Misleading Descriptors on Cigarette Packs in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam: Implementation of Misleading Packaging Regulations
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Introduction

• The tobacco industry uses misleading descriptors, colors, and symbols on cigarette packaging to alleviate smoking-related health concerns.
• The WHO FCTC Article 11 calls for bans on misleading packaging and labelling.
• In the last five years, Indonesia (2013), the Philippines (2015), and Vietnam (2015) have banned some forms of misleading packaging.

Objectives

• Assess compliance with misleading packaging and labeling regulations
• Describe the use of alternative misleading packaging
• Compare packaging from pre (2013) and post (2015/2016) bans

Methods

• Census of cigarette packs on the market purchased in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam in 2013 and 2015/2016
• Tobacco vendors in 4 low, 4 middle, and 4 high socioeconomic areas sampled from three major cities in each country using systematic protocol
• Packs displaying health warning label in rotation coded; packs qualitatively compared

Results

Package compliance with regulations on misleading descriptors (2015/2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Banned misleading descriptors</th>
<th>n</th>
<th># non-compliant packs (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3 (3.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild, extra, ultra</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild, extra mild, slim, special, full, flavor, premium</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>50 (24.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

• Misleading descriptors are permitted in brand names in Indonesia, but many packs still display banned descriptors outside of the brand name.
• The tobacco industry uses alternative packaging and exploits loopholes in regulations.
• Regulations should extend to ban misleading descriptors in trademarked names and countries should consider implementing plain packaging.

References

Tobacco Pack Surveillance System, globaltobaccocontrol.org/tpackss

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