

1990601

B2

HEALTH WARNING TESTING Final Report

Presented to
Health Canada

June 24, 1999

Prepared by
The Environics Research Group Ltd
Ottawa

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
	Focus Group Composition.....	3
2.0	Summary Observations	4
	Current Message Awareness	4
	Package Testing - Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings.....	4
	Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings	5
	Reactions to Individual Designs.....	5
	Most Effective Designs	10
	Retention of Proposed Health Warnings	11
	Slide Designs	11
3.0	Current Message Awareness	12
4.0	Package Testing	14
	Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings	14
	Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings	16
	Reactions to Individual Designs.....	18
5.0	Most Effective Designs	29
6.0	Retention of Proposed Health Warnings	31
7.0	Slide Designs	32
8.0	Conclusions	33
9.0	Appendix A – Moderator’s Guide.....	34
	Rating the Designs	37

1.0 Introduction

Environics Research Group is pleased to present this report of focus group findings to the Office of Tobacco Control of Health Canada. The purpose of this project was to undertake a qualitative assessment of consumer attitudes toward proposed cigarette package designs in support of the development of regulations regarding the placement of health information on tobacco packaging.

To this end, 13 focus groups were completed in May and June 1999. Five sessions took place in Montreal and four sessions took place in both Toronto and Ottawa. The Montreal sessions were conducted in French and the Toronto and Ottawa sessions were conducted in English. There were bilingual participants in the youth sessions in Ottawa (both smoking and non-smoking groups).

The focus group participants were segmented into the various sessions by smoking behaviour and age. The smoking behaviour segmentation was divided between staunch smokers (smokers who have not tried to quit smoking and have no intention of trying to do so), potential quitters (people who have tried to quit smoking in the past and are going to try again in the future) and non-smokers (people who do not currently smoke). The focus groups were also segmented by age: youth (16 to 17 years of age), young adults (18 to 24 years of age) and Older Adults (over the age of 30).

As Health Canada knows, qualitative research is a powerful tool that enables the sponsoring group to receive feedback on the participants' thoughts, feelings and opinions. This type of research allows for the effective probing of the relationships between attitudes, opinions and behaviours. Qualitative research can provide considerable depth of understanding regarding the attitudes held by individuals. However, it should be remembered that, while indicative of attitudes that do exist, these attitudes are not statistically representative or predictive of the larger population. For this reason, the quantitative results used in this report refer only to the focus group population and can not be used to explicitly predict how Canadians in general would react given the same information.

This report summarizes the overall findings of the project and discusses the results in detail. All research work was conducted in accordance with the professional standards established by the Professional Market Research Society (PMRS) and the Canadian Association of Market Research Organizations (CAMRO). Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the Moderator's Guide.

Focus Group Composition

The groups were divided among the three cities as follows:

Montreal:

- ^{loyal} Staunch smokers over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Potential quitters over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Non-smokers over the age of 30 (June 4, 1999)
- Two sessions with youth smokers aged 15 to 17 (June 3, 1999)

Toronto:

- Staunch smokers over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Potential quitters over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Youth staunch smokers aged between 16 and 18 years of age (May 25, 1999)
- Youth potential quitters aged between 16 and 18 years of age (May 25, 1999)

Ottawa:

- Youth non-smokers age 15 to 17 years of age (June 5, 1999)
- Non-smokers over the age of 30 (June 4, 1999)
- Two sessions with youth smokers aged 15 to 17 (June 5, 1999)

2.0 Summary Observations

The results described in this report are based on 13 focus groups that were completed in May and June 1999. Five sessions took place in Montreal, and four sessions took place in both Toronto and Ottawa. The Montreal sessions were conducted in French and the Toronto and Ottawa sessions were conducted in English. The sessions were segmented according to the age and smoking behaviour of the participants.

Current Message Awareness

- There is a high level of awareness of the current health warnings on cigarette packages. Many participants stated that the warnings had become virtually invisible and no longer had the power to seize their attention. Smokers and non-smokers alike said that the average smoker had become desensitized to these warnings.
- Both smokers and non-smokers feel that they are well-informed about the dangers of smoking. Despite this fact, youth smokers feel that these dangers will not effect them personally or that the serious health effects of smoking are too distant in the future. However, many participants in the youth sessions acknowledged that smoking tobacco is having a more immediate impact on their lives, both in terms of decreased physical ability and appearance (bad breath, discoloured teeth).
- There is some evidence that the current warnings are prompting social pressure to quit or cut down on smoking from non-smoking friends or family members.

Package Testing - Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings

- There were strong positive reactions to new designs in all groups. Even though a number of participants stated that some of the warnings are "disgusting to look at," there was a strong consensus that the proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current warnings.
- There was a much higher acceptance of the more graphic warnings by younger participants than by older people.
- There was a strong consensus among the focus group participants that the new messages definitely have the ability to get attention. The addition of pictures was seen as the most significant change from the current health warnings.
- In general, those designs that emphasized the use of text were seen as less effective than those where the picture could deliver the message. The majority of smokers fall into the lower income and education groups, where functional illiteracy tends to be higher than among other socio-economic groups. Clear

visuals, where the picture actually is worth a thousand words, will have the greatest “across the board” impact on the smoking population.

- When participants were asked about the size of the warning there was overall agreement that 60 percent of the package was an acceptable size for the health warning labels. It was also felt that there would be enough remaining room on the package for brand trademarks, text and other visual product identifiers.
- Both staunch smokers and potential quitters stated that the new messages will lead to even greater social pressure to quit smoking. These proposed warnings, especially those that are more graphic in nature, are seen to significantly increase social pressure on smokers.

Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings

- Non-smokers and potential quitters provide higher ratings than staunch smokers do for each of the health warnings tested in these sessions. As well, younger participants and women tend to provide higher ratings than do older participants and men.

Reactions to Individual Designs

- The saying “a pictures worth a thousand words” is applicable to the effectiveness of the tobacco warnings tested during this focus group exercise. The warnings that generated the highest level of positive interest tend to be the ones that rely on a visual, rather than a textual, approach.

The “Shocking” Approach

- Overall, the three warnings that graphically depict the impact of tobacco use on the human body attracted the most attention and provoked the most discussion among participants.
- Mouth Cancer
- In the individual rating process using the questionnaire, the warning “Mouth Cancer” advertisement was rated in the top six by all groups. In fact, this warning was the top-rated item in six of the thirteen groups. This design was the most effective visual image of the three warnings featuring diseased body parts.
- In a number of the youth smoking groups, getting mouth cancer from smoking was described as being a remote possibility. These smokers stated that they believe that mouth cancer is more likely to happen to people who chew tobacco than to those who smoke cigarettes.

- Die Hard Smokers Die Hard Deaths
- Despite some intense efforts to discount this message from pockets of staunch smokers, all groups rated this message among the five most effective designs, including those who were most critical of this image - the staunch smokers in Montreal.
- A number of people in the English-language sessions felt that the title of the message was too glib. As well, the play on words was lost on many other participants in these sessions.
- A few participants felt that the reference to “die hard smokers” excluded those who only smoke half a package of cigarettes a day or less.
- In almost every focus group, participants discussed the need for a more understandable visual image. Many participants do not have an adequate frame of reference to fully understand what they were being shown and the image relied on the accompanying text for identification.
- Cigarettes Cause Strokes
- This warning was also included in the overall top six warnings by the focus group participants. As was the case with the “Die Hard Smokers” message, participants suggested that the visual be improved, as many were not able to identify the photographic subject matter as being part of a human brain.
- Many young people in both the smoking and non-smoking sessions said that, while they are aware of a variety of health impacts as a result of smoking, they were not aware that smoking could cause strokes.

Children Approach

- The two new health warnings featuring children are viewed as credible and strike an emotional cord because they involve one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Many people, including many smokers, believe that parents should act as role models and should not smoke in front of their children or other people’s children.
- Children See, Children Do
- The “Children See, Children Do” warning design was viewed as effective among all age groups. Although this warning received higher ratings from the adult groups than youth participants, even the youth sessions included this warning in their selection of the five most effective designs.

- This approach was seen as honest, efficient and in good taste. This warning also struck an emotional cord among those individuals who started smoking by imitating their parents.
- There was some discussion about the appropriateness of the picture used in this message. Although younger smokers were more likely to express concern about the possible encouragement this image might provide and expressed a desire for a more “bedraggled” child, older smokers were more insistent that the current image be used.
- *Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking*
- During the individual rating exercise, participants in over half of the focus groups rated this message in their top six messages, including all groups in Toronto and all ages of smokers in Montreal. As with the previous health warning, this message was more important for older rather than younger smokers.
- Those who did not give this warning a high rating explained that they felt that pollution and environmental allergies have a greater likelihood of causing asthmatic reactions in children than being exposed to second hand smoke.

Positive Approach

- *Smoking Leaves You Exhausted*
- Participant reactions to this health warning are a perfect example of the need for the warning’s image to carry the message. Participants did not recall the link between carbon monoxide in car exhaust and in cigarette smoke. They picked up on the “exhausted” idea but mainly related it to their reduced ability to climb stairs or participate in group sports activities. Many participants thought that the health warning should be clearer in its approach, either focusing on decreased physical performance or on the toxic constituents within tobacco.
- As well, there is a sense that the health warnings should not be “flippant” in their approach. Just as with the “Die Hard” health warning, there is a general feeling among participants that the health impacts of tobacco is a serious issue that needs to be taken seriously.

Social Stigma Approach

- *Kiss Me*
- Staunch smokers and teen non-smokers in Montreal placed this warning in the top five most effective design category. However, this health warning did not receive the same positive endorsement by a majority of participants overall.

- Many English-speaking participants felt that having a pretty young woman licking an ashtray had other connotations besides the overt message that smoking makes your mouth taste like an ashtray. Many people suggested that, if Health Canada wanted to go ahead with this approach, that multiple images with people of all ages and both genders would mitigate any concerns that the image is sexually exploitative.

Smokers as a Whole Approach

- *Cigarettes Kill*
- Many people liked the straightforward, bottom line nature of this health warning: You smoke, you die. However, many felt that the picture did not do the message justice. Many participants, especially young people, felt that the image used in this message lacked realism and they would preferred a more graphic or blunt visual message.
- Older participants, who were more likely to have personal experience with dying persons, were more convinced about the effectiveness of this design and thought that only minor adjustments (the addition of nearby medical equipment or breathing apparatus) were needed.
- *This Year Smoking Will Kill Off A Small City*
- The chief asset of this health warning is that it presents new information for many of the focus group participants. However, this warning is text dependent and as such, was not as effective as other more visual designs.
- Focus group participants recommended that all the bars in the chart be the same colour or that some other design technique be employed so that the viewer's eye would not skip over the most important information.
- Upon further probing, it was revealed that many smokers are more afraid of *suffering* from a smoking related illness than from *dying* from it. For them, the statistics were too far removed from the physical or emotional pain of severe illness.

Chemical Approach

- While both designs, "You Inhale this Garbage" and "Choose Your Poison", clearly demonstrate the wide ranging and dangerous chemicals contained in cigarettes, focus group participants felt that the dangers from these chemicals were exaggerated in these warnings.

- *You Inhale This Garbage*
- This design tested well and was selected by participants as one of the five most effective tobacco health warnings. While it does not have the shock value of the diseased body parts, people do make the connection between the tar in the gloved hands and the toxic chemicals drawn into a smoker's lungs.
- This warning was not seen an immediate "attention getter." Instead, this warning was seen as a more reflective message that conjured up memories of previous anti-tobacco advertisements.
- *Choose Your Poison*
- "Choose your poison" was rated as one of the least effective warnings tested, largely because this warning was not seen as motivating smokers to quit smoking. The main reason for this perception related to the fact that all of these dangerous chemicals are safely used and stored in the home.

Baby Approach

- The three warnings about smoking killing babies provoked a very strong guilt factor among smokers, especially with older staunch smokers. Younger smokers, in contrast to parents of very young children, did not feel that this message was particularly relevant to them.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – Baby*
- This warning was chosen as one of the five most effective warnings across all focus groups, even among youth groups and staunch smokers. It was also seen as the most effective warning among women.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – Pregnancy*
- Although this message is familiar, it does continue to be a potent warning about the dangers of tobacco. Although this message was seen as effective, it lacked the emotional power of the other health warnings in this approach.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – SIDS*
- This warning was considered to be thought provoking and was seen to provide new information, as many smokers were unaware of the link between smoking and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Although this warning was considered to be educational, a few participants cautioned against using this

message because they believe that it has not been proven conclusively that SIDS is caused by the exposure of children to cigarette smoke.

- Health Canada should also consider that the use of this message may trigger a strong emotional reaction from part of the Canadian public. Health Canada must make a difficult decision between preventing the possibility of new deaths from SIDS and exposing those who have already suffered to a new trauma when considering the use of this message.

Most Effective Designs

- Participants were asked to select the five most effective designs using a two-stage group consensus process. Participants developed a rationale for the choices that supplemented their thinking concerning the effectiveness of individual designs. In this regard, participants were conscious of developing a set of messages that would have broad universal appeal while appealing to specific target groups within the population, such as potential young smokers and parents who smoke.
- Looking at the choices that emerged from this process, we found that there was a tremendous overlap in the choices made by the participants, both in the smaller group discussions and in their choices as a whole.
- The five most effective designs are:
 - Children See, Children Do
 - Mouth Cancer
 - Die Hard
 - Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)
 - You inhale this garbage?
- Despite concerns regarding the quality of the picture, participants were confident that a better, clearer picture could be found to replace the less clear image on "Die Hard."
- Among youth smokers, the five most effective designs are:
 - Mouth Cancer
 - Die Hard
 - Children See, Children Do
 - Strokes
 - Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)

- As with “Die Hard” in the previous list, younger smokers were confident that a better picture could be easily found to replace the image used in “Strokes.”
- “Strokes,” which was among the five most effective designs for younger smokers, ranked as the sixth most effective design among participants overall. Likewise, “You inhale this garbage,” which was placed among the five most effective designs overall, ranked as the sixth most effective design among younger smokers.
- The selection of the five most effective designs is also consistent among Francophone and Anglophone participants.
- A remarkable consensus exists with regard to the most effective health warning designs that could be employed by Health Canada. As well, there was a strong feeling among participants that many of the other designs tested in these sessions could be effectively employed as health warnings. Even the least effective designs were seen as more effective than the text warnings currently used on tobacco packaging.

Retention of Proposed Health Warnings

- There was high recall of the 14 health warnings that were tested, with a majority of participants being able to remember 10 or more designs. Given that recall of these designs would have been aided by the prior discussion, it should be remembered that this recall test does not simulate the actual level of recall these warnings would obtain in the field.
- The recall of these messages does reinforce the earlier findings that the retention of images was higher than the retention of specific text and that the more startling the image, the higher the likelihood that it would be remembered.

Slide Designs

- Participants saw the slide designs are more positive in tone and more informative than the health warnings used on the package exterior. As well, participants appreciated the inclusion of the Internet site address and the toll-free telephone number on the slide. There was a strong recommendation that these features should be positioned closer to the top of the slide.
- The brief one-line messages that currently appear on the outside of the package “lip” should appear on the inside where they would be more readily visible to smokers reaching for a cigarette.

3.0 Current Message Awareness

There is a high level of awareness of the current health warnings on cigarette packages. When focus group participants were asked if they were able to recall the health warnings that currently appear on tobacco product packages they were able to repeat the wording of a significant number of the existing warnings.

After listing the current health warnings participants were asked to state their views on these warnings. The majority stated that these warning no longer had the power to seize their attention. Many participants stated that the warnings had become virtually invisible. Smokers and non-smokers alike said that the average smoker had become desensitized to these warnings.

Many focus group participants stated that the warnings, which have been on the cigarette packages for a number of years, needed to be revitalized in order to obtain the attention of smokers. The following exchange, which illustrates this point, took place in Toronto among potential quitters when they were asked if they felt that the current messages inform them about the dangers of smoking:

"They're doing a pretty good job. Although I do think that the printing could be larger because I'm often buying packs and not being consciously aware of what the warnings are at this point. Because I'm so used to having it on the package. It's like, it took me a few minutes to think about all the warnings.

"You get desensitized to them after a while ... When they first stated doing it I remember being more aware of them, and thinking "whew" ... but then as, you know, you keep smoking and you get desensitized.

"Yeah, after a while you don't even read them anymore. You just open the pack and start smoking."

In the Ottawa focus group with non-smoking youth, one participant spontaneously mentioned that he had seen the article in the National Post¹ about the upcoming changes to cigarette packaging.

Participant: "I think the new ones they have are going to be far more effective."

Moderator: "Yeah? What are these new ones?"

¹ National Post, Pages D4-D5. Monday, May 31, 1999. The article referred the health warning designs created by the National "Kids or Tobacco" Campaign. Some of these designs are similar to those tested for Health Canada.

Participant: "I don't know...Like, there's one about mouth cancer that I think will stop a lot of girls from smoking, probably more girls than guys. Like, the picture they showed just looks so harmful to your teeth, like the mouth cancer. And then there's one with brain cancer. I don't think that would be to effective because most kids don't think about brain cancer, like that's so far in the future. But then, I don't know, I saw a few in the paper but I don't remember the other ones really. The mouth cancer I think will be really effective for girls, again girls won't want to... well young guys too also."

Both smokers and non-smokers alike feel that they are well-informed about the dangers of smoking. They stated that messages on the dangers of smoking and tobacco products are everywhere. Despite this fact, youth smokers still feel that the dangers will not effect them personally or that the serious health effects of smoking are too distant in the future. They say that they won't be smoking forever and therefore the potential for lung cancer or a stroke caused by smoking is remote.

However, it should be noted that in most of the young smoker sessions, participants readily admitted that they were addicted to smoking and that their first cigarette of the day was consumed within 30 minutes after waking in the morning. As well, many participants in the youth sessions acknowledged that smoking tobacco had a more immediate impact on their lives, both in terms of decreased physical ability and appearance (bad breath, discoloured teeth).

Some smokers in these sessions stated that the current messages generate comment from non-smoking friends and family members regarding their smoking habit. The following exchange, taken from one of the Older Adult sessions in Toronto, provides an example of how smokers deal with peer pressure from non-smoking friends and colleagues triggered by the current warnings.

"And the thing is, with all that writing on the packages, I find if you put your cigarettes down and you have a non-smoker anywhere near you they'll go: "Wow, didn't you read that? Haven't you realized how these things happen to you?" ... Yeah right, than you..."

"No, you put a lighter on top of them."

"I throw then in my bag now so they can't even see what I'm smoking. It's true, people have to make their comments – especially a non-smoker or one that quit."

4.0 Package Testing

In all sessions, a total of 14 package designs were tested. Participants were asked to rate each design on a questionnaire prior to a general discussion of the designs. In this section of the report, we discuss the initial reactions to these designs, the questionnaire results, and specific reaction to the individual designs.

Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings

There were strong positive reactions to new designs in all groups. Even though a number of people, especially among the Montreal Staunch Smokers, stated that some of the warnings are “disgusting to look at,” there was a strong consensus that the proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current warnings.

Participants discussed the powerful nature of the “blunt” messages. Staunch smokers, especially those in Montreal, were upset by some of these images. However, when pressed, even Staunch Smokers generally agreed that the messages are effective, even if they are disturbing or have the potential to cause uncomfortable conversations when family, friends and colleagues see the new warnings.

There was a much higher acceptance of the more graphic warnings by younger participants than by older people. This may be due to the fact that younger smokers do not necessarily see these warnings as being directed specifically at them. Youth smokers may view the advertisements as having been designed for older smokers because they believe that only older smokers can get lung cancer or be affected by a stroke due to the use of tobacco products. As well, it may be that younger people react more strongly with a message that is more controversial or seen as “breaking the rules.”

There was a strong consensus among the focus group participants that the new messages definitely have the ability to get attention. The addition of pictures was seen as the most significant change from the current health warnings. In many ways, the addition of a powerful graphic image overshadowed the accompanying text. While visual images lend power to these warnings, their use does have implications for the use of text.

These implications became abundantly clear during the group discussions. There were a few designs (“Die Hard”, “Exhausted” and “Strokes”) where the visual image relies on the accompanying text for comprehension. Some participants overlooked the text and unsuccessfully tried to interpret the message from using the picture alone. In the case of “Die Hard” and “Strokes,” a clearer picture would reduce the dependency of these designs on the accompanying text.

In general, those designs that emphasized the use of text were seen as less effective than those where the picture could deliver the message. For example, the design “This year smoking will kill the population of a small city” is a heavily text dependent warning.

Despite the fact that the text clearly states that it refers to Canadian deaths from smoking related illnesses per year, there was confusion as to whether or not the warning applied only to Canada or to the world as a whole.

From previous research, we know that the majority of smokers fall into lower income and education groups, where functional illiteracy tends to be higher than among other socio-economic groups. Text dependent warnings may not have the desired impact on these smokers. Clear visuals, where the picture actually is worth a thousand words, will have the greatest “across the board” impact on the smoking population.

Some participants, primarily in the sessions with older participants, did not feel that the size of the supporting text was large enough to be legible. This factor also had an impact on the effectiveness of text-dependent warnings.

When participants were asked about the size of the warning there was overall agreement that 60 percent of the package was an acceptable size for the health warning labels. It was also felt that there would be enough remaining room on the package for brand trademarks, text and other visual product identifiers.

Both staunch smokers and potential quitters stated that the new messages will lead to even greater social pressure to quit smoking. As mentioned earlier, the current messages already act as a stimulus for non-smoking friends and family members to comment on smoking behaviour. These proposed warnings, especially those that are more graphic in nature, are seen to significantly increase social pressure on smokers.

A number of participants, smokers and non-smokers alike, mentioned the possibility that the introduction of new, more effective warnings may stimulate a market for cigarette cases or covers.

In a few cases, some participants mused about the possibility that these warnings may have an effect contrary to the intended purpose of these warnings. The following exchange took place between participants in the Older Adult Non-Smoker focus group in Ottawa:

“You know with the way I could be when I was a kid, I could see these things becoming collectors items. “Oh, I’ve got the best warning.””

“I’ll trade you!”

“I’ll trade you my ‘can kill you’ for one ‘pregnancy.’”

Despite any of these concerns, however, there was a general feeling that these proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current messages and should be adopted for use.

Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings

Participants were given a questionnaire and asked to independently complete an evaluation of each of the proposed health warnings for cigarette packages. They were asked evaluate each warning according to the following five criteria using a scale of one to seven, where “one” is a very low impression and “seven” is a very high impression.

- Educational effectiveness – How well does this design educate or inform you about the health dangers of smoking?
- Credibility – How believable or truthful is the information or the concept presented in the design?
- Memorability – How likely is it that you will remember the message, images or information presented in the design?
- Effectiveness – How effective is the message or information at convincing smokers to quit or cut down on smoking?
- Design appeal – Keeping in mind that the purpose of these messages is to convince you to quit or cut down on smoking, is the design effective? Is it professional? Does it help in getting the message across?

As well, participants were provided an opportunity to give their own comments regarding the individual designs.

The following table provides averages of reactions based on language and smoking behaviour:

Quantitative Ratings of Health Warning Designs							
	Youth Smokers	Youth Non- Smokers	Adult Smokers	Adult Non- Smokers	Montreal All	Toronto & Ottawa	Average
Cigarettes Cause Mouth Cancer	5.1	5.6	4.5	5.2	4.6	5.3	4.7
Children See, Children Do	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.9	4.4
Die Hard Smokers Often Die Hard Deaths	5.1	5.0	4.0	4.7	4.4	4.9	4.4
Cigarettes Cause Strokes	4.7	5.3	4.1	4.9	4.3	4.8	4.3
Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking	4.2	4.8	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.7	4.1
Smoking Kills Babies (Baby)	4.4	5.0	4.1	4.8	4.1	4.7	4.1
Smoking Kills Babies (Crib)	4.3	5.1	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.0
Cigarettes Kill	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.0
You Inhale This Garbage?	4.7	4.8	3.7	3.7	4.0	4.4	3.9
This Year Smoking Will Kill Off The Population Of A Small City	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.9
Kiss Me	4.1	4.6	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.0	3.8
Choose Your Poison	4.3	4.6	3.4	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.8
Smoking Leaves You Exhausted	3.7	4.0	3.8	4.7	3.8	4.0	3.6

It should be noted that non-smokers and potential quitters provide higher ratings than staunch smokers do for each of the health warnings tested in these sessions. As well, younger participants and women tend to provide higher ratings than do older participants and men.

Reactions to Individual Designs

The saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” is applicable to the effectiveness of the tobacco warnings tested during this focus group exercise. The warnings that generated the highest level of positive interest tend to be the ones that rely on a visual, rather than a textual, approach. As has been determined in earlier quantitative studies, smokers are over-represented among the lower education groups. Therefore, a high level of literacy among all smokers cannot be expected. To effectively communicate to all smokers, emphasis should be placed on the image carrying the message.

Given the similarities between several of the designs that were tested, they have been grouped into different approaches for the purposes of analysis.

The “Shocking” Approach

Overall, the three warnings that graphically depict the impact of tobacco use on the human body attracted the most attention and provoked the most discussion among participants. In some sessions, smokers stated that they would ask the store clerk for a different package if they were given one with these images. Despite, or perhaps due to this strong negative reaction, smokers and non-smokers regardless of age provided high ratings to all three of these designs. As well, these health warnings appear among the five most effective designs selected by participants overall and by youth smokers for use by Health Canada.

Mouth Cancer

In the individual rating process using the questionnaire, the warning “Mouth Cancer” advertisement was rated in the top six by all groups. In fact, this warning was the top-rated item in six of the thirteen groups. This warning, which employs a mouth ravaged by cancer, received top marks from both youth smoker groups in Toronto, both non-smoking groups in Ottawa, one of the youth smoker groups in Ottawa and from potential quitters over the age of 20 in Montreal.

This design was the most effective visual image of the three warnings featuring diseased body parts. Not all interview participants were able to readily identify the diseased body parts used in the other designs or knew what a healthy lung or brain looks like. Many participants found the image very powerful, although many described it as disturbing.

The mouth cancer image is thought provoking. It grabs your attention. Many smokers, especially those participants in the staunch smoker sessions, stated that they would not buy a package of cigarettes with that warning on it – they would ask for a different package because the image is too disturbing for them. As one staunch smoker in the Toronto youth session stated:

“That one with the mouth on it, I think that one is effective, because when you put (a cigarette) to your mouth, (you’re) going to say: “Oh god, I am going to totally look like that.”

The credibility of the mouth cancer design was called into question in a few of the focus group sessions. Potential Quitters in Montreal questioned its credibility saying that good oral hygiene would prevent mouth cancer, while participants in other sessions stated that it would have no impact on those who wear dentures.

In a number of the youth smoking groups, getting mouth cancer from smoking was described as being a remote possibility. These smokers stated that they believe that mouth cancer is more likely to happen to people who chew tobacco than to those who smoke cigarettes. As one young smoker in Ottawa stated:

“Like, is this for any tobacco product or just smoking? Like chewing tobacco or Dip or Score or something like that, like if you smoke and you use Dip then you’d start to think right away ‘Oh Dip, like... like everyone knows that destroys your gums.’ So you’re going to think right away mouth cancer. I don’t like it if it’s just... are these going... are these important just stop smokers from smoking or is it to stop people from doing other tobacco products?”

All of these “denial” statements indicate that significant pockets of smokers do not understand the connection between tobacco smoking and mouth cancer. Despite some questioning of the credibility of this design, mouth cancer was the number one choice among youth participants and in the top three among all groups with regard to the five most effective designs.

Die Hard Smokers Die Hard Deaths

This warning showed the impact of tobacco use on the human lung. Despite some difficulty in determining what the image depicted, this image was viewed as being very credible. Most smokers and non-smokers are aware that smoking will have a detrimental impact on a smoker’s lungs and that it can lead to lung cancer. Despite some intense efforts to discount this message from pockets of staunch smokers, all groups rated this message in the top six most effective designs, including those who were most critical of this image - the staunch smokers in Montreal.

A number of people in the English-language sessions felt that the title of the message was too glib. As well, the play on words was lost on many other participants in these sessions. A few participants felt that the reference to “die hard smokers” excluded those who only smoke half a package of cigarettes a day or less. The following excerpt from the youth potential quitters’ session in Toronto expresses this point of view:

“...I have a problem with this, I don’t know, but it makes you think that they’re smoking a lot, and it’s like well I only smoke a half a pack a day, or I smoke one pack a day, right, like what do they mean as like “die hard” smokers? They’re trying too hard to make it catchy but it only takes away... it’s tacky.”

In almost every focus group, participants discussed the need for a more understandable visual image. Currently the warning depicts a deceased lung. Many participants do not have an adequate frame of reference to fully understand what they were being shown – especially at such close range. The lung was not immediately identifiable as such and relied on the accompanying text for identification. Even for those who read the caption, the impact was diminished because they did not know what a healthy lung looks like.

Many participants recommended that the visual used in this health warning be changed to include both a healthy and a cancer riddled lung.

Cigarettes Cause Strokes

This warning was also included in the overall top six warnings by the focus group participants. As was the case with the “Die Hard Smokers” message, participants suggested that the visual be improved, as many were not able to identify the photographic subject matter as being part of a human brain.

This warning also received high overall rating despite some resistance from staunch smokers. These individuals in Montreal stated that the photograph was in bad taste and gave the message low ratings on its ability to attract attention. The apparent contradictions in these statements suggest that this image touches a deep nerve among these participants.

Some of the staunch smokers in Montreal also stated that this warning would not convince smokers to quit.

Many young people in both the smoking and non-smoking sessions said that, while they are aware of a variety of health impacts as a result of smoking, they were not aware that smoking could cause strokes. One of the reasons why youth smokers gave higher ratings to this warning may be due to the new information they felt that they were receiving.

Children Approach

Parents who smoke, as well as smokers who are around other people’s children, are the ideal targets for tobacco warnings involving children. Many smokers feel that smoking is a personal choice that, as adults, they are free to make. However, when their smoking behaviour unintentionally influences young children to take up smoking or

imposes a negative health impact on children, the smoker may reconsider their decision to smoke.

The two new health warnings featuring children are viewed as credible and strike an emotional cord because they involve one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Many people, including many smokers, believe that parents should act as role models and should not smoke in front of their children or other people's children. In fact, many smokers made a point of saying that they do not smoke in the house or in front of their children. While this action may prevent their children from being affected by second-hand smoke, some of these smokers feel that this action also adverts the problem of acting as a negative role model.

Children See, Children Do

The "Children See, Children Do" warning design was viewed as effective among all age groups. Although this warning received higher ratings from the adult groups than youth participants, even the youth sessions included this warning in their selection of the five most effective designs.

This approach was seen as honest, efficient and in good taste. This warning also struck an emotional cord among those individuals who started smoking by imitating their parents. One young woman in the Ottawa session, who stated that her father smoked and she would quit if she could, stated that this advertisement really hit home for her because she doesn't want her younger sister to start smoking.

Moderator – "Now, do any of you have any younger brothers or sister?"

"Yeah"

Moderator – "Are you worried about them following your lead at all?"

"I don't want my sister smoking. If I ever catch her with a cigarette she is going to be eating it."

As well, there was one young man in the Toronto Potential Quitters session who strongly objected to this design in the overall group exercise to select the five most effective designs. Upon further probing, it was revealed that he was expressing personal anxiety about the influence that he, as a smoker, might have on convincing his younger siblings to take up smoking.

There was some discussion about the appropriateness of the picture used in this message. There were minor concerns that the image of an attractive child smiling while holding a cigarette glamorizes smoking. This point was raised in a few sessions and the

ensuing discussion resulted in agreement to stick with the image that was tested. Although younger smokers were more likely to express concern about the possible encouragement this image might provide and expressed a desire for a more “bedraggled” child, older smokers were more insistent that the current image be used. These participants felt that all smokers would be able to relate to a more attractive child whereas the less attractive child might not have the same emotional connection for the same reasons and would be easier to discount as “not my child.”

Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking

Smokers do not always care about the effect that smoking has on their own health but, as noted earlier, many are sensitive to making other people pay for their habit with their health. This appears to be one of the underlying strengths of the warning “Your Children are Sick of Your Smoking.”

During the individual rating exercise, participants in over half of the focus groups rated this message in their top six messages, including all groups in Toronto and all ages of smokers in Montreal. As with the previous health warning, this message was more important for older rather than younger smokers. Many of the youth smokers felt that, since the overwhelming majority of them do not have children, this message was not targeted to them and, therefore, was irrelevant to their lives. However, a few youth smokers did discuss the health impact that their parents’ smoking had on their own lives.

Those who did not give this warning a high rating explained that they felt that pollution and environmental allergies have a greater likelihood of causing asthmatic reactions in children than being exposed to second hand smoke. A few participants in Montreal also said that only very heavy smoking in the proximity of children could cause asthma and this entire problem would be avoided by not smoking in front of their children.

Positive Approach

Smoking Leaves You Exhausted

Participant reactions to this health warning are a perfect example of the need for the warning’s image to carry the message. In the group discussions following the introduction of the designs, participants did not recall the link between carbon monoxide in car exhaust and in cigarette smoke. They picked up on the “exhausted” idea but mainly related it to their reduced ability to climb stairs or participate in group sports activities. As one adult staunch smoker in Toronto put it:

"I think the design for that one should be oriented to health. Because when I read it on the page I'm like yeah, its true. You know what (it) is saying is absolutely right, you get tired. But when I saw the picture of the car, I'm like what does the car have to do with it? They are talking about health...."

The message was seen as having low overall effectiveness with youth smokers because they still have a lot of energy, although a number of youth smokers did acknowledge the impact that smoking is having on their physical performance. Adult smokers also questioned the seriousness of the message and its effectiveness, as one adult staunch smoker in Toronto put it:

"It's not really effective. It says smoking leaves you exhausted (but) people aren't scared of being tired, they're scared about dying."

Many participants thought that the health warning should be clearer in its approach, either focusing on decreased physical performance or on the toxic constituents within tobacco.

As well, there is a sense that the health warnings should not be "flippant" in their approach. Just as with the "Die Hard" health warning, there is a general feeling among participants that the health impacts of tobacco is a serious issue that needs to be taken seriously.

Social Stigma Approach

Kiss Me

The "Kiss Me" warning, with the attractive young woman licking an ashtray, resulted in mixed reactions from focus group participants. In Montreal, staunch smokers and teen non-smokers placed this warning in the top five most effective design category. However, this health warning did not receive the same positive endorsement by a majority of participants overall.

Among supporters of this health warning, the humorous approach was seen as refreshing in comparison with other, more sinister messages and humour was seen as enhancing the message's ability to attract attention and encourage message retention. While they perceived the approach to be new and refreshing because of the humour, the actual information it communicated was not seen as new.

Toronto and Ottawa focus group participants did not discuss the humorous aspects of this warning as much as Montreal participants. Considerably more English-speaking participants felt that the picture was in poor taste. They felt having a pretty young woman licking an astray had other connotations besides the overt message that

smoking makes your mouth taste like an ashtray. Many people suggested that, if Health Canada wanted to go ahead with this approach, that multiple images with people of all ages and both genders would mitigate any concerns that the image is sexually exploitative.

A number of groups selected this image as part of their top five images in the breakout group exercises. However, this health warning rarely was made the final list, except among the non-smoking participants. The idea that smoking can negatively impact your sex life was seen as a good reason to have this warning on cigarette packages. The fact that this sort of logic was being used was clear when one potential quitter in Toronto tried to explain why his group as put the “Kiss Me” warning on their top five list:

“Well, we liked “Kiss Me” because, you know, you’re saying “Kiss Me” ... you are coming out and its going to effect your sexual activity.”

Smokers as a Whole Approach

Given the numbers quoted in the “This Year Smoking Will Kill Off The Population of a Small City” and the bottom-line tone of the “Cigarettes Kill” design, these two health warnings place the dangers of smoking in a significantly broader perspective than the other designs tested in these sessions. Many participants stated that pulling the issue away from one individual smoker to smokers in general and their families had an eye-opening effect. Many focus group participants also felt that the alarming and dramatic tone of these two warnings contributed to their eye-opening effect.

Cigarettes Kill

Many people liked the straightforward, bottom line nature of this health warning: You smoke, you die. However, many felt that the picture did not do the message justice. Many participants, especially young people, felt that the image used in this message lacked realism and they would preferred a more graphic or blunt visual message. An example of this is provided in the following exchange between youth smokers in Ottawa:

“(It’s) not graphic enough.”

Moderator – “Not graphic enough? How would you improve this one to make it more effective?”

“A grave”

“A grave, yeah.”

“A body bag.”

"A thing being buried... a coffin being buried."

"With a husband crying or something."

"A guy being buried with the grave scene with their child standing there crying."

As well, younger smokers made comments that the bedside scene featured in this warning was "Too ER" or resembled a scene from a soap opera. However, older participants, who were more likely to have personal experience with dying persons, were more convinced about the effectiveness of this design and thought that only minor adjustments (the addition of nearby medical equipment or breathing apparatus) were needed.

While the information highlighted in this warning was not seen as providing new information or being particularly original, large numbers of participants found it poignant. All self-aware smokers know that they run the risk of developing cancer if they smoke. Very rarely do smokers think about how cancer treatment or their death from tobacco related diseases would impact their family. For anyone who has lived through that traumatic experience, this warning is very powerful, unfortunately many smokers stated that this sort of advertising will not motivate them to quit smoking.

This Year Smoking Will Kill Off A Small City

The chief asset of this health warning is that it presents new information for many of the focus group participants. However, this warning is text dependent, and as such, was not as effective as other more visual designs.

While all participants had an opportunity to closely examine each design, many did not retain the fact that the figure of 45,000 deaths referred to the number of smoking related deaths in Canada per year, as was presented in the text.

As well, the bars in the bar chart were the same colour with the exception of the bar representing tobacco-related deaths, with the effect that many people did not realize that the bottom bar represented the 45,000 smoking deaths. Once this was clarified, focus group participants recommended that all the bars in the chart be the same colour or that some other design technique be employed so that the viewer's eye would not skip over the most important information.

Staunch smokers in Montreal stated that this message did not have the same impact as the ones that showed how cancer could effect their bodies. Upon further probing, it was revealed that these individuals are more afraid of *suffering* from a smoking related illness than from *dying* from it. For them, the statistics were too far removed from the physical or emotional pain of severe illness.

Chemical Approach

While both designs, “You Inhale this Garbage” and “Choose Your Poison”, clearly demonstrate the wide ranging and dangerous chemicals contained in cigarettes, focus group participants felt that the dangers from these chemicals were exaggerated in these warnings.

You Inhale This Garbage

This design tested well and was selected by participants as one of the five most effective tobacco health warnings. While it does not have the shock value of the diseased body parts, people do make the connection between the tar in the gloved hands and the toxic chemicals drawn into a smoker’s lungs. As one non-smoker put it:

“You Inhale this Garbage, I found to be the most effective (design) because, I mean, you actually see ... what you are inhaling. ... I don’t know, it is just really disgusting to me.”

This warning was not seen as an immediate “attention getter.” It was seen as a more reflective message that conjured up memories of previous anti-tobacco advertisements, such as the Cocktail ad and the Government of Ontario advertisement featuring young people diving into a tank of industrial effluent. Potential quitters in both the youth and adult groups in Toronto found the warning’s educational element highly effective:

Moderator – “Why would this look effective then?”

“Well, because it makes you realize what you are actually doing by smoking...”

“You need a visual image of what tar is ... you hear about it, ...but you don’t visualize tar. You just read it on your package in milligrams.” (Adult session)

“For the “you inhale this garbage”, seeing that someone has to put gloves on to touch it and like, and you are putting that in your body! I know we thought that pack was effective.” (Youth session)

Choose Your Poison

“Choose your poison” was rated as one of the least effective warnings tested, largely because this warning was not seen as motivating smokers to quit smoking. The main reason for this perception related to the fact that all of these dangerous chemicals are

safely used and stored in the home. Granted, smokers inhale these products when they smoke and this is not the case through normal household usage, however, the warning did not strike a cord with focus group participants. A different visual might be found to be more acceptable if it were based on the same idea as the more effective “You Inhale This Garbage” health warning.

Baby Approach

The three warnings about smoking killing babies provoked a very strong feelings of guilt among smokers, especially with older staunch smokers. Younger smokers, in contrast to parents of very young children, did not feel that this message was particularly relevant to them. In fact, a number of men joked that if these warnings were put on packages they would request packages with these warnings when purchasing cigarettes because, like some of the current health warnings, this warning does not directly impact them.

Smoking Kills Babies – Baby

This warning was chosen as one of the five most effective warnings across all focus groups, even among youth groups and staunch smokers. It was also seen as the most effective warning with women. Guilt is extremely influential; as one young woman put it: “You see the baby and right away you think ‘I’m a murderer!’”

In previous qualitative research undertaken by Environics for Health Canada, this warning was tested with the image of a smiling baby. A number of participants in those sessions suggested that the message would have a greater impact if the child were crying. They felt that a crying baby would increase the observer’s view that the child was in some sort of pain or danger. The strong endorsement that this altered design achieved in the more recent session confirms that this change strengthened the effectiveness of this health warning.

Smoking Kills Babies – Pregnancy

Although this message is familiar, it does continue to be a potent warning about the dangers of tobacco. It is an effective message for women and there was almost unanimous agreement in all sessions that it is credible. Reaction to the visual differed in Ottawa and Montreal. Montreal participants felt that the empty crib reduced the guilt factor while Ottawa participants felt that the empty crib was effective and that a crib with a more “abandoned” feel to it would have an even greater impact.

Although this message was seen as effective, it lacked the emotional power of the other health warnings in this approach.

Smoking Kills Babies – SIDS

This warning was considered to be thought provoking and was seen to provide new information, as many smokers were unaware of the link between smoking and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Although this warning was considered to be educational, a few participants cautioned against using this message because they believe that it has not been proven conclusively that SIDS is caused by children being exposed to cigarette smoke.

Health Canada should also consider that the use of this message may trigger a strong emotional reaction from part of the Canadian public. Most parents who have had a child die of SIDS feel a tremendous amount of guilt. Although there is statistical confirmation of the link between cigarette smoking and SIDS, many Canadians may not see the causal link in their own experience. Further, as one non-smoking Ottawa participant commented in an eloquent and moving speech, smokers who already had a child die of SIDS continue to bear the guilt and doubt many years after the event.

Others commented that this health warning might open up old wounds for people who didn't even smoke around their child but had one die of SIDS anyway. In any case, Health Canada must make a difficult decision between preventing the possibility of new deaths and subjecting those who have already suffered to a new trauma, when considering the use of this message.

5.0 Most Effective Designs

After they had a chance to comment on the designs, participants were asked to select the five most effective designs. This was accomplished through a two-stage process. Initially, participants were divided into three groups. Each group was asked to select the five most effective designs using a group consensus process. Once these selections were completed, the results were presented all participants with each group asked to explain the rationale behind their choices. Then the participants, using the same group consensus process, had to determine the five most effective designs.

In most cases, participants developed a rationale for the choices that supplemented their thinking concerning the effectiveness of individual designs. In this regard, participants were conscious of developing a set of messages that would have broad universal appeal while appealing to specific target groups within the population, such as potential young smokers and parents who smoke.

Looking at the choices that emerged from this process, we found that there was a tremendous overlap in the choices made by the participants, both in the smaller group discussions and in their choices as a whole. The five most effective designs are:

- Children See, Children Do
- Mouth Cancer
- Die Hard
- Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)
- You inhale this garbage?

Participants selected “Die Hard” despite concerns regarding the quality of the picture. However, they were confident that a better, clearer picture could be found to replace the less clear image that was tested.

Reducing smoking among youth people is one of the priorities for Canada’s anti-tobacco strategy. Looking that the five most effective designs selected by younger smokers, we find that four of the five choices selected by participants as a whole also appear on this list. These designs are:

- Mouth Cancer
- Die Hard
- Children See, Children Do
- Strokes
- Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)

As with “Die Hard” in the previous list, younger smokers were confident that a better picture could be easily found to replace the image used in “Strokes.”

It is important to note that “Strokes,” which was among the five most effective designs for younger smokers, ranked as the sixth most effective design among participants overall. Likewise, “You inhale this garbage,” which was placed among the five most effective designs overall, ranked as the sixth most effective design among younger smokers.

Further, it should be noted that the selection of the five most effective designs is also consistent among Francophone and Anglophone participants.

A remarkable consensus exists with regard to the most effective health warning designs that could be employed by Health Canada. As well, there was a strong feeling among participants that many of the other designs tested in these sessions could be effectively employed as health warnings. Even the least effective designs were seen as more effective than the text warnings currently used on tobacco packaging.

6.0 Retention of Proposed Health Warnings

Toward the end of each session, participants were asked write down as many of the health warnings that they could remember from the previous discussion. The moderators took care to remove any flipcharts or other material that would remind participants of the warnings they had been discussing prior to introducing this topic. As well, another topic related to smoking was briefly discussed in order to put some “distance” between the health warnings and the recall test.

In general, there was high recall of the 14 health warnings that we tested, with a majority of participants being able to remember 10 or more designs. Given that recall of these designs would have been aided by the prior discussion, it should be remembered that this recall test does not simulate the actual level of recall these warnings would obtain in the field.

However, the recall of these messages does reinforce some of the earlier findings discussed in this report. Namely, that the retention of images was higher than the retention of specific text and, that the more startling the image, the higher the likelihood that it would be remembered.

7.0 Slide Designs

Although they were not the focus of the focus group sessions, a number of participants provided reactions to the designs developed for use on the interior “slide” of the cigarette package.

In general, participants saw the slide designs are more positive in tone and more informative than the health warnings used on the package exterior. Most participants were unaware of the information presented on the slide and were surprised about some of the immediate benefits of quitting smoking.

As well, participants appreciated the inclusion of the Internet site address and the toll-free telephone number on the slide. There was a strong recommendation that these features should be positioned closer to the top of the slide.

As well, there were comments that the brief one-line messages that currently appear on the outside of the package “lip” should appear on the inside where they would be more readily visible to smokers reaching for a cigarette.

A number of participants expressed a concern about the visibility of the slide design or the willingness of smokers to read the text. Given the literacy concerns highlighted earlier, these points may be very valid. However, a majority of participants, smokers and non-smokers alike, thought that the slide could be used to provide information.

8.0 Conclusions

The proposed designs are seen as an effective way to revitalize the current health warnings that appear on tobacco packaging. Whereas the current design is almost invisible due to familiarity and the black and white designs, the colourful and occasionally startling images have the ability to seize attention from smokers and non-smokers alike.

The new warnings received spontaneous approval from many participants. Although there is clear guidance on the designs that are seen to be most effective, Health Canada has a great deal of flexibility with regard to the final set of designs that could be used. In fact, all of the designs tested in these sessions were seen as more effective than the warnings that are currently in use.

However, it is clear that the images used on these warnings must be able to convey the message without dependency on the text. Text can play a useful supporting role.

Further, we find that Health Canada should not shy away from blunt or graphic images. However, these images must be rooted in reality rather than employ sensationalism just for the sake of grabbing attention.

These designs, especially those employing graphic images, were seen as increasing social pressure on smokers to quit or cut down on their smoking. However, a number of smokers who participated in these sessions commented that the designs would be effective on their own as a stimulus to reduce consumption.

Finally, the size of the health warnings tested in these sessions (60 percent) was seen to allow sufficient space for brand trademarks, text and other identifiers used by the industry to distinguish their products.

9.0 Appendix A – Moderator's Guide

Health Warning Design Testing PN 4506 MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Introduction **10 Minutes** **0:00**

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Environics Research Group Ltd, a national public opinion research firm.

- We do telephone surveys - from time to time, we do focus groups. Focus groups allow us to get more detail on topics and issues than we can from telephone surveys (thoughts, feelings and opinions)

We are not here to reach a consensus. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate. There are no right or wrong answers - you help me by giving me your opinions, thoughts and ideas. It is important to respect the view of others in the room. We can disagree without being disagreeable.

This meeting will be tape-recorded in order to help me write my report later. Indicate that there are observers (if any) behind the one-way mirror. Everything discussed here will be kept in complete confidentiality - no names will be attached to the results in any way. Feel free to use your first name only.

We are going to be talking today about something that you all should be familiar with – the design of the health warning labels that appear on cigarette packages and the packages of other tobacco products. *Please do not refer to any packages that you might have at hand.*

- *Round-table introductions.* Let's go around the table so that each of you can tell us your name and a little bit about yourself, such as where you work, your hobbies and if you have a family?

Current Message Awareness **5 Minutes** **0:10**

- Once again, do not refer to any packages that you might have at hand. Can anyone tell me the health warning messages that currently appear on tobacco product packages? Are there any others?
- In general, do you feel you are well informed or not well informed about the dangers of smoking from these messages?

Packaging Tests **50 Minutes** **0:15**

Instruction

- I am now going to show you some package designs that include new health messages. First, I am going to distribute a questionnaire so that you can rate each of these designs. I would like to ask you to hold your comments until everyone has had a chance to complete the questionnaire.
- We will be looking at 12 designs in total. For each design, write the name of the design (which I will provide you) in the space provided on the sheets. Using a scale of one to seven, where “one” is very low and “seven” is very high, you will be rating each design according to five criteria:
 - Educational effectiveness – How well does this design educate or inform you about the health dangers of smoking?
 - Credibility – How believable or truthful is the information or the concept presented in the design?
 - Memorability – How likely is it that you will remember the message, images or information presented in the design?
 - Effectiveness – How effective is the message or information at convincing smokers to quit or cut down on smoking?
 - Design appeal – Keeping in mind that the purpose of these messages is to convince you to quit or cut down on smoking, is the design effective? Is it professional? Does it help in getting the message across?
- Feel free to write any additional comments that you might have on the specific design in the space provided.
- I will now take you through these designs.

Exercise

- After All Questionnaires Completed -

- 3a-7f
- What are your initial impressions of these designs? 3a
 - Overall, what designs were most effective? Why? 3b 3c
 - What designs were least effective? Why? 3d 3e
 - How would you improve these designs? 3f

Breakout Group Exercise **30 Minutes** **1:05**

- I am going to divide you into three groups [Make assignments, ensure a roughly equal mix of gender and age].
- In each of your groups, I would like you to decide which **five** designs are the most effective overall. As well, I would like you to decide which **single** design is the most effective overall.
- **Everyone** in your group must agree as to the five designs that make it on to the list, as well as the best overall design.
- You have 15 minutes to reach a decision.
- [As decisions are made, list on flip chart. Proceed once all decisions are listed]
- Perhaps you should tell us how you arrived at these decisions?

Group Exercise **20 minutes** **1:35**

- Now we are going to go through this process again, but as a group.
- First, can we agree that those designs that appear on all our lists automatically goes on the final list? Let's get our five top designs first and then decide which is best overall.
- [Once final list is decided] How do you feel about this list of designs?
- How would your friends who smoke react to these designs?
• How about your non-smoking friends?

Wrap-up **5 Minutes** **1:55**

- [Collect all designs] To conclude our session, I have one more question for you. Once again, I would like you to hold your comments. On the paper you have in front of you, I would like to ask you to write down as many of the **new** messages or designs as you can remember – try to write down at least one. General wording will do.
- Going around the table, I would like to briefly hear what you have remembered.
- You have all worked very hard this evening. Thank you very much for your participation.

Rating the Designs							
Design #1							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #2							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #3							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #4							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #5							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							

Design #6							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #7							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #8							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #9							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #10							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							

Design #11							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #12							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							

Of the designs presented, which five are the most effective overall?

Most Effective:

HEALTH WARNING TESTING

Final Report

Presented to
Health Canada

June 24, 1999

Prepared by
The Environics Research Group Ltd
Ottawa

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
	Focus Group Composition.....	3
2.0	Summary Observations.....	4
	Current Message Awareness.....	4
	Package Testing - Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings.....	4
	Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings.....	5
	Reactions to Individual Designs.....	5
	Most Effective Designs.....	10
	Retention of Proposed Health Warnings.....	11
	Slide Designs.....	11
3.0	Current Message Awareness.....	12
4.0	Package Testing.....	14
	Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings.....	14
	Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings.....	16
	Reactions to Individual Designs.....	18
5.0	Most Effective Designs.....	29
6.0	Retention of Proposed Health Warnings.....	31
7.0	Slide Designs.....	32
8.0	Conclusions.....	33
9.0	Appendix A – Moderator’s Guide.....	34
	Rating the Designs.....	37

1.0 Introduction

Environics Research Group is pleased to present this report of focus group findings to the Office of Tobacco Control of Health Canada. The purpose of this project was to undertake a qualitative assessment of consumer attitudes toward proposed cigarette package designs in support of the development of regulations regarding the placement of health information on tobacco packaging.

To this end, 13 focus groups were completed in May and June 1999. Five sessions took place in Montreal and four sessions took place in both Toronto and Ottawa. The Montreal sessions were conducted in French and the Toronto and Ottawa sessions were conducted in English. There were bilingual participants in the youth sessions in Ottawa (both smoking and non-smoking groups).

The focus group participants were segmented into the various sessions by smoking behaviour and age. The smoking behaviour segmentation was divided between staunch smokers (smokers who have not tried to quit smoking and have no intention of trying to do so), potential quitters (people who have tried to quit smoking in the past and are going to try again in the future) and non-smokers (people who do not currently smoke). The focus groups were also segmented by age: youth (16 to 17 years of age), young adults (18 to 24 years of age) and Older Adults (over the age of 30).

As Health Canada knows, qualitative research is a powerful tool that enables the sponsoring group to receive feedback on the participants' thoughts, feelings and opinions. This type of research allows for the effective probing of the relationships between attitudes, opinions and behaviours. Qualitative research can provide considerable depth of understanding regarding the attitudes held by individuals. However, it should be remembered that, while indicative of attitudes that do exist, these attitudes are not statistically representative or predictive of the larger population. For this reason, the quantitative results used in this report refer only to the focus group population and can not be used to explicitly predict how Canadians in general would react given the same information.

This report summarizes the overall findings of the project and discusses the results in detail. All research work was conducted in accordance with the professional standards established by the Professional Market Research Society (PMRS) and the Canadian Association of Market Research Organizations (CAMRO). Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the Moderator's Guide.

Focus Group Composition

The groups were divided among the three cities as follows:

Montreal:

- Staunch smokers over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Potential quitters over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Non-smokers over the age of 30 (June 4, 1999)
- Two sessions with youth smokers aged 15 to 17 (June 3, 1999)

Toronto:

- Staunch smokers over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Potential quitters over the age of 18 (May 25, 1999)
- Youth staunch smokers aged between 16 and 18 years of age (May 25, 1999)
- Youth potential quitters aged between 16 and 18 years of age (May 25, 1999)

Ottawa:

- Youth non-smokers age 15 to 17 years of age (June 5, 1999)
- Non-smokers over the age of 30 (June 4, 1999)
- Two sessions with youth smokers aged 15 to 17 (June 5, 1999)

2.0 Summary Observations

The results described in this report are based on 13 focus groups that were completed in May and June 1999. Five sessions took place in Montreal, and four sessions took place in both Toronto and Ottawa. The Montreal sessions were conducted in French and the Toronto and Ottawa sessions were conducted in English. The sessions were segmented according to the age and smoking behaviour of the participants.

Current Message Awareness

- There is a high level of awareness of the current health warnings on cigarette packages. Many participants stated that the warnings had become virtually invisible and no longer had the power to seize their attention. Smokers and non-smokers alike said that the average smoker had become desensitized to these warnings.
- Both smokers and non-smokers feel that they are well-informed about the dangers of smoking. Despite this fact, youth smokers feel that these dangers will not effect them personally or that the serious health effects of smoking are too distant in the future. However, many participants in the youth sessions acknowledged that smoking tobacco is having a more immediate impact on their lives, both in terms of decreased physical ability and appearance (bad breath, discoloured teeth).
- There is some evidence that the current warnings are prompting social pressure to quit or cut down on smoking from non-smoking friends or family members.

Package Testing - Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings

- There were strong positive reactions to new designs in all groups. Even though a number of participants stated that some of the warnings are “disgusting to look at,” there was a strong consensus that the proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current warnings.
- There was a much higher acceptance of the more graphic warnings by younger participants than by older people.
- There was a strong consensus among the focus group participants that the new messages definitely have the ability to get attention. The addition of pictures was seen as the most significant change from the current health warnings.
- In general, those designs that emphasized the use of text were seen as less effective than those where the picture could deliver the message. The majority of smokers fall into the lower income and education groups, where functional illiteracy tends to be higher than among other socio-economic groups. Clear

visuals, where the picture actually is worth a thousand words, will have the greatest “across the board” impact on the smoking population.

- When participants were asked about the size of the warning there was overall agreement that 60 percent of the package was an acceptable size for the health warning labels. It was also felt that there would be enough remaining room on the package for brand trademarks, text and other visual product identifiers.
- Both staunch smokers and potential quitters stated that the new messages will lead to even greater social pressure to quit smoking. These proposed warnings, especially those that are more graphic in nature, are seen to significantly increase social pressure on smokers.

Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings

- Non-smokers and potential quitters provide higher ratings than staunch smokers do for each of the health warnings tested in these sessions. As well, younger participants and women tend to provide higher ratings than do older participants and men.

Reactions to Individual Designs

- The saying “a pictures worth a thousand words” is applicable to the effectiveness of the tobacco warnings tested during this focus group exercise. The warnings that generated the highest level of positive interest tend to be the ones that rely on a visual, rather than a textual, approach.

The “Shocking” Approach

- Overall, the three warnings that graphically depict the impact of tobacco use on the human body attracted the most attention and provoked the most discussion among participants.
- Mouth Cancer
- In the individual rating process using the questionnaire, the warning “Mouth Cancer” advertisement was rated in the top six by all groups. In fact, this warning was the top-rated item in six of the thirteen groups. This design was the most effective visual image of the three warnings featuring diseased body parts.
- In a number of the youth smoking groups, getting mouth cancer from smoking was described as being a remote possibility. These smokers stated that they believe that mouth cancer is more likely to happen to people who chew tobacco than to those who smoke cigarettes.

- Die Hard Smokers Die Hard Deaths
- Despite some intense efforts to discount this message from pockets of staunch smokers, all groups rated this message among the five most effective designs, including those who were most critical of this image - the staunch smokers in Montreal.
- A number of people in the English-language sessions felt that the title of the message was too glib. As well, the play on words was lost on many other participants in these sessions.
- A few participants felt that the reference to “die hard smokers” excluded those who only smoke half a package of cigarettes a day or less.
- In almost every focus group, participants discussed the need for a more understandable visual image. Many participants do not have an adequate frame of reference to fully understand what they were being shown and the image relied on the accompanying text for identification.
- Cigarettes Cause Strokes
- This warning was also included in the overall top six warnings by the focus group participants. As was the case with the “Die Hard Smokers” message, participants suggested that the visual be improved, as many were not able to identify the photographic subject matter as being part of a human brain.
- Many young people in both the smoking and non-smoking sessions said that, while they are aware of a variety of health impacts as a result of smoking, they were not aware that smoking could cause strokes.

Children Approach

- The two new health warnings featuring children are viewed as credible and strike an emotional cord because they involve one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Many people, including many smokers, believe that parents should act as role models and should not smoke in front of their children or other people’s children.
- Children See, Children Do
- The “Children See, Children Do” warning design was viewed as effective among all age groups. Although this warning received higher ratings from the adult groups than youth participants, even the youth sessions included this warning in their selection of the five most effective designs.

- This approach was seen as honest, efficient and in good taste. This warning also struck an emotional cord among those individuals who started smoking by imitating their parents.
- There was some discussion about the appropriateness of the picture used in this message. Although younger smokers were more likely to express concern about the possible encouragement this image might provide and expressed a desire for a more “bedraggled” child, older smokers were more insistent that the current image be used.
- *Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking*
- During the individual rating exercise, participants in over half of the focus groups rated this message in their top six messages, including all groups in Toronto and all ages of smokers in Montreal. As with the previous health warning, this message was more important for older rather than younger smokers.
- Those who did not give this warning a high rating explained that they felt that pollution and environmental allergies have a greater likelihood of causing asthmatic reactions in children than being exposed to second hand smoke.

Positive Approach

- *Smoking Leaves You Exhausted*
- Participant reactions to this health warning are a perfect example of the need for the warning’s image to carry the message. Participants did not recall the link between carbon monoxide in car exhaust and in cigarette smoke. They picked up on the “exhausted” idea but mainly related it to their reduced ability to climb stairs or participate in group sports activities. Many participants thought that the health warning should be clearer in its approach, either focusing on decreased physical performance or on the toxic constituents within tobacco.
- As well, there is a sense that the health warnings should not be “flippant” in their approach. Just as with the “Die Hard” health warning, there is a general feeling among participants that the health impacts of tobacco is a serious issue that needs to be taken seriously.

Social Stigma Approach

- *Kiss Me*
- Staunch smokers and teen non-smokers in Montreal placed this warning in the top five most effective design category. However, this health warning did not receive the same positive endorsement by a majority of participants overall.

- Many English-speaking participants felt that having a pretty young woman licking an ashtray had other connotations besides the overt message that smoking makes your mouth taste like an ashtray. Many people suggested that, if Health Canada wanted to go ahead with this approach, that multiple images with people of all ages and both genders would mitigate any concerns that the image is sexually exploitative.

Smokers as a Whole Approach

- Cigarettes Kill
- Many people liked the straightforward, bottom line nature of this health warning: You smoke, you die. However, many felt that the picture did not do the message justice. Many participants, especially young people, felt that the image used in this message lacked realism and they would preferred a more graphic or blunt visual message.
- Older participants, who were more likely to have personal experience with dying persons, were more convinced about the effectiveness of this design and thought that only minor adjustments (the addition of nearby medical equipment or breathing apparatus) were needed.
- This Year Smoking Will Kill Off A Small City
- The chief asset of this health warning is that it presents new information for many of the focus group participants. However, this warning is text dependent and as such, was not as effective as other more visual designs.
- Focus group participants recommended that all the bars in the chart be the same colour or that some other design technique be employed so that the viewer's eye would not skip over the most important information.
- Upon further probing, it was revealed that many smokers are more afraid of *suffering* from a smoking related illness than from *dying* from it. For them, the statistics were too far removed from the physical or emotional pain of severe illness.

Chemical Approach

- While both designs, "You Inhale this Garbage" and "Choose Your Poison", clearly demonstrate the wide ranging and dangerous chemicals contained in cigarettes, focus group participants felt that the dangers from these chemicals were exaggerated in these warnings.

- *You Inhale This Garbage*
- This design tested well and was selected by participants as one of the five most effective tobacco health warnings. While it does not have the shock value of the diseased body parts, people do make the connection between the tar in the gloved hands and the toxic chemicals drawn into a smoker's lungs.
- This warning was not seen an immediate "attention getter." Instead, this warning was seen as a more reflective message that conjured up memories of previous anti-tobacco advertisements.
- *Choose Your Poison*
- "Choose your poison" was rated as one of the least effective warnings tested, largely because this warning was not seen as motivating smokers to quit smoking. The main reason for this perception related to the fact that all of these dangerous chemicals are safely used and stored in the home.

Baby Approach

- The three warnings about smoking killing babies provoked a very strong guilt factor among smokers, especially with older staunch smokers. Younger smokers, in contrast to parents of very young children, did not feel that this message was particularly relevant to them.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – Baby*
- This warning was chosen as one of the five most effective warnings across all focus groups, even among youth groups and staunch smokers. It was also seen as the most effective warning among women.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – Pregnancy*
- Although this message is familiar, it does continue to be a potent warning about the dangers of tobacco. Although this message was seen as effective, it lacked the emotional power of the other health warnings in this approach.
- *Smoking Kills Babies – SIDS*
- This warning was considered to be thought provoking and was seen to provide new information, as many smokers were unaware of the link between smoking and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Although this warning was considered to be educational, a few participants cautioned against using this

message because they believe that it has not been proven conclusively that SIDS is caused by the exposure of children to cigarette smoke.

- Health Canada should also consider that the use of this message may trigger a strong emotional reaction from part of the Canadian public. Health Canada must make a difficult decision between preventing the possibility of new deaths from SIDS and exposing those who have already suffered to a new trauma when considering the use of this message.

Most Effective Designs

- Participants were asked to select the five most effective designs using a two-stage group consensus process. Participants developed a rationale for the choices that supplemented their thinking concerning the effectiveness of individual designs. In this regard, participants were conscious of developing a set of messages that would have broad universal appeal while appealing to specific target groups within the population, such as potential young smokers and parents who smoke.
- Looking at the choices that emerged from this process, we found that there was a tremendous overlap in the choices made by the participants, both in the smaller group discussions and in their choices as a whole.
- The five most effective designs are:
 - Children See, Children Do
 - Mouth Cancer
 - Die Hard
 - Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)
 - You inhale this garbage?
- Despite concerns regarding the quality of the picture, participants were confident that a better, clearer picture could be found to replace the less clear image on “Die Hard.”
- Among youth smokers, the five most effective designs are:
 - Mouth Cancer
 - Die Hard
 - Children See, Children Do
 - Strokes
 - Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)

- As with “Die Hard” in the previous list, younger smokers were confident that a better picture could be easily found to replace the image used in “Strokes.”
- “Strokes,” which was among the five most effective designs for younger smokers, ranked as the sixth most effective design among participants overall. Likewise, “You inhale this garbage,” which was placed among the five most effective designs overall, ranked as the sixth most effective design among younger smokers.
- The selection of the five most effective designs is also consistent among Francophone and Anglophone participants.
- A remarkable consensus exists with regard to the most effective health warning designs that could be employed by Health Canada. As well, there was a strong feeling among participants that many of the other designs tested in these sessions could be effectively employed as health warnings. Even the least effective designs were seen as more effective than the text warnings currently used on tobacco packaging.

Retention of Proposed Health Warnings

- There was high recall of the 14 health warnings that were tested, with a majority of participants being able to remember 10 or more designs. Given that recall of these designs would have been aided by the prior discussion, it should be remembered that this recall test does not simulate the actual level of recall these warnings would obtain in the field.
- The recall of these messages does reinforce the earlier findings that the retention of images was higher than the retention of specific text and that the more startling the image, the higher the likelihood that it would be remembered.

Slide Designs

- Participants saw the slide designs are more positive in tone and more informative than the health warnings used on the package exterior. As well, participants appreciated the inclusion of the Internet site address and the toll-free telephone number on the slide. There was a strong recommendation that these features should be positioned closer to the top of the slide.
- The brief one-line messages that currently appear on the outside of the package “lip” should appear on the inside where they would be more readily visible to smokers reaching for a cigarette.

3.0 Current Message Awareness

There is a high level of awareness of the current health warnings on cigarette packages. When focus group participants were asked if they were able to recall the health warnings that currently appear on tobacco product packages they were able to repeat the wording of a significant number of the existing warnings.

After listing the current health warnings participants were asked to state their views on these warnings. The majority stated that these warning no longer had the power to seize their attention. Many participants stated that the warnings had become virtually invisible. Smokers and non-smokers alike said that the average smoker had become desensitized to these warnings.

Many focus group participants stated that the warnings, which have been on the cigarette packages for a number of years, needed to be revitalized in order to obtain the attention of smokers. The following exchange, which illustrates this point, took place in Toronto among potential quitters when they were asked if they felt that the current messages inform them about the dangers of smoking:

"They're doing a pretty good job. Although I do think that the printing could be larger because I'm often buying packs and not being consciously aware of what the warnings are at this point. Because I'm so used to having it on the package. It's like, it took me a few minutes to think about all the warnings."

"You get desensitized to them after a while ... When they first stated doing it I remember being more aware of them, and thinking "whew" ... but then as, you know, you keep smoking and you get desensitized."

"Yeah, after a while you don't even read them anymore. You just open the pack and start smoking."

In the Ottawa focus group with non-smoking youth, one participant spontaneously mentioned that he had seen the article in the National Post¹ about the upcoming changes to cigarette packaging.

Participant: "I think the new ones they have are going to be far more effective."

Moderator: "Yeah? What are these new ones?"

¹ National Post, Pages D4-D5. Monday, May 31, 1999. The article referred the health warning designs created by the National "Kids or Tobacco" Campaign. Some of these designs are similar to those tested for Health Canada.

Participant: "I don't know... Like, there's one about mouth cancer that I think will stop a lot of girls from smoking, probably more girls than guys. Like, the picture they showed just looks so harmful to your teeth, like the mouth cancer. And then there's one with brain cancer. I don't think that would be too effective because most kids don't think about brain cancer, like that's so far in the future. But then, I don't know, I saw a few in the paper but I don't remember the other ones really. The mouth cancer I think will be really effective for girls, again girls won't want to... well young guys too also."

Both smokers and non-smokers alike feel that they are well-informed about the dangers of smoking. They stated that messages on the dangers of smoking and tobacco products are everywhere. Despite this fact, youth smokers still feel that the dangers will not effect them personally or that the serious health effects of smoking are too distant in the future. They say that they won't be smoking forever and therefore the potential for lung cancer or a stroke caused by smoking is remote.

However, it should be noted that in most of the young smoker sessions, participants readily admitted that they were addicted to smoking and that their first cigarette of the day was consumed within 30 minutes after waking in the morning. As well, many participants in the youth sessions acknowledged that smoking tobacco had a more immediate impact on their lives, both in terms of decreased physical ability and appearance (bad breath, discoloured teeth).

Some smokers in these sessions stated that the current messages generate comment from non-smoking friends and family members regarding their smoking habit. The following exchange, taken from one of the Older Adult sessions in Toronto, provides an example of how smokers deal with peer pressure from non-smoking friends and colleagues triggered by the current warnings.

"And the thing is, with all that writing on the packages, I find if you put your cigarettes down and you have a non-smoker anywhere near you they'll go: "Wow, didn't you read that? Haven't you realized how these things happen to you?" ... Yeah right, than you..."

"No, you put a lighter on top of them."

"I throw them in my bag now so they can't even see what I'm smoking. It's true, people have to make their comments – especially a non-smoker or one that quit."

4.0 Package Testing

In all sessions, a total of 14 package designs were tested. Participants were asked to rate each design on a questionnaire prior to a general discussion of the designs. In this section of the report, we discuss the initial reactions to these designs, the questionnaire results, and specific reaction to the individual designs.

Initial Impressions of the New Health Warnings

There were strong positive reactions to new designs in all groups. Even though a number of people, especially among the Montreal Staunch Smokers, stated that some of the warnings are “disgusting to look at,” there was a strong consensus that the proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current warnings.

Participants discussed the powerful nature of the “blunt” messages. Staunch smokers, especially those in Montreal, were upset by some of these images. However, when pressed, even Staunch Smokers generally agreed that the messages are effective, even if they are disturbing or have the potential to cause uncomfortable conversations when family, friends and colleagues see the new warnings.

There was a much higher acceptance of the more graphic warnings by younger participants than by older people. This may be due to the fact that younger smokers do not necessarily see these warnings as being directed specifically at them. Youth smokers may view the advertisements as having been designed for older smokers because they believe that only older smokers can get lung cancer or be affected by a stroke due to the use of tobacco products. As well, it may be that younger people react more strongly with a message that is more controversial or seen as “breaking the rules.”

There was a strong consensus among the focus group participants that the new messages definitely have the ability to get attention. The addition of pictures was seen as the most significant change from the current health warnings. In many ways, the addition of a powerful graphic image overshadowed the accompanying text. While visual images lend power to these warnings, their use does have implications for the use of text.

These implications became abundantly clear during the group discussions. There were a few designs (“Die Hard”, “Exhausted” and “Strokes”) where the visual image relies on the accompanying text for comprehension. Some participants overlooked the text and unsuccessfully tried to interpret the message from using the picture alone. In the case of “Die Hard” and “Strokes,” a clearer picture would reduce the dependency of these designs on the accompanying text.

In general, those designs that emphasized the use of text were seen as less effective than those where the picture could deliver the message. For example, the design “This year smoking will kill the population of a small city” is a heavily text dependent warning.

Despite the fact that the text clearly states that it refers to Canadian deaths from smoking related illnesses per year, there was confusion as to whether or not the warning applied only to Canada or to the world as a whole.

From previous research, we know that the majority of smokers fall into lower income and education groups, where functional illiteracy tends to be higher than among other socio-economic groups. Text dependent warnings may not have the desired impact on these smokers. Clear visuals, where the picture actually is worth a thousand words, will have the greatest “across the board” impact on the smoking population.

Some participants, primarily in the sessions with older participants, did not feel that the size of the supporting text was large enough to be legible. This factor also had an impact on the effectiveness of text-dependent warnings.

When participants were asked about the size of the warning there was overall agreement that 60 percent of the package was an acceptable size for the health warning labels. It was also felt that there would be enough remaining room on the package for brand trademarks, text and other visual product identifiers.

Both staunch smokers and potential quitters stated that the new messages will lead to even greater social pressure to quit smoking. As mentioned earlier, the current messages already act as a stimulus for non-smoking friends and family members to comment on smoking behaviour. These proposed warnings, especially those that are more graphic in nature, are seen to significantly increase social pressure on smokers.

A number of participants, smokers and non-smokers alike, mentioned the possibility that the introduction of new, more effective warnings may stimulate a market for cigarette cases or covers.

In a few cases, some participants mused about the possibility that these warnings may have an effect contrary to the intended purpose of these warnings. The following exchange took place between participants in the Older Adult Non-Smoker focus group in Ottawa:

“You know with the way I could be when I was a kid, I could see these things becoming collectors items. “Oh, I’ve got the best warning.””

“I’ll trade you!”

“I’ll trade you my ‘can kill you’ for one ‘pregnancy.’”

Despite any of these concerns, however, there was a general feeling that these proposed health warnings would be more effective than the current messages and should be adopted for use.

Quantitative Ratings of Individual Warnings

Participants were given a questionnaire and asked to independently complete an evaluation of each of the proposed health warnings for cigarette packages. They were asked evaluate each warning according to the following five criteria using a scale of one to seven, where “one” is a very low impression and “seven” is a very high impression.

- Educational effectiveness – How well does this design educate or inform you about the health dangers of smoking?
- Credibility – How believable or truthful is the information or the concept presented in the design?
- Memorability – How likely is it that you will remember the message, images or information presented in the design?
- Effectiveness – How effective is the message or information at convincing smokers to quit or cut down on smoking?
- Design appeal – Keeping in mind that the purpose of these messages is to convince you to quit or cut down on smoking, is the design effective? Is it professional? Does it help in getting the message across?

As well, participants were provided an opportunity to give their own comments regarding the individual designs.

The following table provides averages of reactions based on language and smoking behaviour:

Quantitative Ratings of Health Warning Designs							
	Youth Smokers	Youth Non- Smokers	Adult Smokers	Adult Non- Smokers	Montreal All	Toronto & Ottawa	Average
Cigarettes Cause Mouth Cancer	5.1	5.6	4.5	5.2	4.6	5.3	4.7
Children See, Children Do	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.9	4.4
Die Hard Smokers Often Die Hard Deaths	5.1	5.0	4.0	4.7	4.4	4.9	4.4
Cigarettes Cause Strokes	4.7	5.3	4.1	4.9	4.3	4.8	4.3
Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking	4.2	4.8	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.7	4.1
Smoking Kills Babies (Baby)	4.4	5.0	4.1	4.8	4.1	4.7	4.1
Smoking Kills Babies (Crib)	4.3	5.1	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.4	4.0
Cigarettes Kill	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.0
You Inhale This Garbage?	4.7	4.8	3.7	3.7	4.0	4.4	3.9
This Year Smoking Will Kill Off The Population Of A Small City	4.3	4.3	4.0	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.9
Kiss Me	4.1	4.6	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.0	3.8
Choose Your Poison	4.3	4.6	3.4	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.8
Smoking Leaves You Exhausted	3.7	4.0	3.8	4.7	3.8	4.0	3.6

It should be noted that non-smokers and potential quitters provide higher ratings than staunch smokers do for each of the health warnings tested in these sessions. As well, younger participants and women tend to provide higher ratings than do older participants and men.

Reactions to Individual Designs

The saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” is applicable to the effectiveness of the tobacco warnings tested during this focus group exercise. The warnings that generated the highest level of positive interest tend to be the ones that rely on a visual, rather than a textual, approach. As has been determined in earlier quantitative studies, smokers are over-represented among the lower education groups. Therefore, a high level of literacy among all smokers cannot be expected. To effectively communicate to all smokers, emphasis should be placed on the image carrying the message.

Given the similarities between several of the designs that were tested, they have been grouped into different approaches for the purposes of analysis.

The “Shocking” Approach

Overall, the three warnings that graphically depict the impact of tobacco use on the human body attracted the most attention and provoked the most discussion among participants. In some sessions, smokers stated that they would ask the store clerk for a different package if they were given one with these images. Despite, or perhaps due to this strong negative reaction, smokers and non-smokers regardless of age provided high ratings to all three of these designs. As well, these health warnings appear among the five most effective designs selected by participants overall and by youth smokers for use by Health Canada.

Mouth Cancer

In the individual rating process using the questionnaire, the warning “Mouth Cancer” advertisement was rated in the top six by all groups. In fact, this warning was the top-rated item in six of the thirteen groups. This warning, which employs a mouth ravaged by cancer, received top marks from both youth smoker groups in Toronto, both non-smoking groups in Ottawa, one of the youth smoker groups in Ottawa and from potential quitters over the age of 20 in Montreal.

This design was the most effective visual image of the three warnings featuring diseased body parts. Not all interview participants were able to readily identify the diseased body parts used in the other designs or knew what a healthy lung or brain looks like. Many participants found the image very powerful, although many described it as disturbing.

The mouth cancer image is thought provoking. It grabs your attention. Many smokers, especially those participants in the staunch smoker sessions, stated that they would not buy a package of cigarettes with that warning on it – they would ask for a different package because the image is too disturbing for them. As one staunch smoker in the Toronto youth session stated:

“That one with the mouth on it, I think that one is effective, because when you put (a cigarette) to your mouth, (you’re) going to say: “Oh god, I am going to totally look like that.”

The credibility of the mouth cancer design was called into question in a few of the focus group sessions. Potential Quitters in Montreal questioned its credibility saying that good oral hygiene would prevent mouth cancer, while participants in other sessions stated that it would have no impact on those who wear dentures.

In a number of the youth smoking groups, getting mouth cancer from smoking was described as being a remote possibility. These smokers stated that they believe that mouth cancer is more likely to happen to people who chew tobacco than to those who smoke cigarettes. As one young smoker in Ottawa stated:

“Like, is this for any tobacco product or just smoking? Like chewing tobacco or Dip or Score or something like that, like if you smoke and you use Dip then you’d start to think right away ‘Oh Dip, like... like everyone knows that destroys your gums.’ So you’re going to think right away mouth cancer. I don’t like it if it’s just... are these going... are these important just stop smokers from smoking or is it to stop people from doing other tobacco products?”

All of these “denial” statements indicate that significant pockets of smokers do not understand the connection between tobacco smoking and mouth cancer. Despite some questioning of the credibility of this design, mouth cancer was the number one choice among youth participants and in the top three among all groups with regard to the five most effective designs.

Die Hard Smokers Die Hard Deaths

This warning showed the impact of tobacco use on the human lung. Despite some difficulty in determining what the image depicted, this image was viewed as being very credible. Most smokers and non-smokers are aware that smoking will have a detrimental impact on a smoker’s lungs and that it can lead to lung cancer. Despite some intense efforts to discount this message from pockets of staunch smokers, all groups rated this message in the top six most effective designs, including those who were most critical of this image - the staunch smokers in Montreal.

A number of people in the English-language sessions felt that the title of the message was too glib. As well, the play on words was lost on many other participants in these sessions. A few participants felt that the reference to “die hard smokers” excluded those who only smoke half a package of cigarettes a day or less. The following excerpt from the youth potential quitters’ session in Toronto expresses this point of view:

“...I have a problem with this, I don’t know, but it makes you think that they’re smoking a lot, and it’s like well I only smoke a half a pack a day, or I smoke one pack a day, right, like what do they mean as like “die hard” smokers? They’re trying too hard to make it catchy but it only takes away... it’s tacky.”

In almost every focus group, participants discussed the need for a more understandable visual image. Currently the warning depicts a deceased lung. Many participants do not have an adequate frame of reference to fully understand what they were being shown – especially at such close range. The lung was not immediately identifiable as such and relied on the accompanying text for identification. Even for those who read the caption, the impact was diminished because they did not know what a healthy lung looks like.

Many participants recommended that the visual used in this health warning be changed to include both a healthy and a cancer riddled lung.

Cigarettes Cause Strokes

This warning was also included in the overall top six warnings by the focus group participants. As was the case with the “Die Hard Smokers” message, participants suggested that the visual be improved, as many were not able to identify the photographic subject matter as being part of a human brain.

This warning also received high overall rating despite some resistance from staunch smokers. These individuals in Montreal stated that the photograph was in bad taste and gave the message low ratings on its ability to attract attention. The apparent contradictions in these statements suggest that this image touches a deep nerve among these participants.

Some of the staunch smokers in Montreal also stated that this warning would not convince smokers to quit.

Many young people in both the smoking and non-smoking sessions said that, while they are aware of a variety of health impacts as a result of smoking, they were not aware that smoking could cause strokes. One of the reasons why youth smokers gave higher ratings to this warning may be due to the new information they felt that they were receiving.

Children Approach

Parents who smoke, as well as smokers who are around other people’s children, are the ideal targets for tobacco warnings involving children. Many smokers feel that smoking is a personal choice that, as adults, they are free to make. However, when their smoking behaviour unintentionally influences young children to take up smoking or

imposes a negative health impact on children, the smoker may reconsider their decision to smoke.

The two new health warnings featuring children are viewed as credible and strike an emotional cord because they involve one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. Many people, including many smokers, believe that parents should act as role models and should not smoke in front of their children or other people's children. In fact, many smokers made a point of saying that they do not smoke in the house or in front of their children. While this action may prevent their children from being affected by second-hand smoke, some of these smokers feel that this action also advertises the problem of acting as a negative role model.

Children See, Children Do

The "Children See, Children Do" warning design was viewed as effective among all age groups. Although this warning received higher ratings from the adult groups than youth participants, even the youth sessions included this warning in their selection of the five most effective designs.

This approach was seen as honest, efficient and in good taste. This warning also struck an emotional cord among those individuals who started smoking by imitating their parents. One young woman in the Ottawa session, who stated that her father smoked and she would quit if she could, stated that this advertisement really hit home for her because she doesn't want her younger sister to start smoking.

Moderator – "Now, do any of you have any younger brothers or sister?"

"Yeah"

Moderator – "Are you worried about them following your lead at all?"

"I don't want my sister smoking. If I ever catch her with a cigarette she is going to be eating it."

As well, there was one young man in the Toronto Potential Quitters session who strongly objected to this design in the overall group exercise to select the five most effective designs. Upon further probing, it was revealed that he was expressing personal anxiety about the influence that he, as a smoker, might have on convincing his younger siblings to take up smoking.

There was some discussion about the appropriateness of the picture used in this message. There were minor concerns that the image of an attractive child smiling while holding a cigarette glamorizes smoking. This point was raised in a few sessions and the

ensuing discussion resulted in agreement to stick with the image that was tested. Although younger smokers were more likely to express concern about the possible encouragement this image might provide and expressed a desire for a more “bedraggled” child, older smokers were more insistent that the current image be used. These participants felt that all smokers would be able to relate to a more attractive child whereas the less attractive child might not have the same emotional connection for the same reasons and would be easier to discount as “not my child.”

Your Children Are Sick Of Your Smoking

Smokers do not always care about the effect that smoking has on their own health but, as noted earlier, many are sensitive to making other people pay for their habit with their health. This appears to be one of the underlying strengths of the warning “Your Children are Sick of Your Smoking.”

During the individual rating exercise, participants in over half of the focus groups rated this message in their top six messages, including all groups in Toronto and all ages of smokers in Montreal. As with the previous health warning, this message was more important for older rather than younger smokers. Many of the youth smokers felt that, since the overwhelming majority of them do not have children, this message was not targeted to them and, therefore, was irrelevant to their lives. However, a few youth smokers did discuss the health impact that their parents’ smoking had on their own lives.

Those who did not give this warning a high rating explained that they felt that pollution and environmental allergies have a greater likelihood of causing asthmatic reactions in children than being exposed to second hand smoke. A few participants in Montreal also said that only very heavy smoking in the proximity of children could cause asthma and this entire problem would be avoided by not smoking in front of their children.

Positive Approach

Smoking Leaves You Exhausted

Participant reactions to this health warning are a perfect example of the need for the warning’s image to carry the message. In the group discussions following the introduction of the designs, participants did not recall the link between carbon monoxide in car exhaust and in cigarette smoke. They picked up on the “exhausted” idea but mainly related it to their reduced ability to climb stairs or participate in group sports activities. As one adult staunch smoker in Toronto put it:

"I think the design for that one should be oriented to health. Because when I read it on the page I'm like yeah, its true. You know what (it) is saying is absolutely right, you get tired. But when I saw the picture of the car, I'm like what does the car have to do with it? They are talking about health...."

The message was seen as having low overall effectiveness with youth smokers because they still have a lot of energy, although a number of youth smokers did acknowledge the impact that smoking is having on their physical performance. Adult smokers also questioned the seriousness of the message and its effectiveness, as one adult staunch smoker in Toronto put it:

"It's not really effective. It says smoking leaves you exhausted (but) people aren't scared of being tired, they're scared about dying."

Many participants thought that the health warning should be clearer in its approach, either focusing on decreased physical performance or on the toxic constituents within tobacco.

As well, there is a sense that the health warnings should not be "flippant" in their approach. Just as with the "Die Hard" health warning, there is a general feeling among participants that the health impacts of tobacco is a serious issue that needs to be taken seriously.

Social Stigma Approach

Kiss Me

The "Kiss Me" warning, with the attractive young woman licking an ashtray, resulted in mixed reactions from focus group participants. In Montreal, staunch smokers and teen non-smokers placed this warning in the top five most effective design category. However, this health warning did not receive the same positive endorsement by a majority of participants overall.

Among supporters of this health warning, the humorous approach was seen as refreshing in comparison with other, more sinister messages and humour was seen as enhancing the message's ability to attract attention and encourage message retention. While they perceived the approach to be new and refreshing because of the humour, the actual information it communicated was not seen as new.

Toronto and Ottawa focus group participants did not discuss the humorous aspects of this warning as much as Montreal participants. Considerably more English-speaking participants felt that the picture was in poor taste. They felt having a pretty young woman licking an astray had other connotations besides the overt message that

smoking makes your mouth taste like an ashtray. Many people suggested that, if Health Canada wanted to go ahead with this approach, that multiple images with people of all ages and both genders would mitigate any concerns that the image is sexually exploitative.

A number of groups selected this image as part of their top five images in the breakout group exercises. However, this health warning rarely was made the final list, except among the non-smoking participants. The idea that smoking can negatively impact your sex life was seen as a good reason to have this warning on cigarette packages. The fact that this sort of logic was being used was clear when one potential quitter in Toronto tried to explain why his group as put the “Kiss Me” warning on their top five list:

“Well, we liked “Kiss Me” because, you know, you’re saying “Kiss Me” ... you are coming out and its going to effect your sexual activity.”

Smokers as a Whole Approach

Given the numbers quoted in the “This Year Smoking Will Kill Off The Population of a Small City” and the bottom-line tone of the “Cigarettes Kill” design, these two health warnings place the dangers of smoking in a significantly broader perspective than the other designs tested in these sessions. Many participants stated that pulling the issue away from one individual smoker to smokers in general and their families had an eye-opening effect. Many focus group participants also felt that the alarming and dramatic tone of these two warnings contributed to their eye-opening effect.

Cigarettes Kill

Many people liked the straightforward, bottom line nature of this health warning: You smoke, you die. However, many felt that the picture did not do the message justice. Many participants, especially young people, felt that the image used in this message lacked realism and they would preferred a more graphic or blunt visual message. An example of this is provided in the following exchange between youth smokers in Ottawa:

“(It’s) not graphic enough.”

Moderator – “Not graphic enough? How would you improve this one to make it more effective?”

“A grave”

“A grave, yeah.”

“A body bag.”

“A thing being buried... a coffin being buried.”

“With a husband crying or something.”

“A guy being buried with the grave scene with their child standing there crying.”

As well, younger smokers made comments that the bedside scene featured in this warning was “Too ER” or resembled a scene from a soap opera. However, older participants, who were more likely to have personal experience with dying persons, were more convinced about the effectiveness of this design and thought that only minor adjustments (the addition of nearby medical equipment or breathing apparatus) were needed.

While the information highlighted in this warning was not seen as providing new information or being particularly original, large numbers of participants found it poignant. All self-aware smokers know that they run the risk of developing cancer if they smoke. Very rarely do smokers think about how cancer treatment or their death from tobacco related diseases would impact their family. For anyone who has lived through that traumatic experience, this warning is very powerful, unfortunately many smokers stated that this sort of advertising will not motivate them to quit smoking.

This Year Smoking Will Kill Off A Small City

The chief asset of this health warning is that it presents new information for many of the focus group participants. However, this warning is text dependent, and as such, was not as effective as other more visual designs.

While all participants had an opportunity to closely examine each design, many did not retain the fact that the figure of 45,000 deaths referred to the number of smoking related deaths in Canada per year, as was presented in the text.

As well, the bars in the bar chart were the same colour with the exception of the bar representing tobacco-related deaths, with the effect that many people did not realize that the bottom bar represented the 45,000 smoking deaths. Once this was clarified, focus group participants recommended that all the bars in the chart be the same colour or that some other design technique be employed so that the viewer's eye would not skip over the most important information.

Staunch smokers in Montreal stated that this message did not have the same impact as the ones that showed how cancer could effect their bodies. Upon further probing, it was revealed that these individuals are more afraid of *suffering* from a smoking related illness than from *dying* from it. For them, the statistics were too far removed from the physical or emotional pain of severe illness.

Chemical Approach

While both designs, “You Inhale this Garbage” and “Choose Your Poison”, clearly demonstrate the wide ranging and dangerous chemicals contained in cigarettes, focus group participants felt that the dangers from these chemicals were exaggerated in these warnings.

You Inhale This Garbage

This design tested well and was selected by participants as one of the five most effective tobacco health warnings. While it does not have the shock value of the diseased body parts, people do make the connection between the tar in the gloved hands and the toxic chemicals drawn into a smoker’s lungs. As one non-smoker put it:

“You Inhale this Garbage, I found to be the most effective (design) because, I mean, you actually see ... what you are inhaling. ... I don’t know, it is just really disgusting to me.”

This warning was not seen as an immediate “attention getter.” It was seen as a more reflective message that conjured up memories of previous anti-tobacco advertisements, such as the Cocktail ad and the Government of Ontario advertisement featuring young people diving into a tank of industrial effluent. Potential quitters in both the youth and adult groups in Toronto found the warning’s educational element highly effective:

Moderator – “Why would this look effective then?”

“Well, because it makes you realize what you are actually doing by smoking...”

“You need a visual image of what tar is ... you hear about it, ...but you don’t visualize tar. You just read it on your package in milligrams.” (Adult session)

“For the “you inhale this garbage”, seeing that someone has to put gloves on to touch it and like, and you are putting that in your body! I know we thought that pack was effective.” (Youth session)

Choose Your Poison

“Choose your poison” was rated as one of the least effective warnings tested, largely because this warning was not seen as motivating smokers to quit smoking. The main reason for this perception related to the fact that all of these dangerous chemicals are

safely used and stored in the home. Granted, smokers inhale these products when they smoke and this is not the case through normal household usage, however, the warning did not strike a cord with focus group participants. A different visual might be found to be more acceptable if it were based on the same idea as the more effective “You Inhale This Garbage” health warning.

Baby Approach

The three warnings about smoking killing babies provoked a very strong feelings of guilt among smokers, especially with older staunch smokers. Younger smokers, in contrast to parents of very young children, did not feel that this message was particularly relevant to them. In fact, a number of men joked that if these warnings were put on packages they would request packages with these warnings when purchasing cigarettes because, like some of the current health warnings, this warning does not directly impact them.

Smoking Kills Babies – Baby

This warning was chosen as one of the five most effective warnings across all focus groups, even among youth groups and staunch smokers. It was also seen as the most effective warning with women. Guilt is extremely influential; as one young woman put it: “You see the baby and right away you think ‘I’m a murderer!’”

In previous qualitative research undertaken by Environics for Health Canada, this warning was tested with the image of a smiling baby. A number of participants in those sessions suggested that the message would have a greater impact if the child were crying. They felt that a crying baby would increase the observer’s view that the child was in some sort of pain or danger. The strong endorsement that this altered design achieved in the more recent session confirms that this change strengthened the effectiveness of this health warning.

Smoking Kills Babies – Pregnancy

Although this message is familiar, it does continue to be a potent warning about the dangers of tobacco. It is an effective message for women and there was almost unanimous agreement in all sessions that it is credible. Reaction to the visual differed in Ottawa and Montreal. Montreal participants felt that the empty crib reduced the guilt factor while Ottawa participants felt that the empty crib was effective and that a crib with a more “abandoned” feel to it would have an even greater impact.

Although this message was seen as effective, it lacked the emotional power of the other health warnings in this approach.

Smoking Kills Babies – SIDS

This warning was considered to be thought provoking and was seen to provide new information, as many smokers were unaware of the link between smoking and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Although this warning was considered to be educational, a few participants cautioned against using this message because they believe that it has not been proven conclusively that SIDS is caused by children being exposed to cigarette smoke.

Health Canada should also consider that the use of this message may trigger a strong emotional reaction from part of the Canadian public. Most parents who have had a child die of SIDS feel a tremendous amount of guilt. Although there is statistical confirmation of the link between cigarette smoking and SIDS, many Canadians may not see the causal link in their own experience. Further, as one non-smoking Ottawa participant commented in an eloquent and moving speech, smokers who already had a child die of SIDS continue to bear the guilt and doubt many years after the event.

Others commented that this health warning might open up old wounds for people who didn't even smoke around their child but had one die of SIDS anyway. In any case, Health Canada must make a difficult decision between preventing the possibility of new deaths and subjecting those who have already suffered to a new trauma, when considering the use of this message.

5.0 Most Effective Designs

After they had a chance to comment on the designs, participants were asked to select the five most effective designs. This was accomplished through a two-stage process. Initially, participants were divided into three groups. Each group was asked to select the five most effective designs using a group consensus process. Once these selections were completed, the results were presented all participants with each group asked to explain the rationale behind their choices. Then the participants, using the same group consensus process, had to determine the five most effective designs.

In most cases, participants developed a rationale for the choices that supplemented their thinking concerning the effectiveness of individual designs. In this regard, participants were conscious of developing a set of messages that would have broad universal appeal while appealing to specific target groups within the population, such as potential young smokers and parents who smoke.

Looking at the choices that emerged from this process, we found that there was a tremendous overlap in the choices made by the participants, both in the smaller group discussions and in their choices as a whole. The five most effective designs are:

- Children See, Children Do
- Mouth Cancer
- Die Hard
- Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)
- You inhale this garbage?

Participants selected “Die Hard” despite concerns regarding the quality of the picture. However, they were confident that a better, clearer picture could be found to replace the less clear image that was tested.

Reducing smoking among youth people is one of the priorities for Canada’s anti-tobacco strategy. Looking that the five most effective designs selected by younger smokers, we find that four of the five choices selected by participants as a whole also appear on this list. These designs are:

- Mouth Cancer
- Die Hard
- Children See, Children Do
- Strokes
- Smoking Kills Babies (Baby – SIDS)

As with “Die Hard” in the previous list, younger smokers were confident that a better picture could be easily found to replace the image used in “Strokes.”

It is important to note that “Strokes,” which was among the five most effective designs for younger smokers, ranked as the sixth most effective design among participants overall. Likewise, “You inhale this garbage,” which was placed among the five most effective designs overall, ranked as the sixth most effective design among younger smokers.

Further, it should be noted that the selection of the five most effective designs is also consistent among Francophone and Anglophone participants.

A remarkable consensus exists with regard to the most effective health warning designs that could be employed by Health Canada. As well, there was a strong feeling among participants that many of the other designs tested in these sessions could be effectively employed as health warnings. Even the least effective designs were seen as more effective than the text warnings currently used on tobacco packaging.

6.0 Retention of Proposed Health Warnings

Toward the end of each session, participants were asked write down as many of the health warnings that they could remember from the previous discussion. The moderators took care to remove any flipcharts or other material that would remind participants of the warnings they had been discussing prior to introducing this topic. As well, another topic related to smoking was briefly discussed in order to put some “distance” between the health warnings and the recall test.

In general, there was high recall of the 14 health warnings that we tested, with a majority of participants being able to remember 10 or more designs. Given that recall of these designs would have been aided by the prior discussion, it should be remembered that this recall test does not simulate the actual level of recall these warnings would obtain in the field.

However, the recall of these messages does reinforce some of the earlier findings discussed in this report. Namely, that the retention of images was higher than the retention of specific text and, that the more startling the image, the higher the likelihood that it would be remembered.

7.0 Slide Designs

Although they were not the focus of the focus group sessions, a number of participants provided reactions to the designs developed for use on the interior “slide” of the cigarette package.

In general, participants saw the slide designs are more positive in tone and more informative than the health warnings used on the package exterior. Most participants were unaware of the information presented on the slide and were surprised about some of the immediate benefits of quitting smoking.

As well, participants appreciated the inclusion of the Internet site address and the toll-free telephone number on the slide. There was a strong recommendation that these features should be positioned closer to the top of the slide.

As well, there were comments that the brief one-line messages that currently appear on the outside of the package “lip” should appear on the inside where they would be more readily visible to smokers reaching for a cigarette.

A number of participants expressed a concern about the visibility of the slide design or the willingness of smokers to read the text. Given the literacy concerns highlighted earlier, these points may be very valid. However, a majority of participants, smokers and non-smokers alike, thought that the slide could be used to provide information.

8.0 Conclusions

The proposed designs are seen as an effective way to revitalize the current health warnings that appear on tobacco packaging. Whereas the current design is almost invisible due to familiarity and the black and white designs, the colourful and occasionally startling images have the ability to seize attention from smokers and non-smokers alike.

The new warnings received spontaneous approval from many participants. Although there is clear guidance on the designs that are seen to be most effective, Health Canada has a great deal of flexibility with regard to the final set of designs that could be used. In fact, all of the designs tested in these sessions were seen as more effective than the warnings that are currently in use.

However, it is clear that the images used on these warnings must be able to convey the message without dependency on the text. Text can play a useful supporting role.

Further, we find that Health Canada should not shy away from blunt or graphic images. However, these images must be rooted in reality rather than employ sensationalism just for the sake of grabbing attention.

These designs, especially those employing graphic images, were seen as increasing social pressure on smokers to quit or cut down on their smoking. However, a number of smokers who participated in these sessions commented that the designs would be effective on their own as a stimulus to reduce consumption.

Finally, the size of the health warnings tested in these sessions (60 percent) was seen to allow sufficient space for brand trademarks, text and other identifiers used by the industry to distinguish their products.

9.0 Appendix A – Moderator's Guide

Health Warning Design Testing PN 4506 MODERATOR'S GUIDE

Introduction **10 Minutes 0:00**

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Environics Research Group Ltd, a national public opinion research firm.

- We do telephone surveys - from time to time, we do focus groups. Focus groups allow us to get more detail on topics and issues than we can from telephone surveys (thoughts, feelings and opinions)

We are not here to reach a consensus. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate. There are no right or wrong answers - you help me by giving me your opinions, thoughts and ideas. It is important to respect the view of others in the room. We can disagree without being disagreeable.

This meeting will be tape-recorded in order to help me write my report later. Indicate that there are observers (if any) behind the one-way mirror. Everything discussed here will be kept in complete confidentiality - no names will be attached to the results in any way. Feel free to use your first name only.

We are going to be talking today about something that you all should be familiar with – the design of the health warning labels that appear on cigarette packages and the packages of other tobacco products. *Please do not refer to any packages that you might have at hand.*

- *Round-table introductions.* Let's go around the table so that each of you can tell us your name and a little bit about yourself, such as where you work, your hobbies and if you have a family?

Current Message Awareness **5 Minutes 0:10**

- Once again, do not refer to any packages that you might have at hand. Can anyone tell me the health warning messages that currently appear on tobacco product packages? Are there any others?
- In general, do you feel you are well informed or not well informed about the dangers of smoking from these messages?

Packaging Tests **50 Minutes 0:15**

- I am now going to show you some package designs that include new health messages. First, I am going to distribute a questionnaire so that you can rate each of these designs. I would like to ask you to hold your comments until everyone has had a chance to complete the questionnaire.
- We will be looking at 12 designs in total. For each design, write the name of the design (which I will provide you) in the space provided on the sheets. Using a scale of one to seven, where “one” is very low and “seven” is very high, you will be rating each design according to five criteria:
 - Educational effectiveness – How well does this design educate or inform you about the health dangers of smoking?
 - Credibility – How believable or truthful is the information or the concept presented in the design?
 - Memorability – How likely is it that you will remember the message, images or information presented in the design?
 - Effectiveness – How effective is the message or information at convincing smokers to quit or cut down on smoking?
 - Design appeal – Keeping in mind that the purpose of these messages is to convince you to quit or cut down on smoking, is the design effective? Is it professional? Does it help in getting the message across?
- Feel free to write any additional comments that you might have on the specific design in the space provided.
- I will now take you through these designs.

- After All Questionnaires Completed -

- What are your initial impressions of these designs?
 - Overall, what designs were most effective? Why?
 - What designs were least effective? Why?
 - How would you improve these designs?

Breakout Group Exercise **30 Minutes** **1:05**

- I am going to divide you into three groups [Make assignments, ensure a roughly equal mix of gender and age].
- In each of your groups, I would like you to decide which **five** designs are the most effective overall. As well, I would like you to decide which **single** design is the most effective overall.
- **Everyone** in your group must agree as to the five designs that make it on to the list, as well as the best overall design.
- You have 15 minutes to reach a decision.
- [As decisions are made, list on flip chart. Proceed once all decisions are listed]
- Perhaps you should tell us how you arrived at these decisions?

Group Exercise **20 minutes** **1:35**

- Now we are going to go through this process again, but as a group.
- First, can we agree that those designs that appear on all our lists automatically goes on the final list? Let's get our five top designs first and then decide which is best overall.
- [Once final list is decided] How do you feel about this list of designs?
- How would your friends who smoke react to these designs?
 - How about your non-smoking friends?

Wrap-up **5 Minutes** **1:55**

- [Collect all designs] To conclude our session, I have one more question for you. Once again, I would like you to hold your comments. On the paper you have in front of you, I would like to ask you to write down as many of the **new** messages or designs as you can remember – try to write down at least one. General wording will do.
- Going around the table, I would like to briefly hear what you have remembered.
- You have all worked very hard this evening. Thank you very much for your participation.

Rating the Designs

Design #1

Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High

Comments:

Design #2

Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High

Comments:

Design #3

Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High

Comments:

Design #4

Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High

Comments:

Design #5

Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High

Comments:

Design #6							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #7							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #8							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #9							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #10							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							

Design #11							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							
Design #12							
Educational	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Credibility	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Memorability	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Effectiveness	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Design Appeal	Low 1	2	3	4	5	6	7High
Comments:							

Of the designs presented, which five are the most effective overall?

Most Effective:



Erreur : Impossible de stocker la tâche au niveau de l'imprimante

Cause : Disque absent ou saturé.

Solution : Ajouter un disque (disque dur EIO ou RAM) ou supprimer des fichiers.