The Effectiveness of Religious Messages on Cigarette Health Warning Labels in Indonesia

Bekir Kaplan, MD; Jeffrey Hardesty, MPH; Santi Martini, PhD; Hario Megatsari, MPH; Ryan Kennedy, PhD; Joanna Cohen, PhD

Background

- Indonesia has the third largest number of smokers and the largest population of Muslims in the world
- The influence of religion on the country’s political, economic and cultural life is significant
- We examined the effectiveness of religious messages on health warning labels (HWLs) among Muslims in Indonesia

Methods

- Three different textual religious HWLs with corresponding nonreligious HWLs were developed. The same graphical images and themes (suicide, secondhand smoke [SHS] and gangrene) were used in the HWLs
- All participants rated each HWL on a scale of one to 10 (1=“not at all”; 10=“extremely”) for grabbing attention, easy to understand, credibility, makes me feel more concerned about smoking, makes me think about the health risks of smoking, motivates me to stay smoke-free, makes me think about quitting, motivates me to quit smoking, makes me avoid looking at the warning label, and effectiveness
- Participants were recruited from April 28th to May 2nd 2018 in Surabaya, Indonesia

Results

- Of the 817 participants, 79% were male, 100% were Muslim, 52% were 18-24 years old, and 79% were daily smokers
- Overall, the nonreligious HWLs had a median rating score of 7.3, which was slightly higher than the religious HWLs’ median score of 7.2 (p=0.005)
- With regard to credibility, the nonreligious SHS HWL had the highest mean rating score (8.0) followed by the religious SHS HWL (7.7) and the nonreligious suicide HWL (7.4)
- The mean value of the religious gangrene HWL (7.0) was higher than the nonreligious gangrene HWL (6.9) (p=0.042) with regard to making people think about the health risks of smoking

Conclusions

- This is the first study to examine the effectiveness of religious messages on pictorial HWLs among Muslims
- The religious HWL with the gangrene theme was marginally superior to the nonreligious HWL, while the nonreligious HWLs with the SHS and suicide themes were marginally superior to the religious HWLs
- With proper assessment of the potential unintended consequences, implementation of religious HWLs could be considered for a proportion of HWLs in countries where religion has a substantial effect on social life

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