



TPackSS: Tobacco Pack Surveillance System Cigarette Health Warning Label Compliance



India - 2016

In November 2016, India's health warning labels (HWLs) - which fulfill the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 11 minimum requirements - included the following:

1. 85 percent coverage of the front and back of the pack, with color pictorial HWLs
2. Text warning displayed on contrasting background color
3. Two different tobacco use health warning messages, in English, Hindi, or regional language



Front of pack



Back of pack

India's HWL size tied for 2nd in the WHO South-East Asia Region and tied for 3rd globally in 2016.¹ India meets FCTC guidelines for warning size on the front and back of the pack.

TPackSS assesses health warning label compliance as HWL requirements improve in countries. In November 2016, TPackSS collected cigarette packs in Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, and Bengaluru using a systematic protocol.² Cigarette packs were assessed for compliance with the current HWL policy in place at the time of data collection.³

Article 11 of the World Health Organization's (WHO) FCTC requires that Parties implement effective tobacco packaging and labeling measures to increase public awareness of the negative health impacts of tobacco products.

TPackSS systematically collected a sample of 55 unique cigarette packs that displayed the HWLs mandated by India. Packs were assessed for compliance with four key requirements.³

Warning Location

100 percent of the packs had a pictorial health warning at the top edge of the front and back of the pack.



Warning Size

53 percent of packs had a health warning that was at least 3.5 cm wide and 4 cm tall, with 85 percent overall covered on both the front and back of the pack, including 60 percent covered by the graphic.



Warning Label Elements

95 percent of packs had white health warning text printed on a black background with "WARNING" printed in white on a red background. Health warning language matched the language used on the pack.



Warning Text Size

91 percent of packs had a text box that covered 25 percent of the front and back of the pack.



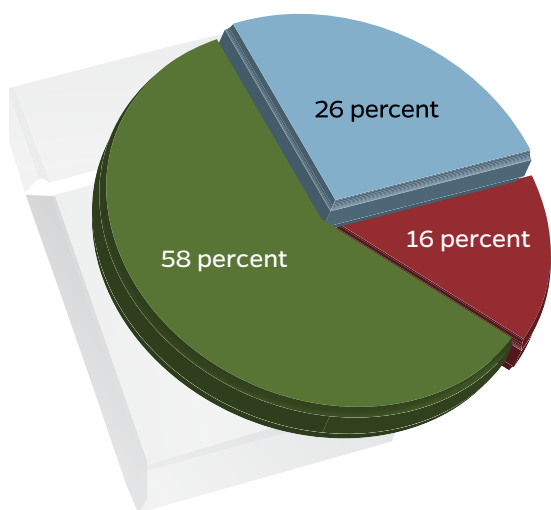
51% of the unique cigarette packs assessed were compliant with the four key HWL requirements.

Area of Concern: Beveled Edges

These packs are compliant with the four key HWL requirements. However, the presence of beveled edges reduces the available space of the principal display area for the HWL. This introduces additional areas for branding on the front and rear faces of the package, potentially minimizing the impact of the HWL.



Collected packs with beveled and non-beveled edges



Breakdown of packs collected and presence of required HWLs

Total number of unique packs collected: 95

- **58 percent** of total packs had a current mandated HWL (n=55)
- **26 percent** of total packs had no HWL or a non-Indian HWL (n=25)
- **16 percent** of total packs had a previous Indian HWL (n=15)

Approximately a quarter of all packs collected in India displayed a non-Indian HWL or no HWL. India should take action to reduce the sale of packs that do not bear the current mandated Indian HWL. Exposure to best practice HWLs can improve the effectiveness of HWLs in India.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society. Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report, Fifth Edition. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids; 2016. http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/WL_status_report_en.pdf. Accessed May 25, 2016.

² Smith K, Washington C, Brown J, Vadnais A, Kroart L, Ferguson J, Cohen J. The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System: A Protocol for Assessing Health Warning Compliance, Design Features, and Appeals of Tobacco Packs Sold in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *JMIR Public Health Surveill.* 2015;1(2):e8 DOI: 10.2196/publichealth.4616.

³ Notification G.S.R. 727(E), October 15, 2014, Republic of India

About TPackSS

The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) project to monitor whether required health warnings on tobacco packages are being implemented as intended, and to identify pack features and marketing appeals that might violate or detract from country tobacco packaging laws in these countries.