



TPackSS: Tobacco Pack Surveillance System Cigarette Health Warning Label Compliance



Turkey - 2013

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

1. 65 percent coverage of the front and back of the pack, with color pictorial HWLs on the front and text on the back
2. Text warning displayed on contrasting background color
3. Fourteen different tobacco use health warning messages, in Turkish



Front of pack

Back of pack

Turkey's HWL size ranked 4th in the WHO European Region and ranked 15th 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 Turkey's HWLs do not fulfill.

TPackSS assesses health warning label compliance as HWL requirements improve in countries. In September 2013, TPackSS collected cigarette packs in Istanbul, Konya, and Diyarbakir 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 241 unique cigarette packs that displayed the HWLs mandated by Turkey. Packs were assessed for compliance with three key requirements.³

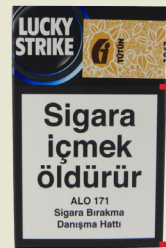
Warning Location

100 percent of packs had the health warning start from the end of the lid or the finishing line of the tax stamp on the front and back of the pack.



Warning Size

59 percent of packs had a health warning that covered 65 percent of both the front and back of the pack.



Warning Label Elements

100 percent of packs had black health warning text and a 3-4 mm black border on the front and back of the pack.

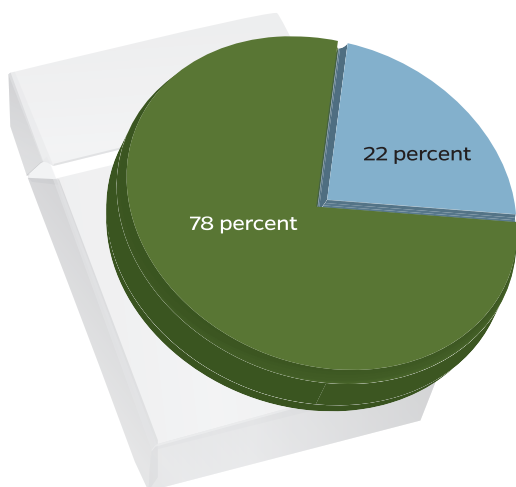


59%

of the unique cigarette packs assessed were compliant with the three key HWL requirements.

Area of Concern: Position of Health Warning Label

These packs are compliant with the three key HWL requirements. However, FCTC Article 11 recommends that HWLs be positioned at the top of the pack to increase visibility and impact. Turkish health warning label policies require that the top of the HWL must start directly underneath the pack opening or the tax stamp. This allows for branding to be present above and below the HWL.



Breakdown of packs collected and presence of required HWLs

Total number of unique packs collected: 308

- **78 percent** of total packs had the current mandated HWLs (n=241)
- **22 percent** of total packs had no HWL or a non-Turkish HWL (n=67)

Nearly a quarter of all packs collected in Turkey displayed a non-Turkish HWL or no HWL. Turkey should take action to reduce the sale of packs that do not bear the mandated Turkish HWL, and consider placing the health warning at the top of the pack to improve the visibility. Exposure to best practice HWLs can improve the effectiveness of HWLs in Turkey.

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, Vadnais 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). doi: 10.2196/publichealth.4616.

³ The Law on Prevention and Control of Hazards of Tobacco Products (Law No. 4207, title as amended); Tobacco & Alcohol Market Coordination Committee's (TAPDK) Decision No. 4721; Regulation on Methods and Essentials concerning the Manufacture Type, Labeling and Surveillance for the Protection from the Damages of Tobacco Products, 2005 (as amended) (Law No. 25692).

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.