Identifying Credible Attribution Statements for Sources on Pictorial Health Warning Labels in China

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New Developments in Pictorial Health Warnings & Standardized/Plain Packaging

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Health warnings

- In China, female smokers 2.7% vs. 52.1% of men; there are 14.4 million Chinese women smoking.

- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) recommends that large and clear warnings appear on both the front and back of tobacco packs.

- They should describe specific illnesses caused by tobacco.

Health warnings in China

• 2007 – Chinese cigarette packs required to have text-only messages, covering at least 30% of the display area; Warnings “Smoking is harmful to your health, quitting smoking is good for your health”

• 2016 - area increased to 35%; warnings include:
  - “Smoking is harmful to your health; please don’t smoke in smoke-free places”,
  - “Quitting smoking early is good for your health; quitting can reduce the harm to your health”
  - “Dissuade youth from smoking; prohibit primary and secondary school students from smoking”
Anatomy of a Health Warning Label

Canada

“Front” (50% size)

“Back” (50% size)

“Marker” word

“Tagline”
Black letters

English Text

Attribution to health authority

Source: Tobacco labelling and packaging toolkit. available at: www.tobaccolabels.org
Attribution Statements on HWL internationally

- Upon review of 109 jurisdictions that use or have passed policies to use pictorial HWLs in 2016; less than a quarter (n=25) of jurisdictions attribute their HWLs to a source

- Most of the sources (n=14) used were “The Ministry of Health” or similar; other common sources were a government website that contained information to support smoking cessation
Data Collection
Methods

- Data collected during November 2016
- Beijing, Shanghai, Wuhan, and Kunming
- Approximately 400 adult (18+) residents from each city
  - Recruitment via street intercept to participate in our 25 minute tablet-based survey.
Visual stimuli

STMA

China CDC

WHO

Liyuan Peng
Methods

Survey participants asked, “Which warning label appears…”

1) “…the most credible?”

2.) “…the most effective at making people quit?”

3.) “…the most effective at preventing young people from starting to smoke?”
Results

Which source appears most credible?

Which source appears most effective at making people quit?

Which source appears most effective at preventing young people from starting to smoke?
Discussion

• Most countries with pictorial health warning labels do not use an attribution source

• China may benefit from using national or international public health authorities as the source for HWLs

• Sources may help labels be more credible and effective at supporting quit-seeking behaviors and preventing young people from initiating cigarette use
globaltobaccocontrol.org/tpackss

THANK YOU!