

احترس
التدخين يدمر الصحة
ويسبب الوفاة

قطران 6 مع
نيكوتين 0.6 مع
أول أكسيد الكربون
مع 7
Tar 6mg
Nicotine 0.6mg
Carbon Monoxide
7mg

تاريخ التصنيع

Prod. date

للبالغين فقط

For Adults Only

3/03 . 3/3

تحذير وزارة الصحة
التدخين ضار بالصحة
MINISTRY OF HEALTH WARNING
SMOKING SERIOUSLY AFFECTS HEALTH

WARNING: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS
TO HEALTH – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

تحذير وزارة الصحة
التدخين ضار بالصحة

صحتك
تصحت

WARNING
WARNING
WARNING

**TOBACCO
PACKAGE
LABELLING**

and

**HEALTH
WARNING
SYSTEMS**

LEAVE YOU
DEATH



World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

**TOBACCO PACKAGE LABELLING
and
HEALTH WARNING SYSTEMS**



World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
Cairo, Egypt
2004

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Tobacco package labelling and health warning systems
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Introduction

The subject of tobacco product labelling and health warning systems is a central issue in the struggle for tobacco control. With the introduction of tobacco advertising bans, tobacco manufacturers are focusing greater attention on tobacco packaging. Tobacco control proponents are also giving greater attention to packaging, as health warnings placed on cigarette packages have been demonstrated to be effective in discouraging smoking.

Recent achievements in this area are raising the profile of tobacco control efforts. Over the past several years a number of countries have introduced health warnings on tobacco packaging, some with remarkable success. In May 2003, 192 Member States of WHO unanimously adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), a global treaty aimed at curbing tobacco-related death and disease.

To date, progress in the field of health warnings in the Eastern Mediterranean Region has been variable. Remarkable success has been achieved in some instances; however, much work remains to be done.

Health warnings in countries of the Region

Current situation

Health warnings on the packages of tobacco products have been introduced in many countries in the Region. Although the inclusion of any type health warning on tobacco packaging represents progress in tobacco control, serious challenges remain. Most of the current health warnings are inadequate, and legislation mandating the listing of tar and nicotine content is absent in many countries. Moreover, the adoption of more effective health warning systems is being obstructed by the lobbying efforts of tobacco companies, their agents and representatives. At the same time, tobacco companies continue to try to circumvent existing laws.





Problems with existing health warnings in the Region

Health warnings on cigarette packs in the Region¹ fall into three categories, based on their position and size on the pack: a) warnings on the side of the cigarette pack; b) warnings on the major face (front or back) of the cigarette pack that are less than 30% of the face area; and c) warnings on the major face (front or back) of the cigarette pack that are 30% or more of the face area.

a) Warnings on the side of the cigarette pack

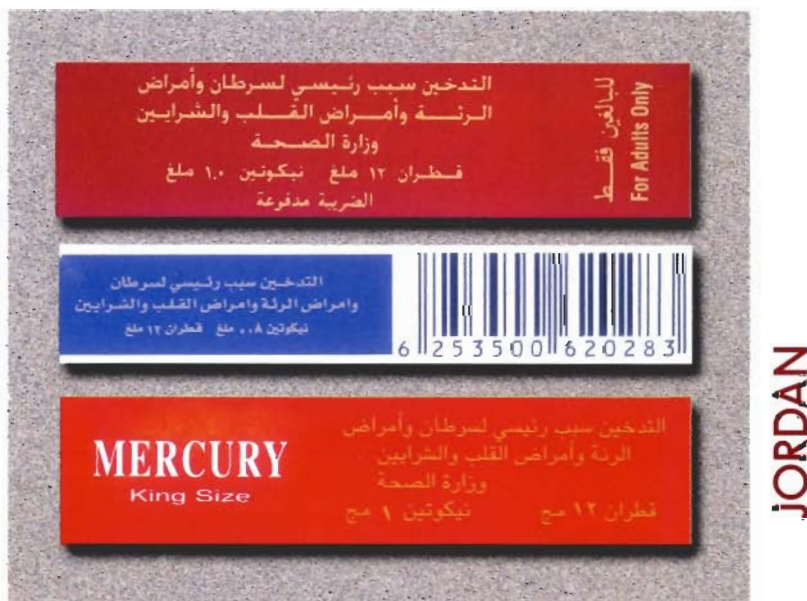
- Lettering is too small (Djibouti, Jordan and Yemen).
- Lettering is camouflaged or hidden by using the same colour as the trade name, a colour similar or close to that of the background, a colour resembling the trademark or other lines and forms on the pack, or is obscured by placement next to larger words or marks. (Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Pakistan, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen).



¹ This discussion only includes warnings on packs sent to the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (WHO/EMRO) from its respective Member States. One pack, from Somalia, did not include any health warning.

- A language other than the country's official or spoken language(s) is used (Djibouti and Somalia).
- Warnings contain lengthy introductions and references to health authorities (Djibouti, Lebanon, Somalia and Sudan).
- Visibility is poor:
 - easily obscured
 - indistinguishable from the trademark or colour of the pack
 - offers limited space for information
 - usually hidden in retail display.

With the exception of Jordan and Yemen, countries that use side-of-the-pack warnings do not list tar or nicotine content on the pack, nor do they list any other contents, emissions or toxins.



b) Warnings on the major face (front or back) of the cigarette pack that are less than 30% of the pack area

This system achieves better overall visibility than the side-of-the-pack system; however, further improvements are needed to resolve the following problems:

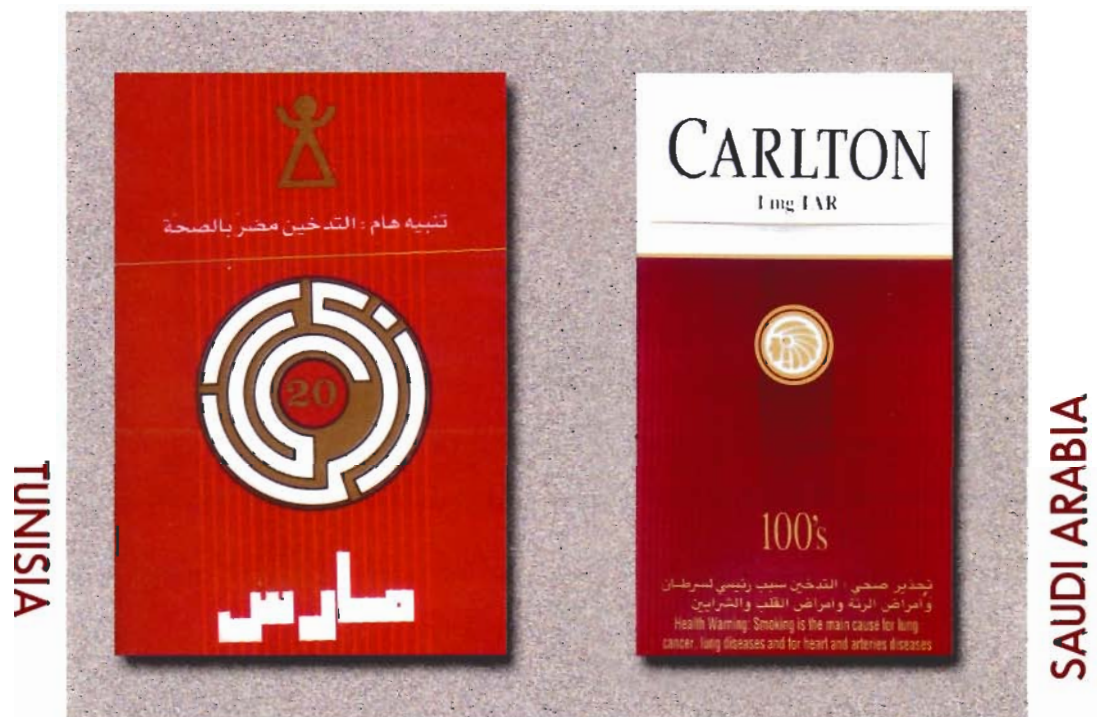
- The warning is placed on the bottom portion of the pack in all the countries that employ or mandate this type of warning system (Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia). This type of system is sometimes used in Djibouti, with the warnings placed on the bottom portion. In Tunisia, the warning is occasionally placed at the top.





- Lettering is small to very small (Oman, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia).
- Visibility is poor due to colour choice (Saudi Arabia); the colour of lettering being the same as the trademark and trade name (Oman and Tunisia); the colour of the lettering being similar to the colour of other nearby words (Bahrain and Djibouti).
- The background of the warning is the same as the rest of the pack, that is, the trade colour of the brand.
- The soft pack has no dominant side.
- For one brand of cigarettes, the warning was placed in very small lettering on a small label affixed to the pack at the top (Tunisia).

The countries that consistently apply this system, Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia, all list tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide content (except in Bahrain, where carbon monoxide is not always listed). Other contents, emissions or toxins are not listed. In Tunisia, only tar and nicotine are listed.



- the colour of lettering being the same as the trademark and trade name

- Lettering is small to very small

c) Warnings on the major face (front or back) of the cigarette pack, at 30% of the pack area

This type of warning system is used only in one country of the Region, Egypt, and has only recently been implemented. It is one of the most significant developments in the area of cigarette package health warnings in the Region. Efforts to improve the warning system, and to prevent tobacco companies from circumventing it, are continuing.

Areas for future improvement to add to the systems' effectiveness would be:

- The warning is currently at the bottom of the major face of the pack.
- The background of the warning is the same colour as the rest of the pack, that is, the trade colour of the brand.
- The lettering of the warning, in some brands, is the same colour as that of the trade name.
- Placing the warning on only one side of the pack affects its impact. In soft packs, where there is no dominant side, the warning's effect is further attenuated.
- Only tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide content are listed.



EGYPT





Examples of successful health warnings in countries outside the Region

Canada

Overview

The Canadian cigarette package warning system has evolved over recent years to emerge as a model for effective messaging. This warning system has captured international attention for its content, form and effectiveness, and set global precedents in more than one area. The system includes two types of warning.



CANADA

- **Exterior warning:** Regulations require that cigarette packs contain one of 16 rotated warnings, which use full colour, pictures and graphics. Warnings occupy the upper 50% of both of the principal display surfaces of each package, in English on one side and in French on the other (Canada's two official languages).
- **Interior warning:** It consists of one of 16 rotated messages on either an insert, for the flip-top pack, or on the "slide" of the "slide and shell" pack. Currently, these warnings are limited to highlighted text messages.

Elements

- **Messaging:** Interior and exterior warnings address specific risks on a rotating basis.
- **Marker words:** Appropriate marker words, such as WARNING, are used.
- **Attributions and extraneous messaging:** The name of the authority to which the health warning is attributed appears inconspicuously, in small typeface, below the health warning.

- **Wear-out:** The Government of Canada has committed to changing and refreshing the warnings within three years of the time of their enactment.
- **Toxic constituent panel:** One side panel of each package carries information about machine-measured yields of various smoke constituents. Toxins currently listed are tar, carbon monoxide, nicotine and the recently added benzene, hydrogen cyanide and formaldehyde.

Impact

A significant number of smokers and recent ex-smokers report that the new warnings were “**a factor**” or “**a major factor**” in motivating a recent quit attempt. Surveys have shown that the warnings continue to attract attention and rate highly as a source of health information months after being on the market. Important elements of the success of these warnings include the following:

- Warnings comprise 50% of the areas of both major faces;
- Warnings occupy the upper portion of both faces;
- Warnings are not obscured or camouflaged by the package colours;
- Warnings identify a causal relationship between disease and the tobacco product itself, rather than the behaviour of the individual (smoking);
- Warnings are large, with pictures and graphics;
- Messages are emotive and personalized rather than impersonal or statistics-based;
- Messages about risks involving physical appearance have greater impact;
- Positive cessation-related messages, with strong risk messages, are more effective.





Brazil

Brazil has become only the second country in the world, following Canada, to introduce health warnings accompanied by pictures on tobacco product packages. In legislation passed in May 2001, the tobacco industry was given until the end of January 2002 to comply.

Another noteworthy feature of the Brazilian warnings is inclusion of the statement "There are no safe levels of consumption of these substances" following the mandatory listing of tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide levels on cigarette packs.



BRAZIL

Recommendations for health warning systems in the Region

The subject of packaging and labelling of tobacco products was addressed in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control under Article 11, which sets standards, makes recommendations, and sets a timetable of three years for the adoption and implementation of such standards and recommendations.

A set of recommendations that adhere to the standards and recommendations of the FCTC can be made as follows:

1. Countries should ensure that tobacco product packaging and labelling do not promote a tobacco product by any means that are false, misleading, deceptive or likely to create an erroneous impression about its characteristics, health effects, hazards or emissions.
2. Each unit packet and package of tobacco products and any outside packaging and labelling of such product should carry a health warning describing the harmful effects of tobacco use, and may include other appropriate messages, which at a minimum should be:
 - rotated regularly
 - large, clearly visible and legible
 - 50% or more of the principal display area
 - in the form of, or include, pictures or pictograms.
3. Each unit pack and any outside packaging and labelling of tobacco products should, in addition to the above warnings, include information on relevant constituents and emissions of tobacco products as defined by national authorities.
4. The warnings and other textual information should appear on each unit pack and any outside packaging and labelling of tobacco products in the principal language or languages of the country in which the products will be sold.

The following points for consideration can be added, based on the Canadian experience:

- Warnings that are 50% of the major face of the cigarette pack, particularly the top portion, are most effective.
- Pictures, colour and graphics are highly effective. Pictures are particularly important in countries with significant illiteracy rates.





- The warning should not be obscured or camouflaged by the package colour or background.
- The print colour and its background should be selected for maximum visibility. Black or white lettering with opposite colour background, and a border of the same colour as the lettering are quite effective (particularly the white lettering on black).
- Appropriate marker words, such as WARNING, should be used.
- Difficult language and lengthy references to health authorities should be avoided.
- Including information on the levels of certain emissions and toxins on the packaging may be a helpful addition.

Conclusion

Important steps have already been taken in introducing tobacco health warning systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, but much more remains to be done. The risks imposed by tobacco consumption to populations and to future generations in the Region are great. To address these risks, countries should take maximum advantage of the FCTC and of the experiences gained in other countries in the area of health warnings and product packaging. Placing health warnings on tobacco product packaging offers a rare opportunity to combat tobacco consumption with a proven method for which the tobacco companies must bear the expense.

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