



TPackSS: Tobacco Pack Surveillance System Cigarette Health Warning Label Compliance



Bangladesh - 2013

In September 2013, Bangladesh's health warning labels (HWLs) – which fulfill the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 11 minimum requirements – included the following:

1. 30 percent coverage of the front and back of the pack
2. Text warning displayed on contrasting background color
3. Six different tobacco use health warning messages, in Bengali



Bangladesh's HWL size tied for 3rd in the WHO South-East Asia Region and tied for 97th globally in 2012.¹ However, FCTC guidelines recommend the use of pictorial warnings that cover 50 percent or more of the front and back of the pack, which Bangladesh's HWLs did not fulfill.

TPackSS assesses health warning label compliance as HWL requirements improve in countries. In September 2013, TPackSS collected cigarette packs in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chittagong using a systematic protocol.² Cigarette packs were assessed for compliance with the current HWL policy in place at the time of data collection.³

Article 11 of the World Health Organization's (WHO) FCTC requires that Parties implement effective tobacco packaging and labeling measures to increase public awareness of the negative health impacts of tobacco products.

TPackSS systematically collected a sample of 56 unique cigarette packs that displayed the HWLs mandated by Bangladesh. Packs were assessed for compliance with four key requirements.³

Warning Location

75 percent of the packs had a text health warning in the upper portion of the front and back of the pack or at the bottom when the tax stamp was affixed to the top of the pack.



Warning Size

46 percent of packs had a health warning that covered 30 percent of both the front and back of the pack.



Warning Label Elements

93 percent of packs had black health warning text printed on a white background.



Warning Text Size

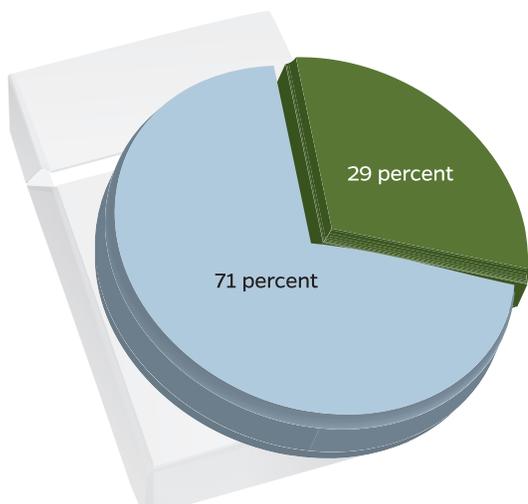
96 percent of packs had health warning text displayed in 18 point font.



45% of the unique cigarette packs assessed were compliant with the four key HWL requirements.

Area of Concern: Luxury and Aspirational Marketing

This pack is compliant with the four key HWL requirements but uses English language exclusively on the rest of the pack. The exclusive use of English on the pack, the aspirational sentiment to “Live The Story” and the marketing appeal of a “Limited Edition” undercuts the health warning label.



Breakdown of packs collected and presence of required HWLs

Total number of unique packs collected: 191

- **71 percent** of total packs had no HWL or a non-Bangladeshi HWL (n=135)
- **29 percent** of total packs had a current mandated HWL (n=56)

Approximately seven in ten of all packs collected displayed a non-Bangladeshi HWL or no HWL. Bangladesh should take action to reduce the sale of packs that do not bear the mandated Bangladeshi HWL.

At a minimum, Bangladesh’s health warning label policy should require a pictorial HWL and coverage of at least 50 percent on the front and back of the pack. Exposure to best practice HWLs can improve the effectiveness of HWLs in Bangladesh.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society. Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report, Third Edition. European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention; 2012. http://www.ensp.org/sites/default/files/CCS_status_report_health_warnings_2012.pdf. Accessed May 25, 2016.

² Smith K, Washington C, Brown J, Vadhais A, Kroart L, Ferguson J, Cohen J. The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System: A Protocol for Assessing Health Warning Compliance, Design Features, and Appeals of Tobacco Packs Sold in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *JMIR Public Health Surveill.* 2015;1(2):e8 DOI: 10.2196/publichealth.4616.

³ Law of Bangladesh Act No. XI of 2005 on An Act to provide provisions for controlling production, use, sale and purchase of smoking and tobacco products and advertisements thereof, Law of Bangladesh on Smoking and Using Tobacco Products (Control) Rules, 2006.

About TPackSS

The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) project to monitor whether required health warnings on tobacco packages are being implemented as intended, and to identify pack features and marketing appeals that might violate or detract from country tobacco packaging laws in these countries.