



STUDY TO ASSESS IMPACT OF PICTORIAL/ TEXT WARNINGS ON CIGARETTE, BEEDI AND CHUTTA PACKETS ON SMOKING HABITS.

Dentistry

Dr Vaddi Sri Himabindu*	Post Graduate Student, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India *Corresponding Author
Dr Natarajan Kannan	MDS, Professor & Head Of Department, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India
Dr Rakesh Kumar Manne	MDS, Professor, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India
Dr Venkata Sarath Prathi	MDS, Reader, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India
Dr Beeraka Swapna Sridevi	MDS, Reader, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India
Dr Sravya Vemareddy	MDS, Assistant Professor, Department Of Oral Medicine And Radiology, Narayana Dental College And Hospital, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Health warnings and pictures on cigarettes and other forms of smoking tobacco packets is intended to inform customers of potential dangers associated with using the product. This study was done to evaluate effectiveness and impact of health warnings and pictures printed on cigarette, beedi & chutta packets on smokers. **Method:** The study population consisted of 100 smokers who visited our college for oral and dental problems. During oral examinations, they were questioned about their smoking habits and various aspects regarding text and pictures printed on the cigarette, beedi and chutta packets with the help of a specifically designed and validated questionnaire and sociodemographic data was collected from them. **Results:** This study showed higher percentage of literacy among urban smokers (94.7%) compared to rural smokers (72.1%). Absence of printed warnings in local Telugu language was tagged by many of the literate smokers as impeding their ability to read and understand the warnings. Most of the smokers saw pictures on the packets but chose to ignore them as they thought these as unlikely to affect them. Few of them attempted to quit the tobacco habit previously but failed on account of addictive nature of the habit, stress and tension. **Conclusion:** The health warnings and pictures printed on packets of tobacco products were marginally effective in inducing smokers to quit habit and there is need for more awareness in rural areas and need for printing of health warnings in regional languages.

KEYWORDS

Health warnings and pictures, Smokers, Tobacco (Cigarette, Beedi & Chutta) Packets, literacy.

INTRODUCTION

More than a billion people throughout the world smoke cigarettes, making it the most common type of smoking¹. Tobacco has been identified as the third leading cause of death worldwide². The biggest tobacco consumption is found in India³. Currently, cigarettes are the most popular smoked form but other forms in vogue include pipes, cigars, bidis, chuttas, hookahs and vaporizers¹. Tobacco metabolites are a major health risk and can result in a number of fatal illnesses including cancer, lung, and cardiovascular conditions¹. The legislative authorities in an effort to curb the tobacco habit have made it mandatory to print written and visual health warnings on cigarette packets⁴. The "Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act" of the Indian government, which went into effect in May 2009, requires that pictorial health warnings on tobacco product packaging take up at least 40% of the display area (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Health Warnings And Pictures Printed On Cigarette, Beedi And Chutta Packets.

Health warnings and pictures on smoking tobacco packets is intended to inform customers of potential dangers associated with using the product⁴. But the question that emerges is whether it genuinely achieves its goal of encouraging smokers to give up their habit. The Aim and objective of the study was to evaluate effectiveness of health warnings and pictures printed on cigarette, beedi & chutta packets on smokers with the help of a specifically designed and validated questionnaire.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This Interview based Questionnaire study was conducted between April 2022 and October 2022. Using Convenient Sampling, this study included 100 smokers who visited our college for their oral and dental problems, based on their meeting the inclusion criteria and their signed informed consent for willingness to participate in the study. Duration of this study was 6 months. During oral examination, the patients with tobacco habits were questioned about their smoking habit and about the text and pictures printed on the cigarette, beedi and chutta packets that they use to smoke with the help of questionnaire (Table 1) and sociodemographic data was collected from them. This was a specifically designed questionnaire and validation of the questionnaire was done by 5 external experts. This study included patients who voluntarily gave informed consent to participate in the study, patients with smoking habit and aged 18yrs and above. The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics committee with the Certificate reference number IEC/NDCH/2022/Mar/P-52.

Statistical Analysis

Data was entered in MS Excel sheet and analysed statistically using SPSS 20 version software. Comparison of the groups was done using Chi-square test. p value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

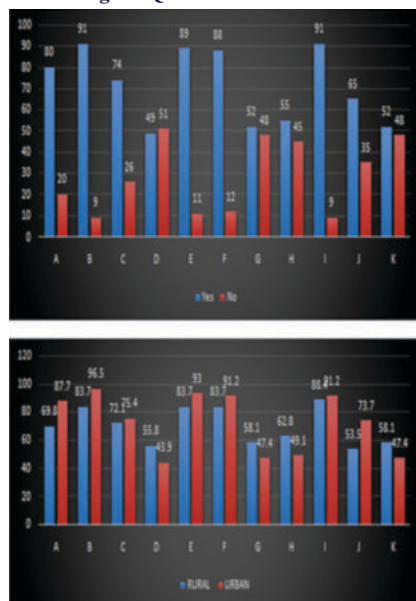
71% of tobacco smokers had Cigarette Smoking habit. Smoking tobacco was bought in packets by 41% of the smokers and in loose quantity by 59% of the smokers. Our study showed higher percentage of literacy among urban smokers(94.7%) compared to rural smokers(72.1%). Urban smokers showed

Table 1: Questionnaire

(1) What do you Smoke?	Cigarette	Beedi	Chutta	Cigar	Other
If YES					
>20/day	10-20/day	<10/day			Occasionally
(2) How do you buy?	LOOSE	PACKETS			
(3) Do you know how to read? - YES NO					
Do you know how to read English - YES NO					
Do you know how to read Hindi - YES NO					
Do you know how to read Telugu - YES NO					
(4) Do you ever read warning on packet in detail? - YES NO					
SOMETIMES					
(5) Did you ever look at the picture printed on the packet closely? - YES NO					
SOMETIMES					
(6) Did the picture scare you? - YES NO					
SOMETIMES					
(7) Did it ever make you think while taking cigarette/beedi out from packet? - YES NO					
SOMETIMES					
(8) Do you think you can get cancer due to smoking? - YES NO					
(9) Have you seen Quit Tobacco video shown in movie hall - YES NO					
(10) Has it ever made you think of quitting Tobacco smoking habit - YES NO					
(11) Did it ever motivate you to quit smoking? - YES NO					
(12) Are you willing to quit smoking? - YES NO					
(13) Have you tried to quit smoking previously? - YES NO					
If Yes - No. of times attempted -					
Reason for being unable to quit -					
(14) Would you like to get some help for quitting smoking habit - YES NO					

literacy rate of 66.7% in English, 31.6% in Hindi and 94.7% in Telugu language. Rural smokers showed literacy rate of 41.9% in English, 23.3% in Hindi and 67.4% in Telugu language. Highest rate of literacy in both rural and urban smokers was seen in usage of telugu language. 49% smokers said they were induced to think of adverse effects due to warnings and pictures while taking cigarette/beedi out from packet. 91% smokers saw the printed pictures and 80% read the warnings on the packets but most of them chose to ignore the some as they felt these are unlikely to affect them. 65% smokers (73.7% urban and 53.5% rural) said they had tried to quit the tobacco habit previously but failed on account of its addictive nature and due to their work stress and tension). Printing of Warnings in other than telugu language was tagged by many of the literate smokers as impeding their ability to read and understand the warnings. The findings of questionnaire were showed in figure 2 & 3.

Figure 2 & 3: Findings Of Questionnaire.



A - Read warning on packet in detail, B - Looked at picture printed on packet closely, C - Picture scared you, D - Made you think while taking cigarette/beedi out from packet, E - Can get cancer due to smoking, F - Seen Quit tobacco video shown in movie hall, G - Made thinking of quitting smoking habit, H - Motivated to quit habit, I - Willing to quit smoking, J - Tried to quit smoking previously, K - Like to get some help for quitting smoking habit.

DISCUSSION

The majority of the participants in this study were older than 50 years(48%), employees(44%) and all of them were male. Given that this study was conducted in hospital location, cigarettes were found to be more prevalent (71%) than bidi (23%) and Chutta (6%) packets. 86% of the smokers were living in Urban and 51.2% of the smokers were living in Rural region. Most participants bought their tobacco loose(59%) and 27% smoked less than ten times per day. According to this study, Urban smokers had a greater percentage of literacy (94.7%) compared to rural smokers(72.1%). In this study, Telugu language literacy showed highest percentage(83%) among the smokers. 80% of smokers read the warnings on the packets and 91% of them glanced at the printed photographs, 74% of them were a little frightened by the image. This result was comparable to earlier research by Raute et al.⁵, Bhat and Kumar and Karibasappa et al.⁷ who evaluated knowledge of health warnings found that it was 89.9%, 74% and 73.4% respectively. When taking cigarettes or beedis out of their packaging, 49% of people thought about the warnings and images. 89% of smokers were aware that smoking causes cancer. Quit tobacco video to give up smoking was viewed by 88% of people in movie theatres, with 52% of those viewers thinking about Quitting Habit. 65% had tried to stop smoking in the past but had failed owing to addiction, stress and tension, 52% wanted assistance in breaking the tobacco habit.

The outcome of the current study was in agreement with the research conducted by Daya Shankar et al. (2020)⁴ which stated that pictorial health warnings over the cigarette packets had no significant demotivational effect on smokers. Similar studies by Oswal et al.⁷, Arora et al.⁸ and Chopra et al.⁶ suggested that pictorial warnings that existed on tobacco packs were perceived to be ineffective in the Indian population. Many of the literate smokers cited the absence of warnings printed in their native Telugu as a barrier to reading and comprehending the warnings. A Study by Kunal C. Oswal et al.⁷, stated that majority of consumers were familiar with the text and graphic warnings on smokeless and smoked tobacco products, mandatory visual warnings were not effective since they are poorly understood and instead, people wanted to see the warnings in Hindi and Marathi (local languages) and preferred to see them on top of or in the middle of both sides of tobacco packets.

CONCLUSION

Presently there is not much significant effect of health warnings and pictures printed on packets of tobacco products in inducing smokers to quit habit.

Take Home Message

Majority of smokers purchased their tobacco products in loose form rather than in packages. Therefore, it is necessary to forbid the sale of tobacco products in loose form. Majority of smokers are familiar with the local Vernacular language rather than English or Hindi. So, health warnings must be printed in Vernacular languages Local to the Place of Sale / Consumption. Increased sensitization of patient regarding adverse effects of tobacco usage is required.

Funding: No

REFERENCES

- Ahsan, M., Saad, M., Jawed, M., Akhtar, S., Haseeb, A., Bilal, M., & Ahmed, A. (2016). Impact of tobacco health warnings on smokers in Pakistan. Age (years), 20(30), 375.
- Chudeh, S., & Janmool, P. (2021). Effectiveness of warning graphic labels on cigarette packs in enhancing late-teenagers' perceived fear of smoking-related harms in Bangkok, Thailand. Journal of public health research, 10(1), jphr-2021.
- Yuvashree CS.(2020). Awareness About Pictorial Warnings on Tobacco Products Among Tobacco Users - A Questionnaire Study. Biosci Biotech Res Comm. 13(7),99-105.
- Chandra, S., Shankar, D., Nanda, M., Anjan, R., & Bharti, G. (2020). Health warnings over cigarette packets impact on smokers within population of North Bihar. Journal of Advanced Medical and Dental Sciences Research, 8(2).
- Raute, L. J., Pednekar, M. S., & Gupta, P. C. (2009). Pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs: A population based study findings from India. Tobacco Use Insights, 2, TUI-S2751.
- Chopra, A., Rao, N. C., Gupta, N., & Vashisth, S. (2014). Communicating tobacco health risks: How effective are the warning labels on tobacco products?. Nigerian Medical Journal: Journal of the Nigeria Medical Association, 55(5), 411.

7. Oswal, K. C., Raute, L. J., Pednekar, M. S., & Gupta, P. C. (2011). Are current tobacco pictorial warnings in India effective. *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev*, 12(1), 121-4.
8. Arora, M., Tewari, A., Nazar, G. P., Gupta, V. K., & Shrivastav, R. (2012). Ineffective pictorial health warnings on tobacco products: Lessons learnt from India. *Indian journal of public health*, 56(1), 61.