this is something you could never notice.” Female Smoker, Not in College

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

Respondents were vocal in expressing their reactions toward the picture.

“This picture works because it's nasty. [It] gives you an idea of what your insides are going to look like if you continue. You wouldn't want anything on your body to look like that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it's dramatic. I don't want to see that.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I know the effects of smoking. I don't know if everybody else does. But I wouldn't buy those cigarettes with that picture on it.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“[I'd] put tape over it or something.” Male Smoker, Not in College

Some smokers in the Not in College groups suggested that the picture should be clearer and that a picture of a healthy lung should be included for comparison.

“I don't get this picture. Is this -- I mean, are these mounds of cancer on the lung?” Male Smoker, Not in College

“It looks like abstract art to me.” Male Smoker, Not in College

*“I think it would be better if they had like a picture of normal lungs on it, too.”
Female Smoker, Not in College*

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[85% of lung cancers are caused by smoking. 80% of lung cancer victims die within 3 years.]

Participants in both the male and female smokers’ groups said that the wording on this label contributed to the overall seriousness of the label’s message.

“The picture grabs my attention, but like the writing really would make me want to quit, too. Like the writing's really strong.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“And like some of the facts on the lung cancer one. Like I didn't really realize you know, you could die within three years. Or like those statistics of it.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Smokers, both male and female, said they were surprised that the percentage of lung cancer cases caused by smoking was “so high.”

“It shocks me to see that those percentages are so high. I mean, I knew it was there but I didn't know it was so high.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The warning labels nowadays say it may cause it. This here would actually kind of make you think, show you the risk of it.” Male Smoker, Not in College

One person in a male college student/recent graduate group said, however, that he probably wouldn’t read the message.

“I’m not going to read that. If it’s between me reading that and taking a cigarette out, I’m going to take the cigarette out and read that after I finish the cigarette. If I finish the cigarette, I ain’t gonna care.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Some participants in each of the smokers’ groups said that this label would make them consider quitting. The comments below illustrate the strong reactions to this warning label.

“Like this would get me to quit smoking.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I’m on the brink of quitting right now, so seeing stuff like this, you know, puts more thoughts in my head, that would make me want to quit.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I was going to say, I think that some people looking at this every single day, if they smoke these brand of cigarettes, they would probably quit.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I wouldn't think a cigarette company will put that on their pack, because they're still trying to sell their product, and that's going to make people stop.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

Participants in the female smokers’ focus groups said that this label probably would be effective in getting most smokers to think about the risks they were taking. However, many of them also said that long-time smokers probably would react most strongly to this label.

“People that have been smoking for a while.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Because even now, I'm sort of embarrassed to say that I hope I'm not going to be smoking when I'm old. ‘I'm not going to get lung cancer tomorrow.’ I've been smoking for like a year, two years. So maybe like definitely people that are older and have been smoking for like 10, 15, 20, 25 years.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Male smokers, on the other hand, did not specify any particular groups that would be influenced more than others by Label A.

LABEL B – SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTIONS

Label B caused some discussion in several of the smokers’ groups. Although the picture attracted a lot of attention – particularly in the womens’ groups — some expressed skepticism about the accuracy of the message. Both men and women said that they did not believe that smoking would cause teeth to look this bad.

“Yes, it's like too extreme.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This one is kind of far-fetched.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Perhaps this is really far-fetched because it's not like a common problem, you know. I work at a dentist's office, and I've never seen somebody with that problem.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This is what you've always been told, since you were younger that that's what your teeth will look like. But a lot of people in here smoke, and you don't see their teeth looking like that.” Male Smoker, Not in College

Two participants in different groups commented upon the fact that they could see how their mouths looked when smoking, but that lung cancer was unseen, and therefore people might react differently depending upon how visible a side effect was. For them, the “unseen danger” of lung cancer seemed more threatening than a visible mouth disease.

“People who have been smoking for a long time can look in the mirror and go ‘My mouth doesn't look like that. That's not happening to me.’ But you can't see what's going on inside of you.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“You can see it in the mirror. You can't see your lungs.” Female Smoker, Not in College

However, some smokers – especially those in the female smokers’ groups – pointed out that the appearance and hygiene of the mouth is very important to them.

“Because it's an appearance thing. When you go out, you want to look good. You want to have nice clothes on. You want to have your hair done. And your smile is your thing. You talk with your mouth. You don't want to be looking like that [on a picture].” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I think this is the best one. Because your smile is everything, I think.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Several men were skeptical about this label. They said that regular visits to the dentist and good dental hygiene would keep smokers’ teeth presentable.

“They've got stuff in the store you put on your teeth at night to prevent that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Sounds like a hygiene thing. I mean, if you don't take the time to at least brush your teeth once or twice a day, and you would let your teeth get like that, that's shame on you.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

Many smokers apparently did not realize that the image in this ad actually shows a mouth with a disease. Their comments indicated that they thought it was meant to represent the mouth of a

typical “heavy smoker” or of someone who chews tobacco.

For many smokers, therefore, the picture was considered to be unbelievable, unrealistic and “far-fetched.”

“I know people, like my grandma and grandpa smoked since they were like walking, and their teeth don't look like that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“All you've got to do is smile and look in a mirror and say your teeth ain't gagging [sic] like that.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I don't think my mouth's ever going to look like that from smoking, honestly. I hope not anyway.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“It looks like you stuffed some mud in your mouth. You know, it's not realistic.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I know someone who chewed tobacco that didn't smoke, and his mouth -- he had mouth cancer. But I've never ever seen anybody that looked like this. And I know people -- older people who smoked for years.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Participants in all of the groups tended to agree, however, that this picture was going to make a cigarette pack look very unattractive and unappealing. The following comments were typical:

“Even if it doesn't affect you about smoking, it just is a disgusting picture.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it's sick, though. I wouldn't buy a pack of cigarettes with that on them.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarette smoke causes oral cancer, gum diseases and tooth loss.]

Based on almost all of the smokers’ responses and reactions, the words on this label were much less effective than the picture. First, the words on the label did not attract much of the smokers’ attention. Secondly, they seemed to completely miss the message that this picture depicted a seriously diseased mouth, rather than a “typical” smoker’s mouth.

The smokers did not seem to understand that the overall message of this label was that “cigarette smoke causes oral cancer, gum disease and tooth loss,” rather than “this is how your mouth will look if you keep on smoking.”

“It's tooth decay is what it is.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I think that the lung one is better, because it actually says on there like a percentage, and that you could die in three years and stuff like that. And it's more

serious that way. And this, it just says you could get it. But I mean, could you die from this? I don't know." Female Smoker, Not in College

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Although many of the smokers were verbally skeptical about this label, they later expressed mixed reactions about whether or not it would be effective in getting them – or others - to quit smoking.

"I don't want my mouth to look like that. So I'd probably be thinking about quitting. It would go through my mind." Male Smoker, Not in College

"If my mouth started looking like that, I'd stop. But until then, why bother even stopping, if your mouth don't look like that." Male Smoker, Not in College

"Well, could you die, or are you just going to look nasty, you know what I mean?" Female Smoker, Not in College

"I just think if a lot of people saw this, they wouldn't do it. But then again, I've never seen anyone look that horrible. I don't know if I could really believe all of that." Female Smoker, Not in College

"Well, I think it goes more to not wanting to smoke if they see this picture, than just some warning on a box." Male Smoker, Not in College

"I think if you were to see this a lot, every day on the back of your cigarettes, you'd begin to think twice about smoking." Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

There were few clear-cut reactions to this label. Despite the perception of “mixed messages” that some smokers commented upon, others said that this label could be effective in getting people to think about possible negative effects of smoking, regardless of age, gender, and smoking status. However, still others suggested that young kids who do not smoke yet or those who have just begun smoking would be most influenced by this label.

"I just think it would reach more people, like more of an age group. It spreads— you know, like the younger kids and like older people." Female Smoker, Not in College

"I think it's a good warning label for the younger generation and the older generation because it could affect both, you know?" Female Smoker, Not in College

"Younger kids who try to go buy cigarettes would really be affected by this because they don't know better that there is a chance that this is going to happen to them. They think oh, my gosh, that's going to happen to me if I smoke this cigarette." Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Non-smokers and I think the younger, coming up smokers would probably react to it rather than older-type people. Because younger kids are more vulnerable to ads and stuff like that than older people that are more mature.” Male Smoker, Not in College

LABEL C – SMOKERS REACTIONS



WARNING
TOBACCO USE
CAN MAKE YOU
IMPOTENT

Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection.

Health Canada

OVERALL REACTIONS

Label C received a lot of attention in all of the focus groups. In the male groups in particular, non-verbal reactions, such as laughter and facial expressions of surprise, were especially noticeable and in many instances were just as telling as the verbal comments from those groups. The first reaction to this label in all groups was that it was “funny” because of the picture.

“My first reaction is, ‘It’s funny’.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I think it’s good to throw a funny one up in there somewhere because all the others are so sad and depressing.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This is below the belt.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in all of the smoker groups – male and female, college students/recent college graduates and those not in college – said that they had never heard that smoking could be a cause of impotence in men.

“I never heard this before. I never knew this. I never knew that smoking could cause that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“And many many many guys have never known that before.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Well, I know a lot of guys that are really particular about having the erection. And I know quite a few guys that really didn’t know this.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Few of the smokers said that they were concerned about the message of this label, and they said that it was “not as serious as the other ones.”

“It’s more of a joking kind of thing. It’s nothing that you would actually take [seriously].” Male Smoker, College student/Recent college graduate

“I’d say like if a lot of people after having intercourse, whatever, pick up a cigarette, light up. Okay, you’re going to look at this afterwards, sitting in the bed, laughing.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

However, after reading the words included in the label, one participant said, *“I think I’d rather have lung cancer than being impotent.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate*

Many smokers – particularly the men – said that they simply did not believe that smoking caused impotence, and therefore they did not believe the label. The label used the language “may cause” rather than “will cause”, so the participants considered the message to be less definitive than other messages they had seen. Secondly, none of the participants in the smokers’ groups had ever heard about anyone having a problem with erection as a result of smoking. Because they had not heard that consequence of smoking before, they said that they were less inclined to believe it.

“‘May’ cause it. I never heard of a guy having to take Viagra because they smoked a cigarette.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I don’t think this one would be as convincing [as some of the others] because you didn’t put a percentage rate on there. I think that’s why it doesn’t have one. Like the other one had a percentage rate to say it’s high risk I think this one would probably be real low risk...like a real low percentage of people get this from it. That’s probably why they didn’t put it on the label.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I think it’s more in line with the mouth one (Label B)... If you’re not having impotency issues, and you’re not thinking about it, [then] it’s not relevant to you.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

The smokers tended to regard the picture on Label C as “a joke” and “not serious.” However, it was the picture that drew the respondents’ initial attention to this label, and some said that the picture and the words conveyed conflicting messages.

“The picture is a joke - The words are not.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Like maybe if they didn’t have that picture on it, it would be taken more seriously.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“The cigarette pack looks.... with this one I’d be laughing. Yeah, I’d show it to people. I’d be like, ‘Look at this ad.’ It’s crazy. I don’t think it would do its best.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection.]

The message conveyed by Label C was new to all participants in the smokers' groups. Many of the smokers – especially males – said that the message was not believable due to the fact that it used the phrase “may cause” rather than “will cause.” In addition, they commented on the fact that this warning did not include numbers or percentages.

“They don't give any percentages. ‘May’ cause it. None of it's definite. All of it is a possibility. Everything is a possibility, so it still don't mean nothing.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don't think this one would be as convincing, because you didn't put a percentage rate on there. I think that's why it doesn't have one. Like the other one had a percentage rate to say it's high risk.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It's kind of hard to believe. I mean, I've never heard of it. I mean, I've never heard of nobody say it happened to them. You probably wouldn't believe it until it happened to you. Then you might want to think about it. Maybe that's what it was from. Smoking.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It says ‘may’ cause sexual impotence. Right there, I know my friends would be like -- if it says may -- it doesn't say that it will. It doesn't say that it will cause it. It says it might. So they have a chance; they have a 50/50 chance.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Would It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Of all of the warning labels shown to the focus groups, this one generated the greatest number of gender differences in terms of responses. Despite all of the criticism directed toward this label in the smokers' groups, many of the male smokers acknowledged that seeing such a message on a cigarette pack would cause them to have second thoughts about smoking, even though it would not be likely to cause smokers to actually quit.

“It could become a big problem. Then I would have to quit. This could convince somebody anyway.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I mean, this would probably make a guy think about it twice, but it probably wouldn't stop him from smoking. He'd probably forget about it in a couple of days. The next time he gets an erection, he'd probably forget about it.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Not surprisingly, female smokers said that this label would not keep them from smoking. However, female smokers said that they thought the threat of impotence could make “guys start thinking about quitting.” Many female smokers said that they would talk to their boyfriends about this warning. A few female participants asked the moderator for samples of this label, because they

wanted to show it to their boyfriends and other friends.

“Guys really worry about that kind of thing.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don't know how a guy could ever buy a pack of cigarettes with that on it.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I know I'm going to say something to my boyfriend later, just to tell him, you know, just so you know.” Female Smoker, College /Recent Graduate

One woman, though, did not see the potential of impotence as a credible threat for men, and said that her boyfriend would not be affected by such a warning.

“I think it's a good bar topic. I can see my friends sitting around laughing at this. I mean, it might be true, but it's not going to make like my fiancée to quit smoking.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Another woman suggested that men would not want to be seen with a cigarette pack that had the warning on it.

“Men, they're not going to want to have their cigarette pack sitting out when they're at the bar or at a restaurant so that somebody can read that and be like oh, you know. And just because men are so insecure about that, anyway.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

Males said that “older” men and women would be the most likely to be influenced by this warning.

“I think only the men who were having impotence problems right now would be like, oh.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don't think it's really going to affect the average male, 18 to 24, you know, when they're in their prime, they're not really going to be thinking about impotence problems, even if they are smoking. So that age range completely would ignore this kind of warning.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Women would react the strongest to this label because ain't no woman going to want her man to smoke these. If she married -- she's got quite a young husband, if she see, she'd be like “You'd better quit smoking them, because I don't plan on not being able to do nothing with you in five or ten years because of these cigarettes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Women generally agreed that the target of the message was men, and especially older men.

“This is for men of an older age or any man who is having sex.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Any man who is having sex.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent college graduate

“Older men, probably, who are already having problems.” Female Smoker, Not in College

LABEL D – SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTIONS

Label D generated little enthusiasm in any of the smokers’ groups, and was said by all of the smokers’ groups to be one of the least effective of all of the labels. The following reasons were cited throughout the smokers’ groups:

- They perceived this warning label to be directed toward non-smokers rather than smokers;
- The picture of a lit cigarette was seen as a positive image to smokers rather than as something that would keep them from smoking; and
- They said that their smoking generally did not interfere with the air quality of others because they either smoke outside or in places where it is customary to smoke, such as bars.

“Because if I’m out and about and I’m smoking in public or outside of a mall or whatever, and somebody doesn’t like it, then they can step aside. If you’re outside, there’s plenty of room out there. You know, if you don’t like it, get away from me.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Yeah, like the only place I smoke inside is like a restaurant. Otherwise, I’m outside. If you don’t like it, go inside. If I’m a smoker, I’ll be outside.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I don’t think too many people care if you’re outside smoking.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Most people don’t even care.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If you don't like smoke, they're going to say get out anyway. So if you don't like it, leave the bar. I'm going to smoke, so if you want to inhale, then you stay right here. If you don't, move on.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Only a few smokers said that they agreed in principle with the message of this warning:

“When I have quit smoking and I really didn't want to smoke, I didn't want to be around it. I'm trying to quit, I don't want to breathe it in. And someone smoking around me, when you stop smoking for a while, it's like the most disgusting thing in the world. It like makes you, eww, stop, you're nasty. So, either way, you're not going to win.” Female Smoker, Not in College

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

Interestingly, some of the participants in the smokers' groups said that they considered the picture on this label to be one that *encouraged* smoking rather than discouraging people from the habit. Others said that the picture did not evoke much of a reaction for them, one way or another.

“I guess the cigarette [is] glistening in the sun... it's so bright, and the light is like shining around the cigarette, and you grab it.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don't think the picture provoke as much thought. Not much visual impact.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“They're just pictures of cigarettes, and, you know, you look at it every day and you're smoking anyway.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Some smokers suggested that the picture could be improved to have more impact. For example, one respondent suggested including small children on the label.

“I think to make this more effective, you'd have like a group of kids. I'll never smoke around kids. Like I don't even want them around, because I know there's secondhand smoke. But if you do put a picture of kids, I think it would be a lot more effective, because you'd start thinking about that. Like you don't want to hurt them, if they're not choosing to smoke.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[You are not the only one smoking this cigarette. The smoke from a cigarette is not just inhaled by the smoker. It becomes secondhand smoke, which contains more than 50 cancer-causing agents.]

Reactions to the message on this label reflected a general sense among smokers in these focus groups that the issue of secondhand smoke is not a convincing one to them. Many of the participants in the smokers' groups minimized the importance of the message by saying things such as “smokers get the worst stuff out of a cigarette.”

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Even those smokers who agreed with the overall message that second-hand smoke can cause harm admitted that it would not encourage them to quit smoking. At best, it would limit where or when they smoked.

“I think it's asking more of you to just consider where you're smoking and who you're doing it in front of. And it's sort of an easier task to take upon somebody who's smokes. Like let's say you like to smoke a lot. Well, maybe after -- if you saw this a lot, you'd be like okay, well, you know, I'm not going to smoke in front of this person or that, you know.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Label?

Most participants in the smokers' groups said that this label was directed primarily toward non-smokers. Others said that it was directed toward smokers who live with people who have health problems.

“Targeted to people that don't smoke.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it's for people who have like health problems possibly, or people who live with people who have health problems. Like you've got someone who is asthmatic, like, you know, you're not going to want to smoke around them, because it makes it worse.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“But I think it all depends on the individual. Just being considerate of, you know, people around you that don't smoke. Like me, if I'm around some people that don't smoke, then I won't smoke.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Some smokers suggested that the message was directed to parents. Therefore, they said it should emphasize that children were the people most likely to be harmed by second-hand smoke.

“I don't want my kid breathing in that stuff even though I do. I've been doing it for such-and-such years. I don't want my kids -- I want my kids to do better than I did.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

It might make ... a mother think about it, or ... a father ... maybe ... you would stop smoking in your house or, you know, things like that.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

From the responses in the smokers' groups, it appears that smokers would be more influenced by this label if the label conveyed more clearly that the second-hand smoke could harm children or a family member with serious health problems. The picture on this label also would need to be modified to relate more clearly the potential dangers of second-hand smoke to those individuals.

LABEL E – SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTIONS

This label generated mixed responses among participants in the smokers’ groups. The strongest reactions came from participants who had children themselves or those whose parents had smoked when they were children.

“How can I tell my child no to smoke when I’m smoking?” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I did get mad when my mom or dad would tell me to quit smoking and start lighting a cigarette.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“If you don’t want your kids to do it, then don’t do it.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I mean, I’m sure it influenced me that I was around it. I’ve seen smoking and what it was or how they do it. You know?” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I can remember being about seven or eight. And when my mom would be at work and my grandmother would be watching us, I can remember using crayons and mimicking my mother smoking a cigarette. I used to do that all the time. That just came back to me looking at this. But yeah, it does have an effect on children, because I used to always act like my mom.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Like you know this, but you just have to be reminded of it.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

Participants in these groups said that the picture indicated that this warning label was directed mainly to parents, because it shows a woman smoking a cigarette and a child imitating her.

“I don’t see nowhere how it’s targeted towards men. Women will see this and be more affected than we would, for the simple fact of the picture.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

*“They’re basically trying to say what you do has influence on your kid, or could.”
Male Smoker, Not in College*

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Children see, children do. Your children are twice as likely to smoke if you do. Half of all premature deaths that involve life-long smokers result from tobacco use.]

According to participants in the smokers’ groups, the wording on this label addresses a broader range of recipients than does the picture. They said that the words are directed to parents and to people who are around children, such as aunts, uncles, and friends. More smokers said they could relate to this warning label because of what is written on it than they did when they simply looked at the picture.

“They say basically that if you’re a parent, your kid sees you doing it, your kid is going to think it’s okay to do it. Mom and Dad are doing it. Why can’t we?” Female Smoker, Not in College

“Just for the big letters at first, and then it’s about kids, you know, so you kind of want to read it.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Female smokers tended to react more directly to this label than did men, and mothers were most like to react positively toward it.

“I believe this is true, and that’s why I -- we plan on trying to quit before our son is old enough to understand it. Or there’s a double standard. You know, like you smoke so why can’t I.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I would [consider quit smoking], because I wouldn’t want my little girl to smoke.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Most male participants said that they would not consider quitting smoking as a result of seeing this label.

“Not strong enough.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced or Affected by This Warning?

Many of the participants in the smokers’ groups initially said that this warning label appeared to be directed primarily toward mothers. However, upon reading the words on the label, many of them said they thought that it also would influence parents and probably anyone who is around children, such as older siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.

“I think it’s more for a mom who does have kids.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“This would get a lot of parents.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

*“But I think that this one is more just geared towards people who have kids. You know? Because if you don't have a kid, you're not really going to think about that.”
Female Smoker, Not in College*

“This they should put on the cigarettes that the older people buy, because this wouldn't affect someone my age first. So if you have kids, it might but I don't have kids, so.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Well, I think it affects older siblings also. You don't want to smoke around your brothers or sisters. Children follow by example. If he's smoking, his brother's, you know, his younger brother's going to smoke. But if he saw this, he'd be like ‘Hey, I really shouldn't smoke around my brother or sister.’” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I have a 14-year-old sister and an 8-year-old sister, and the 14-year-old just got into high school and she started smoking about 2 months ago, and I just found out about it. And the biggest reason is because she sees me and my mom smoke constantly, so.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One smoker said that he thought the label was geared toward pregnant women.

“I think this one is more directed towards the parent that smokes and they're just pregnant for the first time. To kind of make them think twice about smoking when they're pregnant. I think it's directed more towards an older crowd.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate.

LABEL F – SMOKERS REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTIONS

Label F was among the labels that evoked one of the strongest reactions among smokers. Participants in all of the smokers' groups said that they were affected by this label.

“I just think it's really extreme.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“It made me worry about my brain.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“This one makes me want to read it, because I want to know what's going on.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

The message that “tobacco smoke can cause strokes” was new for many smokers.

“I think all you probably hear about it, really, is smoking causes cancer, cancer, cancer, cancer. You don’t hear about strokes.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“All you hear is like cancer and emphysema, really. Those are the like the two main things that I associate with smoking.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Like when I think about smoking, I don't think of me having a stroke. I think more of my lungs and stuff like that. So it's very informative, ‘Oh, wow, I didn't know that.’” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I didn't know that.” Male Smoker, Not in College
One person expressed a more cynical view, however.

“This is just another thing out of everyday life that can cause you to have a heart attack or a stroke.” Female Smoker, Not in College

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

The picture on this label evoked strong reactions similar to the reactions evoked by the picture of “lung cancer.” In fact, the picture of “a human brain with a stroke” was compared by most participants to the picture of “lung cancer” because both of them showed serious health consequences that can be caused by tobacco use.

“I think this goes along with the lung, the picture of the lung.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Many smokers stated that a cigarette pack with a picture of “a human brain with a stroke” would look very unappealing.

“Ain’t looking too good. I would be like ‘ugh’ picking and going through a pack of cigarettes like that.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I’d make sure to keep it in my pocket more than having it lay around my room.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Seeing a brain being all messed up, that’s going to turn you off..” Male Smoker, Not in College

“Ugly, really nasty. It looks very unattractive, just the opposite of their [tobacco companies] ads, you know, their ads are very attractive and appealing. And you look at the pack in the store and it's totally different than what their ads say. That's really bad.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The picture is pretty gross.” Female Smoker, Not in College

However, a couple of respondents in the smokers’ groups suggested that people also should be educated on how the healthy human brain looks.

“They [people] do not know what a normal brain looks like.” Female Smoker, Not in College

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarettes cause strokes. Tobacco smoke can cause the arteries of your brain to clog. This can block the blood vessels and cause a stroke. A stroke can cause disability and death.]

Many smokers, especially females, said that they appreciated the words included in this warning label because, first of all, the words explain and complement the picture. Secondly, they provide new information. Thirdly, they describe the process of getting a stroke “step-by-step.” Finally, the words were considered by respondents to stand out on this warning as they contrasted well with the background and are in a big font size.

“I think that the big words actually caught my attention before the picture because the picture -- you can't tell when you look at it, you know, and then -- and then you got to read, and then you realize what it is.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it’s a good message, because I didn’t know about it.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“I kind of like the message, because it kind of tells a story like a step-by-step process.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“It tells you a lot; it just doesn't give you like a general statement like our cigarettes do... But this actually gives you specific examples and pictures, how exactly those can happen or could happen.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Some male smokers expressed skepticism about the wording in Label F. They said that the message conveyed by those words appeared to be tentative. They also thought that a stroke was more likely to happen to an older, long-time heavy smoker rather than to a younger one.

“They're all like ‘what ifs’, basically, you know. You could possibly get this, or you could possibly get that. But none of this is established. Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If it was like if you smoke a cigarette, you’re going to have a stroke, then maybe it would have some effect.” Male Smoker, Not in College

“I don’t believe a kid that’s smoking today would be having a stroke. I know it takes time. It may happen after 20 or 25 years of smoking every day. Probably.” Male Smoker, Not in College

However, there were smokers for whom this message conveyed a sense of certainty.

“It can do that stuff to you. This ad is saying it will.” Male Smoker, Not in College

Would It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Smokers’ responses to this label indicated that for some of them, it would make them want to cut back or quit smoking.

“It might make me want to cut back.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Well, for me, I think it’s the brain (what would make her quit smoking), because my friend’s mother just had an artery get clogged, and it caused her to go into a coma and she died from it. So, I mean, who would want this to happen to them, actually? You die from something happening to your brain. That’s more important than lungs, with your lungs, at you least you get to live a couple of more years, but this is more serious to me.” Female Smoker, Not in College

“This one actually kind of hits me because my grandpa smoked for 50 years and he had his first stroke about a year-and-a-half ago.” Female Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This one actually makes me think, because my grandpa died of a stroke. So it actually hits somewhere, I mean, whereas the other ones, I was just sort of laughing at. Like this one actually like made a point, because I like can relate with it.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“They would probably prevent people from starting smoking.” Male Smoker, Not in College

One participant decided that he would not buy a pack of cigarettes with this label on it. His response was to try to ignore the message altogether.

“I’d probably switch brands.” Male Smoker, Not in College

To some respondents in these groups, however, the “lung cancer” label was viewed as a more striking argument to quit smoking than this one.

“I would be more caring about my lungs and stuff like that than having a stroke.” Female Smoker, Not in College

Who Would Be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

The most widely stated opinion among smokers in all the groups was that this label would influence “everyone” – a very wide range of smokers, from young to old.

“Everyone.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Nobody would want to have a stroke. Your whole side will mess up. You won't be the same. You can be disfigured, slurred speech.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

However, other smokers in the groups said that this label is directed to older people and to long-time heavy smokers.

“Old people, sensitive people. People who can't take like gory stuff, like blood and something like that.” Male Smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think about strokes and I think about older people. I would think more like an older person would like this more. But I would think it could happen to me.” Female Smokers, Not in College

One or two respondents said that young people would be most likely to pay attention to this label.

“I think this one probably goes back to the -- probably the 13 to 16 age range, probably, you know. If they see this and they read it, they'd probably say “I don't think I want to smoke. Because I know when I was younger, I don't think I cared less about what it would do to my body. But now that I'm getting older, I realize that actually it's not really good for me at all, and I should probably quit. But when I was younger, it didn't really have an effect on me.” Male Smoker, Not in College

E. Differences Between Population Segments

It is important to be cautious in interpreting qualitative data. Although focus group studies provide segmentation of populations, the actual number of groups conducted with each segment are not sufficient to make any generalizations about views and opinions of that population segment in society at large. In addition, not all relevant issues get addressed in all groups, so the fact that something was not mentioned in a particular group cannot be interpreted as lack of importance, or lack of interest in, that particular issue. All we can do is to note views that were or were not expressed in certain segments, and then use that information to help develop future research questions.

Given those caveats, there were not a lot of noticeable differences in the responses of smokers by gender or by level of education. In general, all groups responded most strongly to the lung cancer label, saying that it confirmed information they already knew and that it provided numbers and percentages to strengthen the argument that smoking causes lung cancer.

Similarly, one of the least effective warning labels, according to all of the smokers' groups, was the warning label on second-hand smoke. Many of them did not think that second-hand smoke was a big issue, and in terms of providing reasons for smokers to quit smoking, it was considered to be by far the weakest argument.

The most noticeable differences in responses among smokers occurred between men and women, and the differences in responses tended to occur in discussions related to gender-specific marketing ideas. For example, Label C – Impotence received a lot of attention in both male and female groups. Females, however, did not see it as a relevant issue to them, but they thought that men might be affected by such a message. The 18-24 year old men in our study, however, did not see this issue as being relevant to them, but they did think that “older” men and women (who would be concerned about their partners' virility) might take the warning more seriously.

Men and women also responded differently to the warning about gum diseases. We heard more expressions of concern about appearance among women than we did among men.

We did not note any great differences in the way that college students/recent graduates responded to the questions in comparison with people who were not in college.

In the following section of this report, we look at the responses of non-smokers to the same issues addressed by the smokers' groups. Although there are similarities in many of their responses, there also were notable differences. A comparison of smokers' responses with non-smokers' responses is discussed in Chapter VI, Discussion and Recommendations.

V. Non-Smokers Findings

A. How Do Non-Smokers Feel About Smoking?

Non-smokers in these focus groups expressed primarily negative attitudes toward smoking in general. Specific negative attributes of smoking mentioned in all of the non-smoker groups included:

- effects upon health and well-being;
- esthetic effects;
- the cost of smoking; and
- the effects of secondhand smoke upon others.

Effects upon health and well-being

Participants in all of the non-smoking groups were acutely aware of the health-related effects of smoking. While some participants talked about generally-known facts – that smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease, for example – others talked about the health effects that they observed in family members, or their own bodies when they themselves were smoking. The following comments were typical of comments heard in all of the non-smoking groups.

“You can get lung cancer.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s not good for your lungs and cardiovascular [system].” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s just bad for you.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think that we, as non-smokers,...intake [sic] ... how physically bad it is for you.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“My father smoked for about 35 years and he died of lung cancer. It has had a tremendous effect on my life. That’s why I stayed away from it; because I saw what it did to him.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[A friend of mine] smoked while she was pregnant with both her kids, and you know, it was really sad because ... about three months after the baby was born, they had to put her on home breathing treatments and stuff. And they just sat there while they were doing it. Smoking a cigarette.” Male Non-smoking, Non-college

“That’s the reason why when I did smoke that one time, I never did afterwards, because when you see the people talking through the tube on their neck, sounding like Darth Vader, you know...” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

There were no discernible differences in the responses between males or females, or between people in the college student/recent college graduate groups and those with no college

experience. All of the participants in all of the groups appeared to be acutely aware that smoking could cause serious health problems.

Esthetic effects

A number of non-smoking participants focused upon the negative esthetics associated with smoking – bad breath; smelly fingers, hair and clothes; stains on teeth and furniture; and the residual smell of smoke on furniture or draperies.

“It gives you bad breath.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don't like the way your fingers smell. If you have ever touched a cigarette or held one for somebody, or even if you smoked, your fingers, your body just stinks.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I know people who smoke, but I'm not around them all day because I can't stand the smell. After a while, I'm like, ‘You've got to go,’ you know.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It stinks. As far as with the chemicals, I have an example, my mom has a bed with a wall unit on it, and it's cream; but as time goes by, she used to smoke so much that it turned like a goldish color from all the smoke in the house.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“The smell, and if it can turn furniture a different color, I understand what it's doing with your body.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

The negative esthetic effects of smoking were noted in all groups, including both men and women and people in the college student/recent college graduate groups as well as those groups with no college education.

The cost of smoking

Some of the male non-smokers – both in the college student/recent college graduate groups and those in the non-college groups – said that they do not smoke because cigarettes are too expensive. Cost was not mentioned as a factor in the female non-smoking groups, however.

“I think it's a waste of money. I have a lot of friends who smoke, and they never have any money because they are spending \$4 a pack for those, smoking a pack a day. They never have money to do anything else. I spend my money on better things.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I'm cheap, I'm really cheap...[therefore] I couldn't imagine smoking.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Effects of second-hand smoke

Many of the non-smokers' comments reflected negative attitudes toward secondhand smoke, as well. They commented not only about the irritation of being subjected to others' smoke, but also about the health effects associated with second-hand smoke.

"I think it's kind of obnoxious [living with a smoker in the same house]... a regular smoker can't smell it, but you go to pick your clothes up the next day, and they are absolutely horrible to smell from the second-hand smoke." Female Non-smoker, Non-college

"I think, aside from the fact that it is not physically good for you, it's absolutely disgusting. I don't understand why anybody would want to put that into their body, knowing how it smells, like I can't be around it, let alone inhale it. And growing up in a household where my mother smokes is just horrible, absolutely horrible." Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

"It makes me nauseous. It seriously makes me nauseous." Male Non-smoker, Non-college

"It's really bad when you go to the restaurants where they have smoking sections. I cannot sit in there because it smells so bad. I can't even eat, it's just gross." Female Non-smoker, Non-college

"I just hate the fact that when I go places and people smoke and I'm going to die of cancer and I don't even smoke. I just wish there was something they could do about that for the people who don't smoke. If I go to a public place and you're smoking, I'm trying to protect myself from the things that kill me and I'm still getting killed because you're smoking." Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

"My roommate smokes and all of my friends. I try not to make it a big issue. Like I said, my roommate smokes, so I can't tell him no. He pays half of the rent." Male Non-smoker, Non-college

B. What Was Their Previous Experience with Smoking?

Previous experience with smoking among non-smokers in these groups tended to fall into three categories:

- Those who had smoked regularly at some time in the past
- Those who tried smoking once or twice
- Those who never smoked

There were at least a couple of participants in each non-smoker group who said that they had smoked regularly in the past. As with the smokers' groups, their experiences with smoking were varied, and their reasons for giving up smoking were equally varied.

“I smoked through high school. When I graduated, the prices went up and it got to be too much.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“When I was in sixth grade and I wanted to be like Kurt Cobain, I smoked for, I think, a whole summer.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“My parents used to tell me to go and light their cigarettes on the stove for them, and I was puffing while I was lighting it for them, ...So it was like a phase.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Some non-smoking participants said that they had tried to smoke once or twice sometime in the past, but that they had not developed a regular smoking habit from it for various reasons.

“I tried it once. One cigarette in my whole life. Never again...because it tastes bad. It tastes awful. It leaves like an aftertaste in your mouth, too, you know, after smoking.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

The only time I can remember trying cigarettes...is while intoxicated. I don't think I've ever had a cigarette just for the notion of having one.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The flavor was just absolutely horrible. So many people say, you know, it's not the smoking, it's the taste of a cigarette.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Many participants in the non-smokers groups said that they had never smoked. And, while some participants in the smokers' groups had said that they smoked because their parents or other relatives smoked, several participants in the non-smoker groups gave this as a reason why they did **not** smoke.

“I grew up when my parents were smoking, my mom and dad, and my grandparents. My mom used to make me run to the store all the time and get cigarettes, and I hated going to the store just to go buy cigarettes. Riding in the car with her while she was smoking was like torture.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It's probably the primary reason why I don't smoke because my parents both did, and my mom still does.... Getting out of the house is a relief; I can breathe.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Smoking as an addiction

Non-smokers said that they perceived smoking to be an addiction. When talking about smoking, they repeatedly used the word “addiction” to describe smokers' behaviors.

“I’ve asked people who smoke, ‘If you could go back in time and not start smoking, would you have still started?’ And he was like, ‘No, no.’ They’re addicted, so, they can’t stop.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It is addicting. You crave that nicotine.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Others said that the image of being addicted was enough to keep them from smoking.

“The whole thought of me being somewhere and, like every five or ten minutes, I’ve got to go outside and take a smoke. I couldn’t imagine being dependent on something like that.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

C. Perceptions of the U.S. Tobacco Warning Labels

Remembering Tobacco Warning Labels

Participants in all the non-smokers’ groups were asked whether they recalled seeing warning labels on cigarette packs and whether they paid attention to those warnings. The majority of non-smokers said that they did recall seeing warnings on cigarette packs. However, since they did not smoke, they understandably had not paid much attention to the specific wording or messages of the warnings.

Non-smoking participants did remember that warnings on the U.S. cigarette packs referred to specific conditions:

- lung cancer
- heart diseases
- emphysema
- dangers of smoking during pregnancy.

“May cause cancer or restrict a pregnancy.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It may cause premature and low birth weight.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think there is one for emphysema.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Yes, the little label says it causes heart attacks or whatever.” Male Non-smoking, Non-college

Of all the warning messages mentioned, however, both male and female respondents most frequently recalled the warning that women should not smoke during their pregnancy.

“It warns against pregnant women smoking and that it may be a cause of lung cancer.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“And it doesn't really say it's bad for you; it just says, ‘If you're pregnant’ or this or that.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Yes, pregnant women should not smoke.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Effectiveness of Warning Labels

As with the smokers' groups, participants in the non-smokers' groups said that the seriousness of the U.S. warning messages was compromised because of the use of the word “may” instead of “will” when describing the consequences of smoking. They said that, if the US government wanted people to take the warnings seriously, they needed to use more definite language.

“I think they need to change “may cause cancer” to “will cause cancer.” It's been proven in test after test that it does cause cancer. Somebody could feel as in a loophole, “May cause cancer, and it may not.” They should specify what they've done. It's a proven fact that this, this, and this can happen.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“But that ‘may’ is to capture the people who will say, ‘Maybe it won't.’ So, it should say ‘It will cause cancer,’ ‘It will cause health problems’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in all of the non-smoker groups also mirrored comments of the smokers' groups with respect to the fact that the current warnings are not very noticeable.

“So it's not very visible, it should be about the same size of the name of the cigarette, instead of it being that small.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It's very small, though. They always have the writing really small so you can't really see it.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don't think they stand out at all. They're kind of, you know, hidden, just real light, transparent writing or, you know, metallic writing that just kind of blends in with the foil package.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Many non-smokers expressed the opinion that tobacco warnings should contain stronger messages that are more relevant to young smokers than the current messages are. Some suggested that placing images or pictures on them could intensify the effect of the warnings.

“Maybe it should say ‘You will have bad breath,’ ‘No more dates.’ That would be a good warning [for younger people].” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

*“Maybe they should put a dead person on the pack with a cigarette in his mouth.”
Male Non-smoker, Non-college*

“I think it's all about presentation. If the warning is like that big and there's a skull on the pack, I mean, that extra space would improve it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Many of the non-smokers said that people do not generally pay attention to warning labels placed on cigarette boxes.

“Well, if you're already buying the pack of cigarettes, you already know you're going to smoke it, so what does it matter if there's a label on it or not? It would be different if you were just picking stuff up and reading the ingredients, ‘Oh, this doesn't look very good. I'll take something else instead.’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“A lot of people don't look at those. It's not like cool things.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“You look at them, and you're just like, “Did you ever see the one, you know, what causes lung cancer every year, but thought twice about it?” And many people don't; they don't care. That's why they're already addicted. That's why they're already addicted, so why do they care to read what it may do to them?” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“They're for, like, everyone, but smokers choose not to read it or agree with it. They just want to do what they want to do, and if that makes them happy, fine, you know.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Who Requires Warning Labels?

When asked who requires warning labels on cigarette packs, almost all participants were aware that the Surgeon General or someone in “the government” requires warning labels, although one person had the wrong agency in mind.

“Surgeon General warning, or whatever it's called.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think the government, or something like that, makes them ... put it on there because they would get a lot of lawsuits.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I thought it was the FDA or something.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

However, a few participants in the non-smokers' groups said that they thought tobacco manufacturers voluntarily place warning labels on their products to avoid lawsuit.

“The people at the company that makes them so they can't get sued when somebody dies.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“They're just like avoiding a lawsuit.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Should Government Require Warning Labels?

Most of the participants in the non-smoking groups said that cigarette packs should have warning labels on them and that the government should control those warnings.

“If the government feels it's so much of a problem, then they should be responsible for putting it on there, and not the companies.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If there's more warnings, people will realize that smoking is not good for you.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“They should put it somewhere you can see it, because even if ... one person notices it, then that's a difference in one person ... If it changes one person's opinion on it, that's good.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

During the discussion of the American cigarette labels, several participants in each of the non-smokers groups made the suggestion that the message on the labels be strengthened, either by increasing the size or through the use of stronger language.

“I think they should be stronger worded, maybe, instead of ... ‘may cause birth defects’ ... ‘will cause birth defects’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think they should be bigger. They should be bigger, you know. As you're looking at the name of the cigarette, it should be just as big as the name of the cigarette. So then you have that up front.” Female, Non-smoker, Non-college

Others wondered about the intended audience for the Surgeon General warnings.

“I'm kind of confused about who the Surgeon General warning is for. If the people who smoke know they're there, but they are still smoking, they are already addicted. And non-smokers don't buy cigarettes unless they're purchasing them for someone else, and they already don't smoke, so who is the Surgeon General warning actually for?” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Another participant in that group then responded:

“I think it's targeted towards potential smokers, people that might pick up the cigarettes, which nine times out of ten are kids...” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

D. Perception of Canadian Tobacco Warning Labels

At least one participant in each non-smoking group said that they had seen Canadian cigarette packs prior to being exposed to them during the focus groups. Those who reported seeing those packages also remembered seeing warnings placed on them, and some of their descriptions were explicit (if not exactly accurate).

“Canada has like a dead baby or something. It’s really gross. It’s an eye-opener, but they chose to do it to let people know.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“In Canada, they stick pictures of lungs on the carton, too.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in the non-smokers’ groups said that the Canadian warnings convey stronger messages than the U.S. warnings. Those respondents who remembered seeing some of the Canadian warnings said they reacted very strongly to them. Some of them said that these warnings would make them not want to smoke the cigarettes.

“Bones, a skull? It would make you think twice. The way they are trying to get their message across is real good.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[In Canada] they have pictures of lungs. I don’t know what they have been doing on there, pictures of old, dead people. It’s the truth.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Participants in these groups also stated that Canadian warnings are more visible and more eye-catching than the U.S. warnings.

“They are definitely visible. You’re not going to miss that.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The warnings [in Canada] are larger than they are here and they stick out. Here [in the U.S.], they try to blend them in with the color of the pack.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think they’re really good. I’m a non-smoker and I noticed them when I got to the clubs in Canada.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One person, however, indicated that the Canadian warnings did not seem to deter her friends from smoking Canadian cigarettes. Despite the more severe warnings on Canadian cigarettes, lower prices over the border encouraged her American friends to buy Canadian cigarettes anyway.

“My friends all have Canadian cigarettes because they’re cheaper. They go to Canada, they stock up.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

E. Response to Canadian Warning Labels

Respondents were shown six Canadian warning labels. In order to avoid bias because of the order in which they were presented, the warning labels were rotated and shown in a different order to each group.

General Response to the Labels

In all of the non-smoking groups, participants said that they considered the Canadian warnings to be more noticeable than the more-familiar American labels. Depending upon the specific label – and the demographics of the group – some labels evoked strong facial and verbal responses, and one tended to cause an initial response of laughter.

The non-smoking groups said that the Canadian warnings were noticeable to them as soon as they saw the cigarette packs.

“Right off the bat, I would say these are much better than ours.... It’s bigger. It’s bolder.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college.

“I do like the fact that they put the warning before even the name of the cigarettes. If you read down the page, you’re going to see the warning before you even read what brand of cigarettes you’re picking up.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

The non-smokers in these groups said that the Canadian warnings were “informative” because they provide facts, numbers and percentages.

“And that’s good they are giving you percentages.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This is giving straight facts ... I mean, 85 percent of 100, that’s not a very good statistic there. So it’s saying that you’re going to die smoking...” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It would hit home like the other one with percentages did.” Male Non-smoker, non-college

Non-smokers also said that warnings that include pictures make a stronger impression on people than “just words.” When discussing Label B with the picture of a diseased mouth, for example, one person said:

“The picture says it all, I guess ...It doesn’t even need words.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Participants in the non-smokers groups reacted positively to the fact that the warning labels were rotated so that purchasers would be exposed to different warnings, even if they tended to buy one brand of cigarettes.

“I think that would actually work. If I’m buying cigarettes, and every time I go buy a pack of cigarettes, there’s something new.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One respondent contrasted the Canadian-style warnings with what he saw as the considerably weaker U.S. – style warnings.

“This doesn’t seem like somebody just put this on there to save on a lawsuit. This actually seems like this comes from the government saying ‘You’ve got to put it on there if you are going to sell them. Our [warnings] are like ‘Philip Morris sponsors all of the no-smoking programs.’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

LABEL A – NON-SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTION

Participants in all of the non-smoker groups expressed strong reactions to Label A, which shows a picture of a diseased lung and provides statistics regarding tobacco-related lung cancers and mortality from the disease. The following comments represent the range of reactions expressed when participants initially were shown this warning label.

“Disturbing. They need to start that in this country.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s pretty disgusting but definitely true.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I like the fact that they put the warning before even the name of cigarettes. You are going to see the warning before you even read what brand of cigarettes you’re picking.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This [warning] bugs me because I have asthma, my lungs are already worse off as it is, and being around smokers I always think my lungs are going to turn yellow.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTION TO THE PICTURE

Non-smokers expressed strong reactions toward the picture. While everyone agreed that this picture attracted attention and was eye-catching, some of them said that it was “disgusting,” and one respondent considered it “offensive.”

“The first thing you notice is the picture.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The picture and the message are both pretty strong.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It catches your eye. You see the picture, and then your eyes just kind of move over to the warning.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It would be just amazing if people could look at these pictures and not be moved by them and not be scared by them.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don’t know why someone would want to smoke after looking at this.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It doesn’t look appealing. It doesn’t look like something that I would want to do or try because of that. My grandfather just died of lung cancer.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think this is disgusting.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it’s eye catching but the picture has got to go.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“People will not buy these [cigarettes] because of the picture.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think that picture makes it stand out.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Several participants in the non-smoking college-educated groups expressed the opinion that this kind of warning (especially the picture) was too graphic for their taste and that it might be offensive to someone who wants to buy a pack of cigarettes with this label.

“It would be okay if they just had the warning. The picture overdoes it. It’s like smacking you in the face with it.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think this is disgusting, and if I were a business, I would take whoever put this on my cigarette to court. I think that’s offensive, if you want to put that on the product as it is.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Other non-smokers suggested that the picture should be clearer and that there should be a comparison to a healthy lung.

“The picture is not clear enough.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s a good picture, but it’s kind of blurry.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don’t think that picture looks like when I picture a pair of lungs.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“They need a comparison to a healthy lung.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The problem with this package is that it shows what lungs look like with lung cancer. But for the unknowledgeable citizen, do they know what a lung looks like without the cancer. They need a healthy lung [on the package too].” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTION TO THE MESSAGE

[85% of lung cancers are caused by smoking. 80% of lung cancer victims die within 3 years.]

The non-smoking groups said that the words on this label were very “informative,” “convincing” and “believable.” They appreciated the precision of information – percentages and numbers related to lung cancers caused by smoking – but they also were surprised with “how high those percentages are.”

“It’s informative.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“By saying that ‘85 percent of lung cancers’—if you smoke you can know for sure.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think the statistics are pretty strong here.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Most warnings say ‘may cause lung cancer’, this is just strictly ‘They cause it.’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don’t think people are aware of how high these numbers actually are and how quickly it could actually kill you.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Gruesome. It’s as close as they can get to saying cigarettes are going to kill you without just coming out and saying it.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“They give you facts. The statistics right there say, cancer victims die within three years.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“This is a direct message that you will die.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“In comparison to, ‘are certain to cause,’ ours say, ‘smoking may cause cancer.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“That’s giving straight facts – the startling statistics.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“That’s flat-out telling you facts. Whereas, on the U.S. labels it said ‘may.’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If you smoke you can get lung cancer definitely, but by saying that, ‘85 percent of lung cancers,’ how they can know for sure?” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Label A made a strong impression on non-smokers, both male and female, but many of them did not believe that it would have a great impact upon smokers.

“I would say a little, but not enough to make a significant difference.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Smokers are too numb to what they see.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I’m sure that someone who smokes would just fluff it off, like, ‘It’s not going to happen to me.’” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Whether or not it stops people from smoking, it’s still there. It’s still letting them know that this is what’s going to happen. It shows you what lung cancer looks like, and the statistics.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

However, one non-smoker thought that this label would stop a potential smoker from smoking.

“I think it would turn [people who don’t smoke] away.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One respondent suggested that this label would make a good tool to be used by family members of a smoker.

“I think there’s more family pressure with this one. Family members that are non-smokers would be like, ‘Hey, you should put that out.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

Participants in the non-smoking groups did not think that age or gender would affect the responses to this warning. However, they did think that smokers might be especially responsive to this warning because of the graphic nature of the picture and the statistically strong message of their chances of having lung cancer as a result of smoking.

“Everyone. It’s not like the one that targets moms or older people. For this one there’s no age.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“A picture would really appeal to every smoker, but the statistics, more so to someone who’s been smoking for a long time.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The person who is already smoking.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

However, other participants in the non-smokers’ groups said that this label would be most likely to have an effect upon “early smokers” or prevent non-smokers from smoking, rather than to encourage long-term smokers to quit.

“The early smokers because the long-term smokers, if they haven’t caught it, they’re like, ‘Well, I’m not going to catch it. I’ve been smoking this long.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Non-smokers, probably, if someone doesn’t smoke, their kid – if they’re thinking about smoking, and you just show it to them: ‘Here, this is what happens.’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

One respondent said that this label would affect people who have problems with breathing.

“People who are starting to notice that they’re having trouble breathing, this might make it click for them.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

LABEL B – NON-SMOKER’S REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTION

The picture in Label B immediately attracted participants’ attention, while the words went almost unnoticed as they responded to the graphic photo. Non-smokers – females in

particular – said that they were shocked by this warning label, and they expected that smokers would react to it the same way they did.

“That’s gross.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It grossed me out. I mean, like you see it, and you just didn’t want to look like that.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Plus the words are right over the picture, so it’s like you can’t get away from the picture, when you’re reading it, because it’s like, oh, I see something black behind.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

One male non-smoker saw this warning label as a potential tool to convince his family members to stop smoking.

“I’d want this one to take to my house and show everyone because this would really shock them, out of all of [the labels shown].” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Unlike the smokers, many of the non-smokers in this series of focus groups said that this label had **more** impact for them than the labels depicting warnings of lung cancer or stroke, because “teeth are visible” and “people are concerned with their image.”

“Teeth are the most visible; everybody can see that. No one can see your lungs; no one can see your brain. But any time you talk to somebody, they’re going to see your teeth.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think people are concerned with their image. Just the yellow teeth, even. Forget the cancer. The yellow teeth are unattractive, and you know right away when somebody smokes, even if you can’t smell it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think that would be something people respond to more than the spread of cancer. It’s more visual. You think you have the threat of getting a stroke or some sort of heart disease, but you can’t see that happening. So it’s something you ignore. I know when I used to smoke I ignored that. But the yellow teeth – we’re all so worried about what we look like.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

For many of the non-smokers, the picture was seen as a powerful, effective tool for discouraging smoking, and it evoked strong reactions. Everyone in all of the non-smoking groups said that the picture was extremely eye-catching and noticeable.

“The picture says it all.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“The picture is self-explanatory. You could just put ‘Warning’ [without the words.]” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“That’s the worst one. That’s the first thing everybody notices, your teeth.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“You can’t miss it. It’s gross. I can’t see why anybody would want to buy these knowing that’s what their mouth is going to look like.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Many of the non-smokers said that this picture was as effective or more effective than the pictures on the other warnings that were presented to the groups.

“It’s real noticeable. You can’t see the brain, you can’t see the impotence, but everyone sees your teeth.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s more disgusting than the lung to me.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don’t know what a lung looks like. I know what good teeth look like and ... they don’t look like [this].” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think a picture like this would be just as effective as the brain one.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I wonder if this person is still alive, with their mouth looking like this.” Male Non-Smoker, Non-college

Participants in one of the male, non-smoker, non-college groups speculated about who would look like this, and how people would react to them.

“It’s probably somebody who smokes, but doesn’t brush their teeth.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“People will not talk to somebody whose teeth look like that.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Only a couple of non-smokers from the male, college student/recent graduate groups expressed skepticism about this picture. One suggested that it showed the teeth of a person who chews tobacco; the other one questioned whether or not the teeth of a smoker could actually look like this.

“I think chewing tobacco would do this before a cigarette will.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I’ve never seen anybody look like this, even chain smokers.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarette smoke causes oral cancer, gum diseases and tooth loss.]

Because of the strength of the picture on this label, few participants in the non-smokers’ groups paid much attention to the wording. However, other participants commented that the message was effective to them.

“I don’t even need to read that. Just see the picture.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“This is the only one you don’t have to read. It’s obvious [from the picture].” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“You can’t even really see the words at the bottom, anyway.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I like this one because it says ‘cigarette causes’; it doesn’t say ‘can cause’.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“This is something [message] that would affect you and everyone would know it.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Many of the non-smokers said that they had not realized that smoking could cause diseases of the mouth in addition to the more commonly recognized risk of lung cancer.

“It causes oral cancer?” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I had no idea it causes tooth loss. I’ve never heard that, ever.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Some participants in the non-smokers’ groups indicated that they thought this label would both prevent non-smokers from smoking and encourage smokers to quit smoking.

“If you want your mouth to look like that, you keep on smoking. Otherwise, you quit, or you don’t start.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“That will get people’s attention. I believe it’s probably going to be successful. I’m sure it would deter a lot of people from smoking, and people who are smoking and thinking about quitting.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“If you show this to someone who doesn’t smoke, they’re not going to smoke. The chances of them not smoking are greater than someone who already smokes, quitting.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it’s better for preventing smoking than actually stopping smokers from smoking because, personally, I see this and it disgusts me. Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“That’s one more reason not to smoke because, ‘I’m sorry, but I don’t want my teeth to look like that, I want them to be shiny white.’ Female, Non-smoker, Non-college

“They wouldn’t sell much.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Participants in one of the male non-smoker college student/recent graduate groups doubted whether this label would encourage smokers to quit smoking, however.

“I don’t think either one of these would have any effect on people who smoke. Because people who smoke are going to look at this and say, ‘Well, my teeth don’t look like that.’ Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“They are going to say, ‘I brush, I take care of my teeth.’” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

Some of the non-smoking focus group participants suggested that young people who do not smoke yet, or who have just begun smoking, would be most influenced by this label.

“Younger smokers, but anybody who doesn’t smoke or is thinking about smoking.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think teenagers would be affected because they want to look good.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Only a couple of non-smokers thought that older, long time smokers would be most affected by this label.

“I think older people that have been smoking for a long time.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Label C – Non-smokers’ Reactions



WARNING
TOBACCO USE
CAN MAKE YOU
IMPOTENT

Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection.

Health Canada

OVERALL REACTION

Label C received a lot of attention, and respondents were quite engaged while discussing it. The non-verbal reactions, such as laughter and facial expressions of surprise and amusement, were greater – especially with males – than what was expressed verbally. The first reaction to this label was that it was funny because of the picture.

“It’s more funny than serious to me.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This is the funniest warning label I’ve ever seen.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

(Laughter) “I definitely have to say this label would catch my attention.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“A lot of teenage guys feel peer pressured into it, they think it makes them look cool, where in the long run, it’s not going to be pretty cool if you don’t have a girlfriend.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s not very appealing. It’s not very decorative, It’s got this limp cigarette telling you this is going to cause sexual side effects.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

However, after reading the words included in the label, non-smokers’ reactions got more serious.

“It’s funny but it’s true.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

The message conveyed by this label was new to all non-smokers across the board, males and females, both for those who had attended some college and those who had not.

“I didn’t know that. I think what they have on the U.S. packs is just that it may cause cancer.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I had no idea about it.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

The picture on Label C was considered by most of the non-smokers to be humorous and “funny looking.” It was a picture that drew respondents’ attention to this label and made them read the words.

“This is kind of goofy to look at.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I see this [picture] as a little more humorous. It feels lighter. There is no blood.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s almost comic bookish or something, like symbolism or vague.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The picture definitely draws you to the words, which in turn draws you to the paragraph.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Pretty creative. The limp cigarette makes you want to read it.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“‘Why is the cigarette like that?’ It makes you want to look at the words.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Even though it’s still just a cigarette, it’s still effective because of its shape. The first thing I noticed was the picture on this one and I read the caption next to it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Only one male non-smoking respondent said that this picture does not stand out:

“It doesn’t stand out, really, to me. It’s the same color as the package.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection.]

The message conveyed by Label C was new to all of the participants in the non-smokers’ groups. The majority of the non-smokers said that the words on this label were more serious and more powerful than the picture and that the picture without those words would not be understood.

“I didn’t get a cigarette thing [the picture] until I read it.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“That’s the most straightforward one.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It would scare me just by looking at it and reading what it’s saying.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Many of the female non-smokers did not question the veracity of the message (one of the few skeptical females is quoted below), while participants in the male non-smoker groups generally considered it to be not very credible. Male respondents expressed the desire to know more hard facts about this warning, including conclusive statistics and research results.

“The message itself is very honest. It should be scary to many people.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think this message could be heard because I think that’s a huge fear to a lot of men. It might be in the back of their heads for a while.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“A lot of people probably won’t think it’s true. They’ll just really blow it off and be like, ‘You know, I’ve been smoking for so long and nothing has happened to me.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“This says, ‘may cause’, so right there they are taking credibility. The other pack says ‘cause’.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This really doesn’t even affect me that much. Just because of the word they use, ‘can’, you know, It ‘can’ make you.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Tell me facts. To me numbers, stats, stick out more than just words like that.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“This one doesn’t have any research backing it up, like 80 percent of guys are limp because they smoke.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it would be more influential if it actually gave a percentage, like one out of ten or one out of five people who smoke experiences sexual side effects.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Also, these were the male respondents who pointed out that this message is not as effective as some other labels.

“It’s not as effective as the teeth or the lungs one, but it still sends a message.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Would It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Both male and female non-smokers said that they thought this label might have some influence on male smokers.

“I would think this one here would work more than the other two, just for the simple fact that dudes are more gung-ho about their sex.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“If you put this over here telling them they [males] may lose performance, they fear they may lose their performance.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I could see people reacting to this, males, in particular.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“That’s one of the best reasons [cigarettes may cause sexual side effects] to quit.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It might nag smokers when they finally make a decision to quit, because at least 50 percent of smokers say, ‘Yes, I want to quit, but I’m just not ready.’ But I don’t think it’s going to be like, ‘Oh my God, let me stop right now.’ It wouldn’t be a sudden impulse.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It would definitely stop me from smoking.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Some respondents were skeptical about whether or not this warning would prevent people from smoking. Those respondents perceived this warning as a “curiosity item” and something to show to their friends.

“I think it would just make people laugh.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Somebody who doesn’t smoke would buy this just to bring back to the States and show to their buddies.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

Most of the non-smokers thought that this label was directed only toward men, and some of them implied that it would target older men, not young adults such as themselves.

“It isn’t going to stop girls from smoking, though. It’s targeted towards males.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“A girl is going to look at this and say, ‘Who cares? I’m not a guy.’ If her boyfriend smokes, then they’re going to care.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“A guy might take it a bit different, because it affects them.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it’s focused more on a male than a female.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think a guy would be embarrassed to carry something like this around, even in front of their parents or someone older. Or a little kid asking, ‘What’s this word? What is a penis?’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“A woman buying this doesn’t care because she’s not worried about getting impotent. A man buying this is saying, ‘I know what I can do in bed. I ain’t worried about this happening to me.’ So this really would have no effect.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This one is geared toward men, definitely.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

A few of the male non-smoking respondents said, however, that this label might also be directed toward women.

“Guys but girls too. Girls don’t want a smoker who can’t get it up.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s geared toward some women maybe.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

LABEL D – NON-SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTION

Although participants in the non-smokers’ groups generally appreciated the overall message conveyed that “second-hand smoke is harmful,” they did not express much enthusiasm for the design or anticipated effectiveness of this warning label. Despite their concerns about the lack of effectiveness of Label D, however, they indicated in no uncertain terms that they thought the overall message of this warning label was important. They expressed concerns about people who smoke around kids and expose them to second-hand smoke.

“It’s still just as important, because you rarely see any ads that are about secondhand smoke.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I hate when I go to the restaurant and I’ll see two little kids sitting there with both their parents smoking.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Non-smokers in all groups agreed that this label probably had the weakest impact out of all labels presented to the groups. They expressed the belief that the problem of second-hand smoke is significant, but the picture on the label did not convey its importance.

“I like the message but I definitely don’t think the picture is effective.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[Label D is the weakest] just because of the picture. It would improve it if they had a stronger picture on here, with Mom and baby.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“This is mostly the message and I’m not looking for words. If I’m a smoker, I’m looking for a picture.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don’t think one is very striking, it’s just words.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

The non-smoking groups said that this label probably would not have much effect upon smokers, and that it probably is therefore directed toward non-smokers.

“If I were a smoker I wouldn’t even notice this [ad].” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s not really directed toward the smoker. Someone who is already smoking isn’t going to really care about secondhand smoke affecting themselves or someone else. In most cases they’re not going to care.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Smokers really don’t care about secondhand smoke that much.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don’t think this sends a very strong message. Smokers don’t care whether it’s affecting somebody around them.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTION TO THE PICTURE

The picture on Label D did not appear to make much of an impression on any of the non-smoking groups. They considered the picture on this label to be less effective than the picture on the other labels that were presented to the groups. They said that the image of a burning cigarette would not discourage smokers from smoking.

“It’s just a burning cigarette standing there and doing nothing.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don’t think that the picture is as effective as the other ones were. It’s just a cigarette. The other ones actually show things that happen to you.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s not as eye-catching as the other two.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It makes you want to read but it’s not as sticking with you as the brain one.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Non-smokers said that this warning could be improved by placing a picture showing a second-hand smoke situation, such as “mother smoking a cigarette in front of a child.”

“I think the more effective picture would be with a parent or parents with a young child sitting there when they are smoking away... and that smoke is going in their direction. A picture like that would show secondhand smoke in some way.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Even though we might not care about other adults, we all kind of have a soft spot for kids.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Maybe it would be a little more effective if you put a child [in the picture].” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[This warning needs a better picture] I think just facts are boring and that people just kind of push them off to the side.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s not showing what it [the secondhand smoke] does to affect you.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I don’t think smokers care about second-hand smoke unless there’s a baby around.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[You are not the only one smoking this cigarette. The smoke from a cigarette is not just inhaled by the smoker. It becomes secondhand smoke, which contains more than 50 cancer-causing agents.]

Participants in the non-smokers’ groups said that they liked the words on this label. They said that it provided an opportunity to “spread the message” to smokers of how harmful second-hand smoke is for people who do not smoke. However, they once again reiterated the belief that smokers would not be particularly responsive to it.

“I’d like more smokers to know about it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it’s a very good message for a non-smoker but it wouldn’t affect smokers because our society is like me, myself, and I. A lot of people think ‘I don’t care if you secondhand smoke’.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Don’t smoke around other people. Pretty much, that’s what it’s saying.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Its pretty much saying to the guy who bought the cigarettes, ‘You’re not just killing yourself by smoking cigarette; you’re killing everybody else around you, too’.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it’s just telling us something we already know; people around you are affected by the smoke.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it’s got a catchy title.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Will It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Although non-smokers liked the message on this warning, they were doubtful whether this warning would keep smokers from smoking. Some non-smokers said that it would not affect smokers because “they already harm themselves so they do not care if they harm someone else as well.”

“Smokers will be like, ‘Don’t be around me if I smoke.’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don’t think that people who actually smoke are going to be that sympathetic.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“There are still going to be people out there who don’t care, but it might change the minds of some people.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Label?

Some participants in the non-smoker groups thought that this label was directed to non-smoking friends of smokers and other people who might be exposed to the secondhand smoke.

“It’s directed to non-smokers. Smokers don’t really buy the second-hand smoke argument.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Someone who hangs out with a smoker.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Maybe some parents who are close with their children.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it might appeal to the non-smoker, but it needs to appeal to the smoker, because the non-smoker’s not the one that’s going to stop smoking.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Some non-smokers thought that the main target for this message was parents. Therefore, they suggested, it should emphasize that children were most likely to be harmed by second-hand smoke.

“This label might have an effect on a pregnant person that’s smoking because they’re thinking, ‘Well, I’m smoking, but it’s also getting to my child.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

LABEL E – NON-SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTION

This label received favorable responses from the majority of non-smokers, especially those who said they have close contact with children. The picture on this label was perceived as being more striking than the words. This label appeared to have a bigger impact on female than on male non-smokers.

In general, non-smokers said that they liked this label. They thought that the statement that children follow the example set by their parent(s) was very believable and that it might be a serious problem that it is not taken into consideration by the U.S. warnings.

“I like that one a lot. I have preschoolers with crayons walking around the classroom like, look at me, ‘I’m like my mom.’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I like this one. It’s the truth. This is just another issue that we don’t touch on in the United States.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think this is something else that’s a big factor why people should quit.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“[This one would have the biggest effect because] I would hope that people care about their children and that they wouldn’t want their children to smoke. I know smokers, and they are like ‘You know, one thing I don’t want is my children to pick up this bad habit. Then why are you doing it in front of them?’ If they have this kind of label, it might make them realize what they’re doing, and maybe give them the urge to stop.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s more effective than Label D (Secondhand smoke).” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Non-smokers agreed with what they saw as the basic premise of this label – that children of smoking parents are more likely to smoke than children of non-smoking parents. They said that this label would help a smoking parent realize that it is not enough to tell their kids that smoking is not good for them; it also would give them an example to follow.

“That would be a really good one. One of the reasons why I don’t smoke is because neither of my parents smoke.” Female non-smoker College student/Recent graduate

“I think [this one would be the most effective] not even for people with kids, but anytime you are around kids. And that’s in a lot of situations, whether you’re at a restaurant and there are children at the table next to you or you work in a day care type situation and the kids see you smoke. At some point any smoker has probably smoked where a child has seen them smoke.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“They [kids] are looking at you. Just think, like, what’s going their head. They’re probably looking at you, saying, ‘Oh, that looks like fun.’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“They are trying to tell parents to watch out because their children can follow what they do.” Male non-smoker, Non-college

One non-smoking respondent also mentioned that this label “would make parents feel guilty.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it [picture] implies guilt, the mother standing there.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

However, one female respondent said that it would not keep people from smoking:

“I think the children one would be the one most doubted because most parents say, ‘I taught my kids better than that. I tell my kids, no.’ And you will get into that whole debate over, ‘Is it the parent that’s in charge, or the kid’s friend’ or ‘Who has more influence.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

The non-smoking groups said that they considered the picture to be very impressionable. They also thought that the picture was more effective than the message in promoting the concept of reducing smoking. They said that they were impressed especially by the image of the child in the picture.

“Sometimes actions speak louder than words.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This picture says, ‘As soon as I get of age, I’m starting.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The child on the package of cigarettes is [the most striking].” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“[The most striking image on the label] is the picture of the daughter trying to imitate the mother.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Many of the non-smokers said that the warning contrasts well with the pack of cigarettes and makes it look different from a typical pack.

“The contrast is great.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“The warning is black. It makes you look at it, it makes you read it. I think it makes the warning stand out more than the cigarette label, itself.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It doesn’t look like a cigarette pack with this picture.” Male, Non-college

Several participants in the non-smokers’ groups did not notice that the woman on the picture was pregnant.

“Maybe the color is wrong, but I didn’t even know she was pregnant until after.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s not real effective, as far as the words. I think it would be a good message if they maybe changed her outfit (to make her look more obviously pregnant) and changed the words.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Children see, children do. Your children are twice as likely to smoke if you do. Half of all premature deaths that involve life-long smokers result from tobacco use.]

Non-smokers perceived the message on this label as being “so true”, and they said they agreed with the message that children are twice as likely to smoke if their parents do.

“It’s so true, if your parents smoke, you’re are more susceptible to smoking. That’s good that they laid that out.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“The message here is, ‘Are you going to kill your kids? Kill your loved ones.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“This [message] is kind of pointing out that you’re a role model to your children. You are their life.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

However, a few non-smokers said that the message was not clear to them and that they did not understand how it relates to the picture.

“If I were to read this, ‘half of all premature deaths,’ I wouldn’t know if they were talking about an infant or of people dying prematurely.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I thought we were talking about people dying prematurely.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Will it Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Non-smokers were divided over whether or not this label would encourage people to quit smoking. While some of them said it might have an effect on smokers, quite a few of them were skeptical about whether or not this label would make smokers quit smoking.

“If they’re around children and they saw it, they may just step off to the side where they couldn’t be seen, where the children can’t see them doing it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Generally, I would say, ‘I don’t have any kids, so I’m okay.’” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Who Would be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

All of the non-smokers in the focus groups said that this warning label was directed primarily toward parents.

“If you are a parent you have more sympathy and compassion for your kids than for yourself.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This warning is definitely geared towards the parents.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It definitely speaks to parents.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“This is targeting parents.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“Mothers. Whatever I do reflect on my kids, and they might pick up that habit or do what I did. And I wouldn’t want that.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Many of the participants expressed concern that, simply because the label was targeted so clearly toward parents, others would tend to ignore it.

“If I’m a kid, I’m not going to care.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think a person with no kids would probably look at this and go, “I don’t have kids.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It wouldn’t appeal so much to a single guy doing it.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I like this one but it only targets parents. And people who don’t have kids, ‘Oh, who cares about the other people’s kids. I’m never going to see them again.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

LABEL F – NON-SMOKERS’ REACTIONS



OVERALL REACTION

Label F, along with Label A (*Cigarettes cause lung cancer*) and Label B (*Gum diseases*), evoked very strong reactions from non-smokers in all of the groups. The most common expressions used by participants to describe this label were “shocking”, “looks disgusting”, “explicit”, and “gives the facts.”

“This one is the most shocking.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Pretty gross.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It doesn’t look like a pack of cigarettes. It just looks like a big warning label.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s pretty graphic. It’s pretty explicit.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s a lot more shocking than D (Second-hand smoke) or F (Children see children do] because it shows what it does to your brain.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Participants in the non-smokers groups said that this warning would “deter people from smoking” because it would “scare” people with its threat of “disability and death.”

“That one would really deter most people because a stroke can kill you almost instantly. That’s scary.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I know it would scare me.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It comes right on and says, ‘You are going to die’.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“You can’t live without the brain. You’d have a stroke and one side of your body isn’t functioning and you can’t function. You’re just like a vegetable.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Many of the non-smokers appreciated that this warning “gives facts” and that those facts, in their opinion, are “pretty serious.”

“This is the truth.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“It is serious.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

In the opinion some of the non-smokers, smoking after becoming familiar with this label would evoke the feeling of “embarrassment” in a smoker.

“It would make you feel kind of stupid. Like, it’s sitting there telling you what it does and you’re walking around carrying that pack, like a person who couldn’t read or something.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It would make you feel embarrassed too, because ‘I continue to do this, even though this [warning] is in front of me.’” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I didn’t know that it could cause stroke.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen that.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

REACTIONS TO THE PICTURE

The picture on this label evoked strong reactions similar to the reactions evoked by the picture of “lung cancer” because both of them show serious health consequences that can be caused by tobacco use.

Most of the non-smokers in these groups responded to the image on this label with obvious discomfort. They said that it is mainly the picture that makes this label look so unappealing.

“The brain looks disgusting and it’s even worse if it’s split open.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“The picture is most striking on this label.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“You ask yourself, “Why is there a brain on my pack of cigarettes?” You can’t help it but read it.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Non-smokers agreed that this warning “attracts attention” and is “eye-catching” primarily because of the picture:

“Image attracts your attention.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“White on black is good. It catches your eye.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“The brain picture catches your eye.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Non-smokers also said they liked the fact that the picture “looks real” and does not try to beautify the reality:

“I think that’s what [smokers] need. You can’t sugar-coat it. You can’t put some little cartoon character on the front and expect people take it seriously.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“It’s quite obvious [from the picture], this person is not living anymore. You know that without really saying.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

Only one person in a male non-smoker, college student/recent graduate group said that showing the picture of a brain on a cigarette pack is “not necessary.”

“I think the message is fine, but you really don’t need to see the picture.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

REACTIONS TO THE MESSAGE

[Cigarettes cause strokes. Tobacco smoke can cause the arteries of your brain to clog. This can block the blood vessels and cause a stroke. A stroke can cause disability and death.]

The message that “Tobacco smoke can cause strokes” was new for most of the non-smokers in these focus groups.

“I don’t think most people think about their brain when they smoke, so it’s eye-opening. It’s something that they will look at and think, ‘Oh well, I really didn’t think about my brain. I think about my lungs [when I smoke].” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Many non-smokers said that the message included in the label was effective because, first of all, it's straightforward, direct, and blunt (the words explain and complement the picture). Secondly, it explains the process of getting a stroke step-by-step. They also liked the fact that it provides specific information.

"It gets straight to the point." Male Non-smoker, Non-college

"I like that because it tells you: This stuff will kill you. Right now the cigarette companies just say, 'This might cause this which could kill you. This [message] gets straight to the point that it will definitely kill you.'" Male Non-smoker, Non-college

"It tells you it can cause a stroke, here's what a stroke is, here's what happens when you have a stroke." Male Non-smoker, Non-college

"It says it can block the blood vessels. That's a lot of specific information." Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

"I think a lot of people don't quite understand what goes on with their [sic] body. When they see something that's talking about what's going on inside them, I think most people take a couple seconds to read it and find out." Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Additionally, the words were considered by respondents to stand out on this warning as they contrasted well with the background and are in a big font size.

"This is black and bold, and red and black – it draws your eye to that." Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Only one respondent said that the message in this label attracts less attention than the picture:

"Apart from the picture of the brain you don't look at the message." Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Would It Make People Want to Quit Smoking?

Non-smokers said that this label might encourage people to quit smoking and also might prevent non-smokers from smoking.

"It might change someone's mind, I think it's so graphic, it's telling you what it's doing, that I don't see why it wouldn't." Male Non-college

"I think more people wouldn't smoke if they saw that. It's kind of disturbing." Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

"I think it would prevent smoking, if you show it to any non-smoker." Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It would make me want to put down the cigarettes.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Buying a pack of cigarettes with a brain on it is not too wise for any smoker.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I wouldn’t want to smoke what’s inside of the pack once you see what’s on the cover.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Smokers would probably avoid those packs.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think they [smokers] would be stunned.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

One respondent also said that the non-smoker who tries to help his/her family member to quit smoking could use this label.

“If I picked up my mom’s cigarette pack and seen [sic] this, I would be like, Ma, you know, do you see what this can do? Why are you still doing this? Female Non-smoker, Non-college

Who Would Be Most Influenced/Affected by This Warning?

The most popular opinion among non-smokers across the board was that this label would influence “everyone” – smokers as well as potential smokers and people in all ages:

“Everybody. If I was a smoker and I bought that pack of cigarettes, I’d probably pass and wait for the new label.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“Everyone, because a young person will be grossed out and an older person will be grossed out. No one can live without a brain.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it targets everybody.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

“I think it would deter, possibly, people who were going to smoke; if you buying this for the first time and you actually read this.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

Some non-smokers said that older people and people who had a stroke or whose family members or friends had a stroke would be most affected by this label:

“If someone is smoking and they have family history of strokes already, they would probably say, ‘Okay, well, now I’m going to stop doing that. It causes strokes.’ Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Anybody who ever seen [sic] or had a stroke that had damaging effect, that would definitely hit home with them.” Female Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“But judging people who I know had strokes, they don’t know why they had a stroke.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“When you think of a stroke, you think of older people, so probably this would not have much effect on young people.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“It’s for older public. Young people feel invincible. We don’t feel like we get this stuff until we reach at least 45 or 50.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“I think it’s great that this kind of reinforces that message because most people think, ‘Oh, my doctor just wants me to quit smoking.’” Female Non-smoker, Non-College

In contrast to this view, though, several respondents said that young people, or people who were thinking about starting smoking, would be most likely to pay attention to this label.

“People that are thinking about starting smoking. Underage, impressionable kids.” Male Non-smoker, Non-college

“For a young person like myself, this would deter me from smoking.” Male Non-smoker, College student/Recent graduate

“Probably the person who is thinking about smoking [would be most affected by this warning].” “The person who is going for the first time to buy their own pack, and then sees that.” Female Non-smoker, Non-college

F. Differences Between Population Segments

As with the smokers’ groups, there were not a lot of differences noted between male and female participants or between those who were attending/had graduated from college and those who do not have any college experience. Those differences that did exist are discussed below.

The non-smoking groups generally said that the lung cancer and the mouth disease labels were most effective. The warning label on lung cancer confirmed their previous ideas about the negative consequences of smoking, and the mouth disease label was seen to be effective because of the ugliness of the picture. However, the veracity of the mouth disease message was questioned by some, particularly by participants in one of the male, college student/recent graduate groups, since they knew lots of smokers but did not know any who had suffered with this kind of disease.

There also was confusion, especially among the non-college groups, about the message that warning Label B (Mouth) was trying to convey. At least one participant in each of several non-smokers' groups thought that the label implied that this was what a "normal" smoker's mouth looked like. Since everyone in all of the groups knew smokers, and the mouths of these smokers did not look like the picture, they interpreted the picture to be exaggerating the possible negative effects of smoking.

Both male and female non-smokers thought that Label C (Impotence) was funny at first glance, but that upon reading the message, male smokers might be encouraged to quit. Others, however, saw this label as mainly funny, and therefore not to be taken seriously, particularly when compared to the messages about the danger of lung cancer, stroke or mouth diseases.

Although most non-smoker participants agreed in principal with Label D, the message about second-hand smoke, there was almost universal agreement that this message would not be effective with smokers. Rather, they said that non-smokers would appreciate the message, and that smokers who were parents might pay attention to it, but in general it was not considered to be very effective.

Label E (Children See, Children Do) generated a very mixed response. While some groups – both male and female – perceived the message to be very true and important to convey, others thought that it would be ineffective with anyone except parents.

Finally, Label F (Stroke) generated a strong response in most of the non-smokers' groups. This label, along with the lung cancer and mouth labels, was seen as one of the most effective labels by non-smokers. While some of them were unaware that smoking could cause strokes, they clearly accepted the seriousness of the message, and – unlike the mouth cancer message – did not question the truth of it.

Chapter VI, Summary of Findings Across All the Groups, provides a comparison between, and a discussion of, the responses of smokers with those of non-smokers.

VI. Summary of Findings Across All the Groups

As indicated throughout the report, the goal for this project was to obtain qualitative feedback from young adults, ages 18 – 24, toward U.S. and Canadian-style warning labels on cigarette packages. In the previous two chapters, the responses of smokers and non-smokers were analyzed separately. In this chapter, we look at the responses of participants across all of the groups – smokers and non-smokers, male and female, college students/recent graduates and those without any college education. It is important to remind the reader once again that the focus groups were conducted in one city during a one-month period in early 2002, and they were selected not to be representative of the population at large, but to provide a “snapshot” into the way 18-24 year olds reacted to American and Canadian warning labels at that point in time.

Similarities Across All the Groups

There were many similarities in responses across all groups, regardless of demographic characteristics. The following viewpoints were noted in all groups of respondents.

- 1. Existing U.S. cigarette warnings elicited similar reactions among all the groups.** Although all participants – smokers and non-smokers, males and females, college and non-college educated – recalled seeing warnings on cigarette packs, they said that those warnings did not make a noteworthy impression on them. They also claimed that the U.S. warnings did not influence their smoking behavior, whether that was a decision to smoke, or not to smoke.
- 2. Participants indicated that the U.S. warnings are not very visible to them.** They said that the black and white notices “blend in” with the cigarette package, and the small print makes them even less noticeable. Both of these characteristics serve to minimize their visibility.
- 3. Young adults had difficulty linking current warnings to themselves and their own health status.** Participants across all groups stated that current U.S. warnings reflect obvious and common knowledge. They remembered that warnings on the U.S. cigarette packs refer to lung cancer, heart diseases, emphysema and pregnancy. However, except for a couple of female participants who were either pregnant or have children of their own, they appeared to have difficulty relating to these warnings because they were young and saw lung cancer, heart disease and emphysema as things that happened to older people.
- 4. Participants perceived the U.S. warning messages to be weaker than the Canadian warnings, due to the use of the phrase “may cause” instead of “will cause.”** Participants in all of the groups indicated that the suppositional language used in American warnings tended to weaken the impact of the messages compared with the statistics and “hard facts” presented in the Canadian warning labels (see comment #8 below).
- 5. Despite the fact that the focus groups were held in Detroit which is close to Windsor, Ontario, Canada, only one or two participants in each group (with the**

- exception of one group of female smokers) said that they had seen the Canadian cigarette packs with the new warning labels prior to the focus groups. Those who reported seeing the warning labels had much stronger responses to the Canadian warnings compared to their responses for the U.S. warning labels. Respondents described those warnings as being “blunt”, “distressing”, “disgusting” and definitely more eye-catching than the U.S. warnings. Those who had seen Canadian cigarette packs spontaneously recalled seeing pictures on them. Some of the smokers said that they would not want to buy and/or smoke cigarettes with such warnings.
6. **Canadian warnings were more visible and more eye-catching than the U.S. warnings.** Smokers and non-smokers in these groups also said that warnings that include pictures make a stronger impression on people than “just words.”
 7. **The Canadian tobacco warnings evoked strong emotional reactions in participants across all the groups.** Many participants said they thought people would react more strongly to the Canadian-style warnings than toward the current U.S. warnings. Some respondents – both smokers and non-smokers – said that seeing those warnings on cigarettes would actually discourage them from smoking.
 8. **Canadian warning labels also were considered by participants to be more informative and convincing than the U.S. ones because they provide facts, numbers and percentages.** Participants in all groups responded favorably to the specific information provided in the Canadian warning labels, compared with the conditional language they saw in U.S. labels – “might,” “may,” rather than “will cause” or “in ___ percent.”
 9. **Participants recommended using a variety of labels.** Participants in all segments liked the idea that the Canadian warnings offer a variety of labels and that they are rotated on the cigarette packs so “one person has a chance to come across any of them” and be influenced depending on which particular label relates to them most.
 10. **The most effective warnings were those that combined both strong visual images and compelling facts.** The most effective for the majority of respondents were those labels that combined the strongest images such as “lungs with cancer”, “brain with stroke” and “mouth diseases” (this warning was effective with non-smokers, but less so with smokers). The strongest messages were those that were backed up with facts such as “85 percent of lung cancers are caused by smoking”, “a stroke can cause disability and death.”
 11. **Labels that had the weakest impact were those that: 1) contained a weak image; 2) provided a message that participants did not think was credible; or 3) the message was not directly relevant to the participant.** Images that participants did not think were effective were the burning cigarette in Label D (which some smokers actually saw as appealing to them) and the pregnant woman with children in Label E (some participants had difficulty interpreting what the picture was trying to show).

When the image did not immediately capture their attention, participants did not respond positively to the warning label. Similarly, participants in all of the groups tended to respond skeptically to messages that were new to them. Some had never heard that smoking could cause impotence, and thus were inclined not to believe that message; others had not heard that smoking could cause gum diseases, so they tended not to believe that message. Finally, if the message was not directly relevant to the participant – the message addressed parents, but the participant did not have children; or it addressed impotency and the participant was a female – there also was a tendency to discount the information and – especially within the smokers’ groups – to use that as “further proof” that risks associated with smoking are not as bad as they are portrayed to be.

In summary, while different groups might have responded differently to individual warning labels, the concepts that weakened a warning label for all of the groups were similar – weak images, unfamiliar messages, and irrelevance of messages to an individual.

Differences Between Smokers and Non-smokers

The most noteworthy distinctions between population segments in this study were those between smokers and non-smokers. In general, smokers tended to be more skeptical about risk information than were their non-smoking counterparts. This applied to both existing U.S. warnings and to the new Canadian warning labels shown to them in the focus groups. With respect to U.S. warning labels, for example, smokers emphasized the suppositional language as a reason for discounting the severity of the threat to their health from smoking. With the Canadian warnings, they were less likely than non-smokers to believe warnings that they had not heard before.

Smokers and non-smokers also differed on the kinds of warning messages that they said were effective for them. For example, Labels A (lung cancer) and F (brain with stroke) had the strongest impact on smokers, while Label B (mouth diseases) had the strongest impact on non-smokers. For smokers, the potential life-threatening effects of smoking clearly were of greatest concern to them.

Comparing the reactions to Label B of non-smokers and smokers highlights some of the differences between these two populations. For non-smokers, the highly unattractive mouth in Label B was a significant turn-off from smoking, and they said that people who smoke cigarettes do have bad breath and yellow teeth. They also indicated that, in their experience, a long-term heavy smoker's mouth could look like the one presented on the warning. Smokers, on the other hand, said that taking care of oral hygiene can reduce the effects of smoking on their teeth and gums. Thus, they considered Label B to be a “scare tactic” that did not realistically present the actual risks of smoking.

Differences Between Male and Female Respondents

There also were some differences in responses between men and women, although in general these were less noticeable than the differences between smokers and non-smokers. Female participants appeared on occasion to be less skeptical toward warning labels than some of the male respondents, and male respondents more often questioned the messages on some of

the labels. For example, Label C generated different responses in male and female groups. While females often stated that this warning was directed toward men in general, many of the male smokers said that the label targeted only older men. Some men even suggested that the warning might be targeted toward women to keep their male partners from smoking.

In general, females responded more positively toward Label E ("Children See Children Do") than did the male respondents. Whereas some of the female non-smokers considered it to be a very effective message, male non-smokers were not similarly affected by the label. This does not come as a surprise, as many of the respondents said that this label is directed to mothers and people who are often around children such as care providers and nannies.

Differences Between College and Non-college Educated Respondents

There were no discernible differences in reactions toward warning labels between college and non-college educated respondents. They were understood by all respondents regardless of education level. This indicates that the messages conveyed by the labels are straightforward, clear and understandable (they do not use technical or abstract terms).

Label-By-Label Summary Comments

Label A – Lung Cancer

Both the picture and the words on Label A evoked strong emotional reactions from respondents due to the fact they touch on serious health consequences caused by smoking. Label A was considered by most participants to be very effective. Most of the focus groups said that the target audience for this message would be “everyone,” and that this label would have an impact on a very wide range of the population, no matter what is the age or gender.

Label B – Mouth Diseases

Label B (Cigarettes Cause Mouth Diseases) was considered by most participants in the non-smoking groups to be very effective. However, due to the graphic appearance of the picture, participants did not pay attention to the words and therefore the overall message of this warning that “cigarette smoke causes oral cancer” was misunderstood. Many respondents thought that the picture shows a mouth of a heavy smoker, not a mouth with oral cancer and gum disease, and therefore considered that warning to be exaggerated, “far-fetched” and unbelievable. Many respondents said that this label was directed mainly to teens sensitive about their looks.

Smokers were less likely than non-smokers to respond positively to this warning, and in fact tended to not believe it in some instances. They said that it would not be particularly effective in getting them to stop smoking “because my mouth doesn’t look like that,” and thought that non-smokers would be more likely to respond to this warning label than would smokers. Non-smokers, however, considered this warning label to be one of the most effective because of the graphic nature of the picture and the effect they thought it would have in keeping teens from smoking.

Label C – Impotence

While the “limp cigarette” illustration on Label C was considered amusing by almost everyone and did generate a lot of attention, it did not appear to be very effective as a message to encourage people not to smoke. People had not heard previously that smoking could cause impotence, so they frankly were skeptical about the message. Secondly, the message did not include any statistics to back the claim, so that also detracted from its believability.

Male respondents in particular tried to challenge the reliability of the message, saying that “this never happened to them” and therefore it is unbelievable that smoking cigarettes can cause impotence. Also, the suppositional phrase “can make you” used on this label instead of “will make you” made some participants doubt this warning.

Label C also was perceived by all as a label that targeted limited audiences. Who exactly that audience was differed from one segment to another (women thought it was targeted toward men, men thought it might be targeted at women to get their boyfriends to stop smoking, or at older men), but each group was convinced that it was targeted toward someone other than them.

Label D – Not the Only One

None of the groups considered Label D to be very effective. While non-smokers generally agreed that second-hand smoke was harmful, they did not think that smokers would be deterred from smoking because of this fact. Smokers said that they did not usually smoke around

other people, and that people who wanted to avoid smoke should stay away from smokers. Thus, they tended to confirm the non-smokers' views that the second-hand smoke argument would not effectively deter smokers from smoking.

Label E – Children See, Children Do

According to the focus group participants, Label E targeted limited audiences—primarily mothers, people who spend a lot of time around children (such as babysitters), and pregnant women. The message that children follow behaviors of their parents was not seen as a particularly relevant argument against smoking to most participants in these groups, since most did not have children of their own. This attitude was especially prevalent in the smokers' groups.

Participants also said that the picture was confusing because it provided two separate messages that seemed to be mixed. One was the message that pregnant women should not smoke, while the other message was that adults should not smoke around children. They suggested separating these issues for clarity.

Label F – Strokes

Label F was considered by most participants to be very effective. Although a number of focus group participants had not heard that cigarette smoking could cause strokes, the seriousness of this particular consequence made them think about the need to get further information, and if it were true, they would consider it to be a strong disincentive to smoking. Participants in all of the groups thought that this message would be effective with all segments of the population.

Interpretation/Recommendations From This Research

Qualitative research provides deep, rich data about reactions, motivation, and underlying causes for behavior. For a study about reactions to cigarette warning labels, therefore, it is a very useful tool for understanding how smokers and non-smokers alike actually respond to specific warnings. Do “scare tactics” work? If so, what kinds of “scare tactics”? Is humor effective? Do people really pay attention to facts and figures? What kinds of words are most believable when it comes to discouraging smoking?

Because qualitative information is not quantifiable, it is not possible to generalize these findings to the general public. However, our experiences with participants in these focus groups have led to some interesting findings that, while not provable, nevertheless are based upon repeated observations in numerous focus groups.

Would the use of Canadian-style warnings actually affect the behavior of people – get smokers to quit/cut down or keep non-smokers from smoking? It's not possible to answer that question with any degree of certainty, based simply upon the data from these focus groups. It is clear, though, that the graphic nature of some of the Canadian warnings and the strong statements of fact about morbidity associated with smoking served to get people to think about these smoking-related issues.

The point also was made by participants in several of the groups, however, that the “shock value” of the Canadian warning labels was enhanced by the fact that they were new to most of the people in the groups. Would continued exposure to these “new” warnings eventually make them less visible and less effective, just as long-term exposure to the current U.S. warning labels has done? This question cannot be answered with certainty, but preliminary indications of long-term effectiveness can be obtained by reviewing Canadian studies done prior to and following initiation of the warning label campaign.

Summary Table – Effectiveness of Labels

Exhibit VI.I summarizes the reactions of each of the focus groups toward each of the Canadian warning labels shown to them.

Exhibit VI.I - Reactions to Labels Across All the Groups

	Similarities Across All the Groups	Differences							
		Smokers				Non-smokers			
		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		College	Non-college	College	Non-college	College	Non-college	College	Non-college
Label A <i>Lung Cancer</i>	Overall very effective Picture: strong Message: strong Targets everyone	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective				
Label B <i>Mouth Diseases</i>	Overall moderately effective Picture: very strong Message: weak Targets everyone but especially young and beginners smokers	Moderately effective	Not very effective	Not very effective	Not very effective	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective
Label C Impotence	Overall moderately effective Picture: weak Message: strong Targets men	Not very effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective	Moderately/very effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective
Label D <i>Second-band Smoke</i>	Overall not very effective Picture: weak Message: weak Targets non-smokers	Not very effective	Not very effective	Not very effective	Not very effective				
Label E <i>Children See Children Do</i>	Overall not very effective Picture: weak Message: weak Targets parents	Moderately effective	Not very effective	Not very effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Not very effective
Label F <i>Human Brain with Stroke</i>	Overall very effective Picture: strong Message: strong Targets everyone but especially older, long-time smokers	Very effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Very/moderately effective	Very effective	Very effective	Very effective

VII. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the findings reported throughout this study.

1. **Include pictures** -- The graphic pictures of injured lungs, brains and teeth proved to be most effective with all participants. These photos illustrated the kinds of warnings that people had heard before, and so they found them to be believable.
2. **Use statistics in warning labels** -- In order to maximize effectiveness, the photos should be accompanied by clear statistical numbers and the words “will cause,” not “may cause.” Participants in all of the focus groups emphasized the fact that they wanted factual information, not conditional messages.
3. **Test all photos and illustrations** with target audiences to ensure that they are clear. A number of participants in these focus groups did not know that the mother in Label E was pregnant, because the picture was not clear to them. Testing pictures and the accompanying messages with the target audiences would help to avoid these kinds of misinterpretations and therefore maximize the impact of a warning label initiative.
4. **For “new” messages – Combine with public education campaign to increase effectiveness.** People in the focus groups tended to consider messages that they’d heard before – lungs, pregnant women – to be more believable than messages that were new to them – impotence, stroke, mouth disease. If the more unfamiliar warnings are to be used, and new ones introduced, they will need to be accompanied by extensive information that establishes the legitimacy of the claim in the eyes of the public.
5. **Avoid images of lit cigarettes in ads directed toward smokers** (see Label D). According to the smokers’ focus groups, picture of a lit cigarette may actually **encourage** people to smoke rather than discourage them. While the photo of a lit cigarette may look like a negative image to a non-smoker, it is not necessarily negative to smokers. Some of the smokers in these focus groups said that the image of the lit cigarette looked good to them and actually made them want to have a cigarette. This would seem to defeat the purpose of the warning label.

VIII. Conclusions

Determining whether or not warning labels are effective in deterring smoking is a complex question, and one focus group study can only address a small sliver of the issue. The findings from this study do begin to address some of the questions raised in the introductory chapter, however. Reprinted below are these questions, as well as summary answers of what was found in the focus groups held for this study.

1. What was the prior exposure of focus group participants in the Detroit metropolitan area to Canadian warning labels?

Several participants in each of the groups had prior exposure to the Canadian warning labels, but not all had seen them.

2. What were the group participants' reactions to Canadian-style warning labels? Did demographic differences among the respondent groups – smoking status, gender, education status – appear to affect their reactions to the labels?

All of the focus groups indicated that the Canadian warning labels were much more noticeable than the current U.S. labels. There were differences in responses among the respondent groups, but the most extensive differences were among smokers and non-smokers rather than differences based upon gender or education status of the respondents.

3. What were the group participants' perceptions of Canadian-style labels in terms of their visual and contextual format? What responses did the Canadian warnings elicit from participants in the focus groups?

As stated above, all of the focus groups indicated that the Canadian-style warnings were eye-catching and quite noticeable, especially in comparison to the U.S. labels. Responses to each of the labels, delineated by smoking status, education status and gender, are indicated in the previous three chapters.

4. What were the smokers' reactions to these warnings in terms of providing incentives/ motivations to quit?

Smokers indicated that they would be most likely to consider quitting if the warning labels included facts, figures and statistics that indicated that their personal risks were very high. They also were more likely to believe warning labels that depicted health messages they were familiar with, such as lung cancer and smoking while pregnant. They were least likely to be motivated to quit by messages that were not directly relevant to them, and by messages that they did not believe, due either to no prior knowledge of the health risk or because of lack of documentation of the risk.

5. Did smokers think that any of the warning labels would keep young people from smoking?

Smokers did think that warning labels could have some effect upon keeping young people from smoking. They particularly mentioned the mouth disease warning label (although they said this label would not keep them from smoking), and the labels on lung disease and stroke.

6. How did non-smokers react to the warnings? Did they think that any of the labels would encourage current smokers to quit, or prevent young people from beginning to smoke?

Non-smokers were more optimistic than smokers about the potential of warning labels encouraging smokers to quit, and they also said that warning labels could be a useful resource in preventing young people from starting to smoke. They also thought that the mouth disease label would serve as a disincentive to young people, as well as the lung and stroke labels.

7. Did gender or level of education appear to affect the ways in which people responded to the labels?

Education level did not appear to affect the ways in which people responded to the labels. However, there were some apparent gender differences, primarily for labels that appeared to participants to be targeted for specific segments of the population.

We look forward to seeing additional research done on warning labels, particularly with other age groups, young people who currently do not smoke, and long-time smokers.

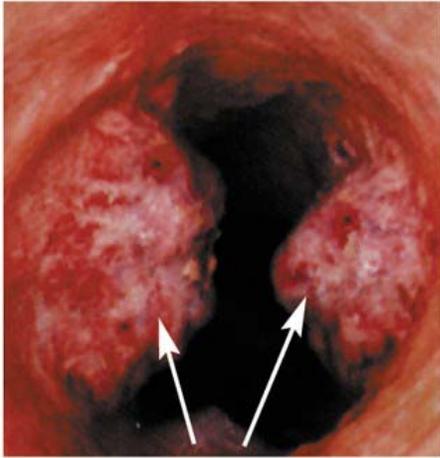
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Appendix A

Images of Canadian Tobacco Warming Labels



lung cancer

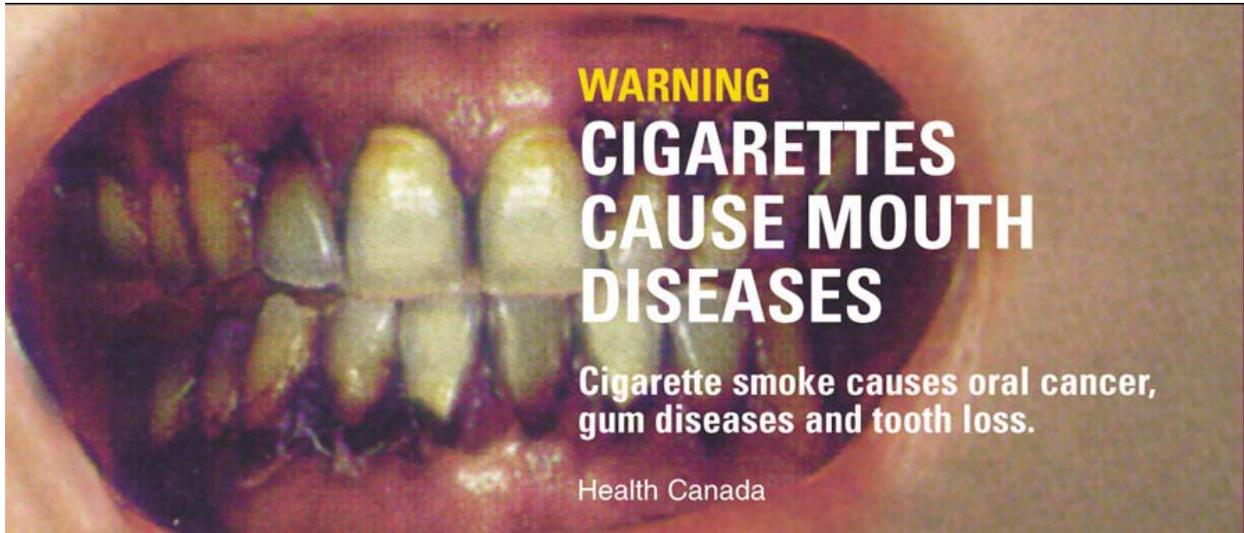
WARNING

CIGARETTES CAUSE LUNG CANCER

**85% of lung cancers are caused by
smoking. 80% of lung cancer victims
die within 3 years.**

Health Canada

LABEL A



LABEL B



WARNING
**TOBACCO USE
CAN MAKE YOU
IMPOTENT**

**Cigarettes may cause sexual
impotence due to decreased blood
flow to the penis. This can prevent
you from having an erection.**

Health Canada

LABEL C



LABEL D



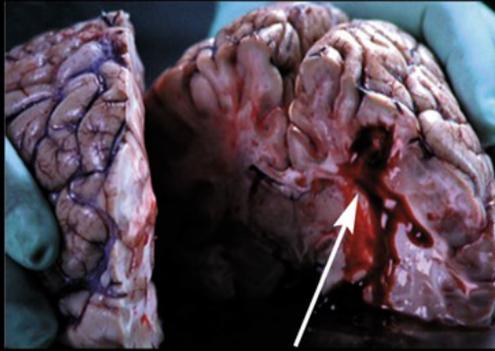
WARNING

**CHILDREN SEE
CHILDREN DO**

**Your children are twice as likely
to smoke if you do. Half of all
premature deaths among life-long
smokers result from tobacco use.**

Health Canada

LABEL E



human brain with stroke

WARNING

CIGARETTES CAUSE STROKES

**Tobacco smoke can cause the arteries
in your brain to clog. This can block
the blood vessels and cause a stroke.
A stroke can cause disability and death.**

Health Canada

LABEL F

Appendix B

**Focus Group
Recruitment Screener**

Participant Screener for CDC Focus Groups

Hello _____, my name is _____ and I'm with Cremmins and Forman, a research and consulting firm here in Detroit. We are working with another firm, ORC Macro, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to learn more about tobacco use. As part of this study, we are planning approximately an hour and a half discussion group of about 6-8 young adults and we would like for you to participate in it. Would you mind if I ask you a few questions in order to determine whether or not you are eligible to participate?

Screening Questions

1. Do you or someone from your close family work for the following:
 - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who do not work themselves or have no close family members working for the CDC.*]
 - Tobacco Industry or Tobacco Related Projects -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who do not work themselves or have no close family members working for the Tobacco Industry.*]
 - Market Research Firm -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and end explain that we are looking for people who do not work themselves or have no close family members working for Market Research Firm.*]
2. Determine gender. [*Interviewer: Ask only if you can't tell.*]
 - Male
 - Female
3. How old are you?
 - Under 18 years old -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people 18-24 years of age.*]
 - 18-24 years old -> **continue**
 - Over 24 years old -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people 18-24 years of age.*]

4. What is the highest grade or year of school you have completed?

- Less than high school -> **recruit to non-college groups**
- Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate) -> **recruit to non-college groups**
- Technical/vocational school -> **recruit to non-college groups**
- Community college -> **recruit to non-college groups**

If any of the above applies skip to question 5.

- College 4 years or more (college graduate) -> **recruit to college groups, skip to question 5**
- Some college (1-3 years at a 4 year institution) -> **ask question 4a**

4a. Are you currently enrolled?

- Yes -> **recruit to college groups, skip to question 5**
- No -> **ask question 4b**

4b. Have you left your college or university for one semester and plan to return?

- Yes -> **recruit to college groups**
- No -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who are currently attending college.*]
- Don't know -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who are currently attending college.*]

5. What is your ethnic background? Don't eliminate anyone at this point. Go to the next questions and then eliminate.

- White, not Hispanic or Latino Origin
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino Origin
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Other [Specify]_____
- Refused

If answer more than one of the above ask which one of these groups best represents your race.

Try to recruit 8 White and 4 Black/African American persons for each group.

Now, I would like to ask you a couple of questions about smoking and cigarettes.

6. Have you smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days?

- Yes -> **recruit to smoking group, skip to question 9**
- No -> **ask question 7**

7. Have you smoked a cigarette in the past 6 months?

- Yes -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who have not smoked recently.*]
- No -> **ask question 8**

8. Do you plan on smoking a cigarette in the next 6 months?

- Yes -> **eliminate** [*Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and explain that we are looking for people who are not likely to start smoking.*]
- No -> **recruit to non smoking group, go to question 9**

9. Would you be comfortable discussing your ideas and experiences about cigarette smoking with 5-7 other people for approximately an hour and a half? Every person who participates in the discussion will receive \$50.00 cash in appreciation of his/her time and willingness to talk with us.

- Yes
- No ->*thank the person for his/her time and end conversation*

I'm glad that you will be able to join us! The focus group will take place on (Day), (Date), at [6:00 or 8:00 p.m.] at [site location].

Date	Hour	Gender	Smoking/ Non-smoking	College/ Non-college	Check the Group to Which Invited
January 28	4:00 p.m.	Male	Smoking	College	
January 28	6:30p.m.	Male	Smoking	Non-college	
January 29	4:00 p.m.	Male	Smoking	Non-college	
January 29	6:30p.m.	Female	Smoking	Non-college	
January 30	4:00 p.m.	Female	Smoking	Non-college	
January 30	6:30p.m.	Female	Smoking	College	
February 4	4:00 p.m.	Male	Non-smoking	College	
February 4	6:30p.m.	Male	Non-smoking	Non-college	
February 5	4:00 p.m.	Male	Non-smoking	Non-college	
February 5	6:30p.m.	Female	Non-smoking	Non-college	
February 6	4:00 p.m.	Female	Non-smoking	Non-college	
February 6	6:30 p.m.	Female	Non-smoking	College	

Will you be available to participate at this time?

- Yes
- No -> *[Interviewer: thank the person for his/her time and end conversation.]*

I would like to send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility. In order to do so, could you please tell me your mailing address (or fax number) and a phone number where you can be reached:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date of focus group: _____ Time: _____

We are only inviting a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to attend. Please call [recruiter] at [telephone number] if this should happen. We look forward to seeing you on {date} at {time}. If you use reading glasses, please bring them with you to the focus group.

Appendix C

Smokers Focus Group Discussion Guide

**WARNING LABELS FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSION GUIDE
YOUNG ADULT SMOKERS (1/17/02)**

Procedures (10 minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to be here. My name is Ewa Carlton and I work for ORC Macro, an Opinion Research Corporation company. We are currently working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). I want to take a few minutes to tell you what to expect from our discussion tonight and then I'll give everyone the chance to introduce themselves.

As you may recall from when you were recruited, we are conducting this focus group study to understand young adult's attitudes toward and behavior regarding smoking.

My role is to simply facilitate the discussion, make sure we stay on topic, and keep us within our 2-hour time limit. I am not here to push any particular agenda or point of view, but rather to hear your frank and honest opinions. There are no right or wrong answers, and nothing to be ashamed of. We all have our own likes and dislikes, our own thoughts and feelings.

I want to remind everyone that the discussion here is confidential. We will not report your comments by name, and we ask that you respect one another's privacy in the same way. We don't expect you to tell us anything that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the group. But we do hope that you will be honest with your responses to the questions I ask.

Before we begin, I need to give you the informed consent form. Let's read it together and then I'll ask you to sign it. Most importantly, I want to make sure that you understand your participation in this study is completely voluntary. That means you can leave at any time.

Moderator: Review and collect informed consent form

I'm going to ask a series of questions, but mainly I want to hear from you. As I mentioned, my role is simply to guide the discussion. Sometimes we may really get going on one question and I'll have to move you on to the next question so that we may cover everything. Please don't take it personally! We just need to hear from everyone about several topics.

Moderator: Review ground rules like –

- Participate as you feel comfortable*
- Remember that disagreement is OK*

Most importantly, please try to speak up, speak clearly, and one at a time, if possible. Remember we are audiotaping the discussion so that we can have an accurate record of the discussion.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Participant Introductions and Warm-up Exercise (-10 minutes)

So we can get to know each other a little, let' go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name, the city where you were born, and your favorite movie and TV shows.

Thank you. Now, let's get started with our discussion.

Discussion Questions (1 hour, 30 minutes)

I. Smoking Initiation and Habits (20 minutes)

Let's talk about your personal smoking habits.

1. When did you start smoking? What made you start smoking?
[Probe: What factors influenced or contributed to your decision to smoke]
Moderator: List on flipchart.
2. Why do you like to smoke?
3. How many cigarettes a day do you smoke? When do you smoke?
4. Have you ever tried to quit smoking? Why or why not? Do you want to quit? For how long have you quit?
5. Think about your friends and the people you work with. How common is smoking among these groups?

II. General Discussion about United States Warning Labels (15 minutes)

1. Have you ever seen health warning labels on cigarette packs?
2. What do these warnings say?
3. Who decides to place them on the cigarette packs?
4. What are they trying to say to people by placing these warnings?
5. In your opinion, how do people react to them?
6. What is your reaction?

7. Do you think these kinds of warning labels should be on cigarette packs? Why or why not?

III. Canadian Warning Labels (5-10 minutes)

1. Have you seen the Canadian warning labels on cigarette packs?
2. What did they look like?
3. What did they say?
4. What kind of impression did you have after viewing the images? [Probe: Did the images make you think about quitting?]

IV. General Discussion about Canadian Warning Labels (20-25 minutes)

Introduction: About a year ago the Canadian government began requiring new warning labels on cigarettes sold in Canada.

[Moderator: Show participants the Canadian warning label photos]

1. Now do you remember seeing these or similar ones?
2. What are your first impressions after seeing this packaging?
3. What are your reactions to the warning label on that packaging?
4. What is this warning label trying to tell you? [What message is it trying to convey?]
5. Do you think this kind of message might make young people less likely to start smoking?
6. What do these labels do to the cigarette pack? And to the impression you get from the pack?

[Moderator: Point out toxic ingredient information on side of pack]

7. Did the image make you want to read the warning text?
8. Have you ever heard of these ingredients? What do these ingredients do to your health?
9. Do you think cigarette manufactures should have to provide information on what chemicals are in cigarettes?

[Moderator: Show participants the Canadian warning label photos]

10. Which of these do you find gets your attention the most? The least? Why?
11. Who might react to these warning labels? [Probe for: kids, pregnant women etc.]
12. What about you? Which of these warning labels would keep you from smoking? Why? What about your friends?

V. Ideal Warning Label (10 minutes)

1. After seeing the Canadian warning labels, do you think the U.S. should change The information on cigarette packs? How?
2. In your opinion, how could the U.S. warning label be modified/improved? Or perhaps it does not need to be modified/improved? [Probe for: visual elements and verbal content]

False Close (U.S. cigarettes) – Moderator: Provide participants with materials so they can develop warning labels. Step out of room and check in with observers.

VI. Clarification requested by observers (5 minutes)

Moderator: Ask additional questions requested by observers

VII. Closing (5 minutes)

Well, that's the last of my questions. Do you have any questions?

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this discussion. We sincerely appreciate and value your input.

Appendix D

Non-Smokers Focus Group Discussion Guide

**WARNING LABELS FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSION GUIDE
YOUNG ADULT NON-SMOKERS – (2/1/02)**

Procedures (10 minutes)

Thank you for taking the time to be here. My name is Ewa Carlton and I work for ORC Macro, an Opinion Research Corporation company. We are currently working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). I want to take a few minutes to tell you what to expect from our discussion tonight and then I'll give everyone the chance to introduce themselves.

As you may recall from when you were recruited, we are conducting this focus group study to understand young adult's attitudes toward and behavior regarding smoking.

My role is to simply facilitate the discussion, make sure we stay on topic, and keep us within our 2-hour time limit. I am not here to push any particular agenda or point of view, but rather to hear your frank and honest opinions. There are no right or wrong answers, and nothing to be ashamed of. We all have our own likes and dislikes, our own thoughts and feelings.

I want to remind everyone that the discussion here is confidential. We will not report your comments by name, and we ask that you respect one another's privacy in the same way. We don't expect you to tell us anything that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the group. But we do hope that you will be honest with your responses to the questions I ask.

Before we begin, I need to give you the informed consent form. Let's read it together and then I'll ask you to sign it. Most importantly, I want to make sure that you understand your participation in this study is completely voluntary. That means you can leave at any time.

Moderator: Review and collect informed consent form

I'm going to ask a series of questions, but mainly I want to hear from you. As I mentioned, my role is simply to guide the discussion. Sometimes we may really get going on one question and I'll have to move you on to the next question so that we may cover everything. Please don't take it personally! We just need to hear from everyone about several topics.

Moderator: Review ground rules like –

- Participate as you feel comfortable*
- Remember that disagreement is OK*

Most importantly, please try to speak up, speak clearly, and one at a time, if possible. Remember we are audiotaping the discussion so that we can have an accurate record of the discussion.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Participant Introductions and Warm-up Exercise (-10 minutes)

So we can get to know each other a little, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. Please tell us your name, the city where you were born, and your favorite movie and TV shows.

Thank you. Now, let's get started with our discussion.

Discussion Questions (1 hour, 30 minutes)

I. Smoking Initiation and Habits (20 minutes)

Let's talk about what your opinions about smoking.

1. Generally, what do you think about smoking?
2. Did you ever try smoking? Why or why not? When was it? How frequently? At what occasions? What made you quit smoking?
3. Do you ever have thoughts about starting smoking? Why or why not?
4. What are your reasons for not smoking? What don't you like about smoking?

[Probe: What factors influenced or contributed to your decision not to smoke]
Moderator: List on flipchart.

5. Think about your friends and the people you work with. How common is smoking among these groups?
6. Do smokers ever try to encourage you to smoke? At what occasions? How do you respond to them?
7. What do you think about second-hand smoke? Are you exposed to second-hand smoke? By whom, how often. Are you trying to do anything to stop being exposed to second-hand smoke?

II. General Discussion about United States Warning Labels (15 minutes)

1. Have you ever seen health warning labels on cigarette packs?
2. What do these warnings say?
3. Who decides to place them on the cigarette packs?

4. What are they trying to say to people by placing these warnings?
5. In your opinion, how do people react to them?
6. What is your reaction?
7. Do you think these kinds of warning labels should be on cigarette packs? Why or why not?

III. Canadian Warning Labels (5-10 minutes)

1. Have you seen the Canadian warning labels on cigarette packs?
2. What did they look like?
3. What did they say?
4. What kind of impression did you have after viewing the images? [Probe: Did the images make you think about quitting?]

IV. General Discussion about Canadian Warning Labels (20-25 minutes)

Introduction: About a year ago the Canadian government began requiring new warning labels on cigarettes sold in Canada.

[Moderator: Show participants the Canadian warning label photos]

1. Now do you remember seeing these or similar ones?
2. What are your first impressions after seeing this packaging?
3. What are your reactions to the warning label on that packaging?
4. What is this warning label trying to tell you? [What message is it trying to convey?]
5. Do you think this kind of message might make young people less likely to start smoking?
6. What do these labels do to the cigarette pack? And to the impression you get from the pack?
7. Did the image make you want to read the warning text?

[Moderator: Show respondents toxic ingredient information.]

8. Have you ever heard of these ingredients? What do these ingredients do to your health?
9. Do you think cigarette manufactures should have to provide information on what chemicals are in cigarettes?

[Moderator: Ask participants to look at all Canadian warning label photos]

10. Which of these do you find gets your attention the most? The least? Why?
11. Who might react to these warning labels? [Probe for: kids, pregnant women etc.]
12. What about you? Which of these warning labels would keep you from smoking? Why? What about your friends?

V. Ideal Warning Label (10 minutes)

1. After seeing the Canadian warning labels, do you think the U.S. should change The information on cigarette packs? How?
2. In your opinion, how could the U.S. warning label be modified/improved? Or perhaps it does not need to be modified/improved? [Probe for: visual elements and verbal content]

False Close (U.S. cigarettes) – Moderator: Provide participants with materials so they can develop warning labels. Step out of room and check in with observers.

VI. Clarification requested by observers (5 minutes)

Moderator: Ask additional questions requested by observers

VII. Closing (5 minutes)

Well, that's the last of my questions. Do you have any questions?

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this discussion. We sincerely appreciate and value your input.

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

ORC Macro is conducting a focus group study on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help them understand young adult's attitudes toward and behavior regarding warning labels on cigarette packages. We are asking you to participate in a 2-hour discussion with other young adults who, like you, identified themselves as cigarette smokers. A report of the results from all of the discussion will be made to CDC. If you agree to join in this discussion, here are some things you should know:

- Participation in this group discussion is completely voluntary.
- Any questions you have about this study will be answered before the group discussion begins.
- The discussion will be audiotaped and videotaped.
- The discussion will be observed by project staff from both ORC Macro and CDC.
- Your name will not be used in any reports about this group and no quotes will be attributed to you.
- You may choose to leave the group at any time, for whatever reason.
- You will receive \$50 to compensate you for your time and participation in the group.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above and agree to participate in this group.

Signature _____

Witness _____

Date _____