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## Cigarette Packaging in Ireland: The Plain Future

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# Cigarette Packaging in Ireland: The Plain Future.

Wesley Connolly Tong and Maurice Murphy



- Ireland has become the first country in Europe and the second in the world to pass plain packaging laws for tobacco products.
- Cigarette companies will be banned from producing branded tobacco products for the Irish market from May 2016 and banned from selling branded tobacco products in Ireland from May 2017.

# Packaging is Powerful!



- Packaging is the last and most critical link in the chain of promotional communications.
- Since the tobacco industry has been stripped of most of its marketing mix, the cigarette package has become an increasingly important advertising tool.



Immaculate blend of exclusive tobacco.

June



Slim Cigarettes

*Immaculate blend of exclusive tobacco.*



*Slim cigarettes*

FINEST QUALITY  
TOBACCOS



AMERICAN  
BLEND

*Slim Line*

**R1**<sup>®</sup>  
REEMTSMA No.1

Ultra

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОХОРОНИ  
ЗДОРОВ'Я УКРАЇНИ ПОПЕРЕДЖУЄ:  
КУРІННЯ ШКОДИТЬ ЗДОРОВ'Ю



ARÔME  
l'adoration

VÎNZAREA CĂTRE MINORI ESTE INTERZISĂ  
Fumatul dăunează sănătății Dumneavoastră

# Packaging is Powerful!



- Okell (2007) contends that cigarette pack design is used to attract attention, communicate brand identity, offer symbolic meaning to the user and function as an extension of their personality and demonstrates how young adult smokers use packaging design to construct their smoker identities.

# Is Plain Packaging Powerful?



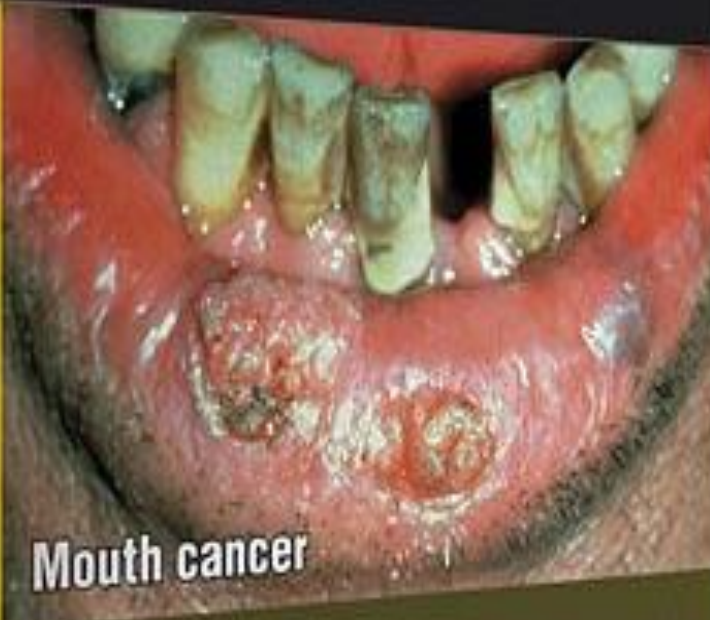
- Plain packaging (which had branded elements, such as colour, fonts, and imagery removed) is less attractive and engaging, particularly to young people (Freeman *et al.*, 2008).



# Plain Packaging Samples

CIT

**SMOKING CAUSES  
MOUTH AND THROAT  
CANCER**



Mouth cancer

Brand  
Variant

25

**WARNING**  
The toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke damage your blood vessels, damage your body's cells and attack your immune system

**DON'T LET  
CHILDREN BREATHE  
YOUR SMOKE**

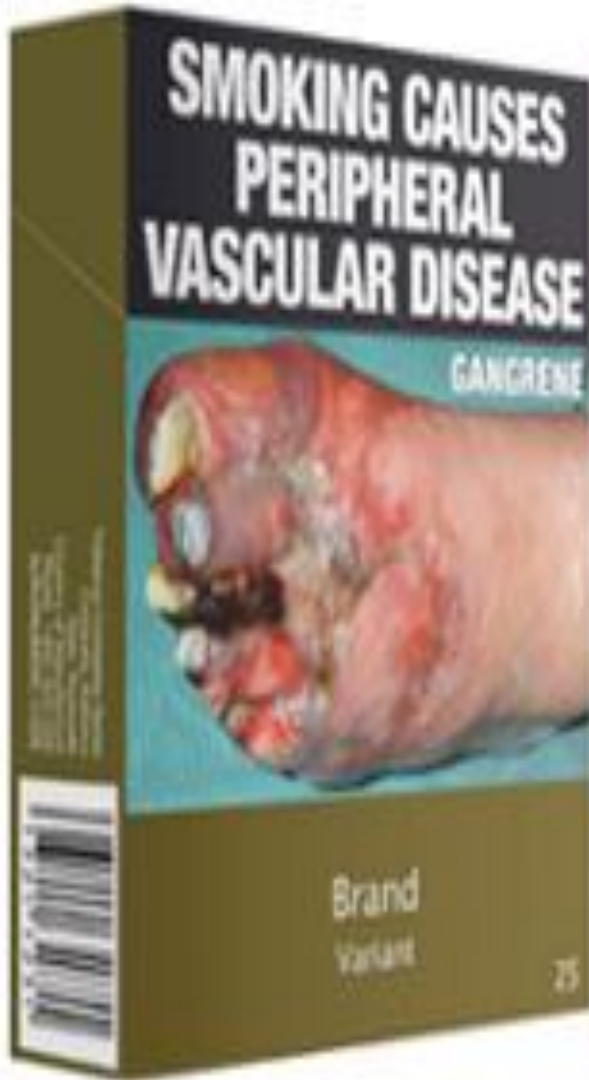


Brand  
Variant

25

**WARNING**  
The toxic chemicals in tobacco smoke damage your blood vessels, damage your body's cells and attack your immune system

# Plain Packaging Samples



**SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER**



BRYAN DIED AGED 34  
Winfield

**SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE**



GANGRENE  
Winfield

**SMOKING HARMS UNBORN BABIES**



Winfield

**SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER**



BRYAN DIED AGED 34  
Winfield

**SMOKING HARMS UNBORN BABIES**



Winfield

**SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE**



GANGRENE

**SMOKING CAUSES MOUTH CANCER**



TONGUE CANCER

**SMOKING CAUSES MOUTH CANCER**



TONGUE CANCER

**SMOKING CAUSES EMPHYSEMA**



ALL WITH EMPHYSEMA

**SMOKING CAUSES BLINDNESS**



Winfield

**SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE**



GANGRENE

- Does plain packaging facilitate an improved attention to health warnings?
- Does plain packaging increase consumer perceptions of risk?
- Does plain packaging reduce consumer appeal and attraction?
- Does plain packaging reduce consumer demand and smoking behaviour?

# Improved attention to Health Warnings



- Qualitative research with New Zealand youth found that pictorial warnings on plain cigarette packs increased the attention paid to graphic warning labels and increased the overall perceptions of harm caused by cigarette smoking, and reduced the social appeal of cigarette smoking (McCool *et al.*, 2012).

# Improved attention to Health Warnings



- A study conducted with youth in Belgium found that health warnings “catch the eye” much more strongly when presented on plain, rather than branded packages (Van Hal *et al.*, 2012).
- Canadian university students exhibited greater recall for health warnings on plain versus branded packaging (Al-Hamdani, 2013).

# Increased Consumer Perceptions of Risk



- Tobacco packaging has played a central role in promoting the false belief that some cigarette brands are less harmful than others (Hammond, 2014).
- Pack colour was significantly associated with ratings of reduced risk and tar (Hammond, 2014).
- Plain packages were associated with fewer false beliefs about the relative risk of different brands (Gallopel-Morvan *et al.*, 2011).

# Increased Consumer Perceptions of Risk



- Packs with darker colours were seen to contain cigarettes which were more 'harmful to health' and 'harder to quit'.
- Conversely, packs with lighter colours were seen to be less 'harmful to health' and 'easier to quit' (Gallopel-Morvan *et al.*, 2011).
- The findings highlight the importance of base colour for plain packaging.



# Reduced Consumer Appeal and Attraction



- In general, plain packaging reduces the appeal of cigarettes among adolescents and adults in terms of the attractiveness or appeal of the cigarette (Scheffels and Sæbø, 2013).
- It also reduces the taste of the cigarette compared to fully branded cigarettes (Hammond *et al.*, 2013).

# Reduced Consumer Appeal and Attraction



- Approximately one third of youth in a study (Hammond *et al.*, 2013) believed plain packaging would make non-smokers “less likely to start” and approximately one quarter believed plain packaging would make young smokers “smoke less”.

# Reduced Consumer Demand and Smoking Behaviour



- Germain *et al.* (2010) found that youth perceived images of progressively plainer packs to be less appealing and also to negatively effect product taste.
- Pack options with fewer branding elements were associated with less demand and were more likely to elicit cessation behaviour (Hoek *et al.*, 2010).

# Plain Cigarette Pack Colour and Attitude to the Cigarette Pack



- Colour is routinely used in package design to shape consumer perceptions of risk (Pollay, 2001; Wakefield *et al.*, 2002).
- These studies are consistent in demonstrating that darker, non-white colours are perceived as significantly less appealing and more effective.

# Plain Packaging Regulations in Australia – December 2012



- Smokers using plain packs perceived their cigarettes to be lower in quality, tended to perceive their cigarettes as less satisfying than a year ago, were more likely to have thought about quitting at least once a day in the past week, and rated quitting as a higher priority in their lives (Wakefield *et al.*, 2013).

- Calls to the Quitline increased 78% after plain packaging was implemented, adjusting for other factors.
- Quitline calls peaked 4 weeks after the implementation deadline for plain packaging, but the increase was prolonged at 6 months post-implementation (Hammond, 2014).

**Thank you**