

# Impact of Standardised Pack Laws:

## Findings from the 2016-18 ITC New Zealand Surveys

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## Key findings:

Implementation was followed by large increases in the proportion of smokers that stated they disliked the look of their packs and who supported standardised packs;

There were less substantial impacts on most other measures such as a small reductions in reports that packs triggered positive thoughts about smoking and in the proportion of smokers with a preferred brand or stating that pack design was a reason for smoking their usual brand.



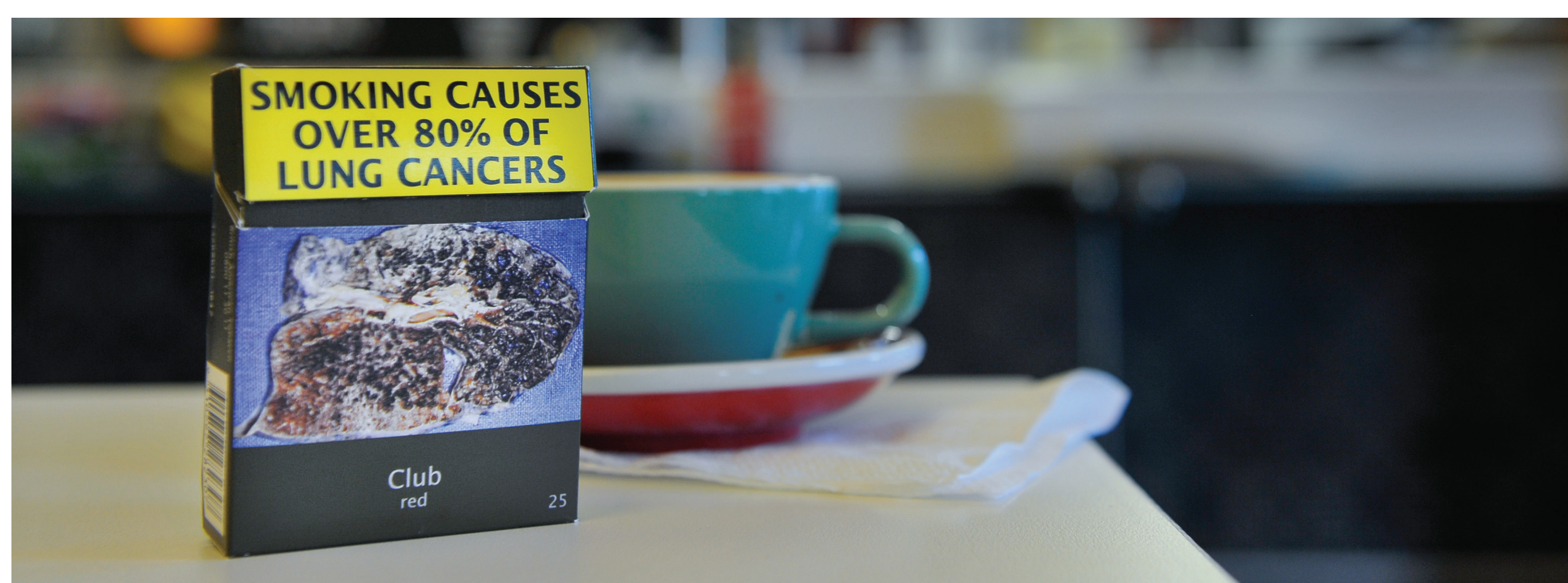
## Background

- From March-June 2018 New Zealand (NZ) implemented new laws and regulations for packaging of tobacco products. These included:
  - standardised cigarette packs, e.g., standard pack design, colour, brand name font
  - enhanced pictorial warning labels (PWLs): larger, new images, more prominent
  - Quitline number
- The stated aims were to reduce the appeal, social and cultural acceptance and approval of smoking and tobacco products; and to enhance the impact of the PWLs and the veracity of smokers' perceptions about the harmful effects of tobacco products.

**Table: Measures of support for, and impact of, standardised packaging among NZ smokers pre-post implementation**

Measure Statement/question	Response option	% All (95% CI)		% Māori (95% CI)		% Non-Māori (95% CI)	
		W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2
<b>Support for standardised packaging</b>							
Tobacco companies should be required to sell cigarettes in plain packages	Agree/strongly agree	31 (27.2, 35.0)	45.7* (40.6, 50.8)	34.4 (27.7, 41.7)	46.7 (37.7, 55.9)	29.5 (25.0, 34.4)	45.3 (39.2, 51.5)
<b>Pack appeal</b>							
Extent you like the look of your cigarette pack or tobacco pouch?	'Not at all'	49.9 (45.8, 54.0)	76.1* (71.3, 80.3)	56.2 (49.0, 63.2)	72.8 (49.0, 63.2)	47 (42.0, 52.1)	77.4 (42.0, 52.1)
How often in the last 30 days have you covered up your cigarette pack or tobacco pouch or put it out of sight?	'Lots of times'	18.7 (16.0, 21.8)	17.6 (14.4, 21.4)	18.7 (13.9, 24.7)	19.5 (14.4, 25.8)	18.8 (15.5, 22.5)	16.9 (12.9, 21.7)
<b>Pack impact on triggering smoking</b>							
How often seeing a cigarette pack/ tobacco pouch makes you to want to have cigarette	'Sometimes/ often/very often'	60.3 (56.3, 64.1)	61.3 (56.6, 65.9)	70.2 (63.4, 76.3)	67.43 (58.5, 75.1)	55.9 (51.0, 60.6)	58.9 (53.2, 64.4)
Extent seeing your cigarette pack/ tobacco pouch leads you to think about pleasure you will get from smoking your next cigarette	'Somewhat/a lot'	19.4 (16.2, 23.1)	20.7 (16.7, 25.5)	21.8 (16.4, 28.4)	22.8 (15.6, 32.1)	18.4 (14.6, 22.8)	19.9 (15.2, 25.6)
<b>Strength of brand identity and appeal</b>							
Have a usual/preferred brand of cigarettes	'Yes'	87.4 (84.3, 90.0)	82.3* (78.4, 85.6)	83.3 (76.8, 88.3)	80.2 (73.5, 85.6)	89.2 (85.5, 92.0)	83.1 (78.2, 87.1)
Pack design was part of reason for choosing usual brand	'Yes'	7.8 (5.6, 10.7)	3.7* (2.2, 6.2)	5.8 (3.3, 10.0)	3.1 (1.5, 6.5)	8.6 (5.8, 12.6)	3.9 (2.0, 7.5)
How much do brands differ in their prestige or status?	'Not at all different'	24.4 (20.9, 28.2)	27.5 (20.9, 28.2)	22 (16.1, 29.3)	23.8 (16.8, 32.5)	25.5 (21.4, 30.1)	29 (24.0, 34.5)
<b>Perceived quality, taste and satisfaction of cigarettes</b>							
Description of quality of current cigarettes	'Low quality'	14.7 (11.5, 18.5)	19.94* (16.3, 24.0)	13.3 (9.6, 18.1)	20.1 (14.3, 27.5)	15.3 (14.3, 27.5)	19.8 (15.5, 24.9)
Taste of your cigarettes compared to 12 months ago	'Taste worse'	5.1 (3.3, 7.6)	7.8 (3.3, 7.64, 12.5)	6 (3.3, 10.8)	10.4 (3.3, 10.8)	4.7 (3.3, 10.8)	6.7 (3.5, 12.4)
Degree of satisfaction of your cigarettes compared to 12 months ago	'Less satisfying'	17 (13.4, 21.2)	21.1 (16.4, 26.7)	13.1 (8.9, 18.8)	22.5 (8.9, 18.8)	18.5 (14.0, 24.2)	20.5 (14.8, 27.8)

\* Statistically significant (p<0.05) differences between W1 and W2 – only examined for the whole sample



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## Objective

To investigate the impact of the new packs on NZ smokers; specifically: support for standardised packaging, pack appeal and impact, brand identity, and perceptions of cigarettes and tobacco.

## Methods:

- Participants were recruited from respondents in the nationwide NZ Health Survey.
- CATI interviews conducted with smokers in Wave 1 (W1, Aug 2016-Apr 2017) and Wave 2 (W2, Jul-Dec 2018) of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) NZ Survey.
- Repeat cross-sectional analysis from W1 (n=910) and W2 (n=726) smokers including n=326 (W1) and n=308 (W2) who identified as Māori (indigenous peoples of NZ).
- Weighted analyses: estimates reflect the NZ adult smoking population.

## Results

### Support for standardised packaging

- Support for standardised packaging increased from 31% (W1) to 46% (W2).

### Pack appeal

- The proportion of smokers stating that they disliked the look of their cigarette/ tobacco packs increased from 50% (W1) to 76% (W2)
- The proportion who frequently covered their packs was largely unchanged.

### Pack impact on triggering smoking

- The proportion of smokers reporting that packs triggered positive thoughts about smoking decreased from 42% (W1) to 36% (W2)
- There was little reported change in packs triggering a desire to smoke.

### Strength of brand identity and appeal

- There was evidence from three measures of weakening brand identity and appeal but changes were not substantial.

### Perceived quality, taste and satisfaction of cigarettes

- There were small increases in the proportion reporting that their cigarettes were of low quality or had deteriorated in taste or satisfaction in the last year.

Findings were mostly similar for Māori and non-Māori participants.

## Conclusions:

- The findings suggest that standardised packaging had an immediate effect in greatly reducing the appeal of cigarette/tobacco packs to NZ smokers. Impacts on other measures such as brand identity and appeal and perceptions of cigarette/ tobacco products were more modest, but may develop over time.
- Longer term follow-up is needed to assess whether impacts of standardised packs are sustained or strengthen/weaken over time.
- Further studies should assess the impact of standardised packs on stimulating quitting and avoiding relapse among smokers, and preventing the uptake of smoking by adolescents and young people.

## Disclosures/Conflict of Interest:

GTF has served as an expert witness on behalf of governments in litigation involving the tobacco industry. All other authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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