



BRIEFING 3: STANDARDISED PACKS – THE HEALTH FACTS

- One in every two smokers will die of a tobacco related disease.
- The cost to the State of tobacco related diseases in 2009 was €500 million.¹
- The cost to the State of premature mortality caused by smoking in 2009 was €3,500 million.²
- Plain packaging eliminates the last great marketing tool for the tobacco industry.
- Evidence shows that standardised packs are less attractive than branded cigarettes.
- Assumptions on the relative strength and relative harmfulness of cigarette brands are removed by standardised packaging.
- Plain packaging makes health warnings more effective.

All about PERCEPTION

- Plain packaging will eliminate the last great marketing tool for the tobacco industry.
- Current branded packaging has the effect of communicating the **WRONG** messages to consumers:
 - It attracts children by using colours and textures
 - It gives the impression that some cigarettes are healthier than others (i.e. by using lighter colours)
- Plain packaging **STOPS** this kind of messaging:
 - All packs will be the same dull drab colour
 - All packs will be the same size and shape
 - All packs will include large graphic health warnings
- The evidence is there – In studies carried out in New Zealand, Scotland, Brazil and Canada, plain packaging has been shown to be **LESS ATTRACTIVE** than branded cigarettes.^{3 4 5 6}

1 Department of Health, Tobacco Free Ireland, <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/TobaccoFreeIreland.pdf?direct=1>

2 Jarvis, A., et al (2009), *A Study on Liability and the Health Costs of Smoking*, London: GHK, http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/docs/tobacco_liability_en.pdf

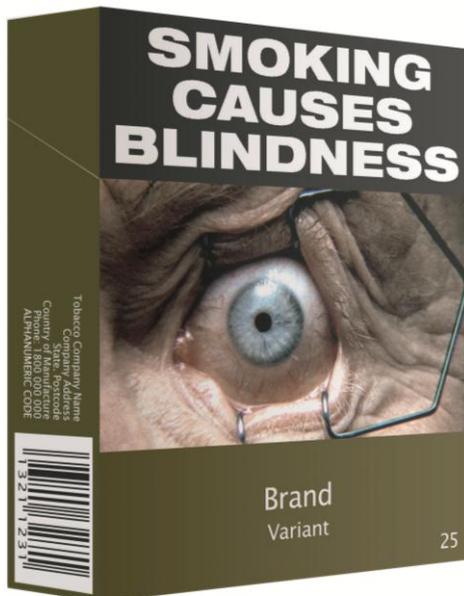
3 Hoek, J. (2007). Enhancing the Effectiveness of Warning Labels: Plain Packs vs. Branded Packs. In: *Oceania Smokefree Conference*, Auckland, 4-7 September, 2007. <http://otcc.confex.com/otcc/otcc07/techprogram/P1260.HTM> and Hoek J, Gendall P, Louviere J (2009). Tobacco branding and plain packaging: the new frontier in tobacco control? In: *American Marketing Association 20th Anniversary Marketing and Public Policy Conference*, Madison Hotel, Washington DC, May 28-30.

4 Moodie C, Ford A, Mackintosh AM, Hastings G (2012). Young people's perceptions of cigarette packaging and plain packaging: an online survey. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 14(1): 98-105. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ntr136](http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntr136)

5 Centre for Health Promotion (1993). *Effects of Plain Packaging on the Image of Tobacco Products Among Youth*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto. <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/fuf13d00> and RBJ Health

- A study of the perceptions of French teenagers towards branded cigarette packs and plain packaging showed that the standardised packs were described as ‘sad’ and ‘flat’. ‘We are in a period where everything is **FLASHY**. When you have an iPod in your hand, there are a lot of colours. This pack is black and white, it’s like we have an old TV.’⁷
- Current branded packaging gives off **POSITIVE** suggestions such as those in relation to strength and harm.
- Research carried out by the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart Foundation with Irish teenagers showed that ‘slim’ cigarettes were **ASSUMED** to be less harmful and lighter – ‘a good choice for someone looking to give up.’⁸

“When they come out, I’ll stop smoking. It’s turning me off completely.”
Irish teenager in focus group research



The Health Facts on Smoking

- **ONE IN EVERY TWO** smokers will die of a tobacco related disease.
- In Ireland, **5,200 DIE** from tobacco use every year. 44% of these deaths are from cancer.⁹
- An EU study has estimated that the costs to Ireland of premature mortality due to smoking-related diseases was over **€3,500 million in 2009**.¹⁰
- The study also showed Irish health expenditure on smoking-related diseases was approximately **€500 million** in 2009.

Management Associates (1993). *Impact of Plain Packaging of Tobacco on Youth Perceptions and Behaviour. Report of Study 1*. Toronto, ON: RBJ Health Management Associates.

6 White C (2011). *The Impact of Cigarette Package Design on Young Women in Brazil: Brand Appeal and Perceptions of Health Risk*. Thesis for Master of Science, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON (unpublished).

7 CNCT (Comité National Contre le Tabagisme) (2008a). “Comment mettre en oeuvre les dispositions de la CCLAT pour parvenir à une “dénormalisation” de la consommation de tabac?” *Evaluation de l’impact du paquet de cigarettes neutre: Résultats d’une étude qualitative menée sur 34 personnes* [Evaluation of the impact of a plain cigarette pack: Results of a qualitative study with 34 people]. Report for the Institut National de Cancer. Paris: CNCT.

8 The Impact of tobacco branding and standardised packaging on young people’ (2013), Ignite Research for the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart Foundation

9 Department of Health, Tobacco Free Ireland, <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/TobaccoFreeIreland.pdf?direct=1>

10 Jarvis, A., et al (2009), *A Study on Liability and the Health Costs of Smoking*, London: GHK, http://ec.europa.eu/health/tobacco/docs/tobacco_liability_en.pdf

Health Warnings and plain packaging

- Plain packaging has been proven to increase the **EFFECTIVENESS** of health warnings.
- Current branded packaging distracts smokers from health warnings by using colour, shape and graphics to **UNDERMINE** the message written on the pack.
- A study in the Medical Journal of Australia found a 78% increase in the number of calls to the Quitline following the introduction of standardised packs.¹¹
- A study in France monitored the eye movements of people when shown a plain pack and a branded pack. It showed that people spent longer looking at the health warnings. This was most effective on non-daily smokers, which suggests the biggest impact would be on young people wanting to experiment.¹³
- In Canada, research has shown that people remember health warnings better on a plain pack than a branded pack.¹⁴
- Research by the Irish Heart Foundation and Irish Cancer Society showed that the visibility of graphic warnings on plain packs would encourage teen smokers to quit and for those teens that have trialled smoking, most reported that the introduction of plain packaging would be enough to prevent them from trying cigarettes again.¹⁵

For more information, please contact:

*Eoin Bradley, (01) 2310 518, ebradley@irishcancer.ie
Cliona Loughnane, (01) 6685 001, cmccormack@irishheart.ie*

11 Young, F *et al.* (2014) 'Association between tobacco plain packaging and Quitline calls: a population-based, interrupted time series analysis'. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 200, 29-32. <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2014/200/1/association-between-tobacco-plain-packaging-and-quitline-calls-population-based>

13 Munafò M, Roberts N, Bauld L, Ute L (2011). Plain packaging increases visual attention to health warnings on cigarette packs in non-smokers and weekly smokers but not daily smokers. *Addiction*, 106(8): 1505-1510. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2011.03430.x>

14 Goldberg M, Liefeld J, Madill J, Vredenburg H (1999). The effect of plain packaging on response to health warnings. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(9): 1434-1435. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.89.9.1434>

15 The Impact of tobacco branding and standardised packaging on young people' (2013), Ignite Research for the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart Foundation