

# Plain packaging removes cigarettes' appeal

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Removing branding and wrapping cigarettes in plain packaging helps remove the appeal of smoking according to new a Cancer Research UK-funded study published in *Tobacco Control*.

The researchers found that more women than men smoked less and found smoking less enjoyable when using the plain packs.

Some smokers also claimed that they would be more likely to attempt quitting if all cigarettes came in the dark brown unbranded packs used in this study.

In the first study of its kind nearly 50 young adult smokers used non branded cigarette packets in normal everyday situations for two weeks. The researchers then compared the reaction to this packaging to the reactions of using regular packs for two weeks.

The plain brown packs were given a fictional name with standard branding and the [health warning](#) "Smoking Kills". Twice weekly questionnaires were followed up with face to face interviews for more in depth analysis of reaction.

Plainly wrapped cigarettes were rated negatively against the original packs. Taking out the cigarettes less often, handing out cigarettes less frequently and hiding the pack more were all reported as a result of the plain packaging.

Dr Crawford Moodie, the study's lead author based at the University of

Stirling, said: “Despite the small size of this study it adds an important real world dimension to the research on the way smokers respond to plain packaging. The study confirms the lack of appeal of plain packs, with the enjoyment and consumption of cigarettes being reduced. We’re now looking to build on this research to understand more about the impact of packaging on smokers.”

The UK government is expected to begin a public consultation on the future of tobacco packaging later this year.

Australia should be the first country in the world to wrap [cigarettes](#) in plain packaging. The Australian government has announced that all tobacco must be sold in plain packaging from July 1, 2012. Picture health warnings will also cover 75 per cent of the front and 90 per cent of the back of packs.

Jean King, Cancer Research UK’s director of [tobacco control](#), said: “While a small study, this research provides important insights into the power of cigarette packaging. Colourful and slickly designed packs are one of the last remaining avenues for tobacco companies to market their deadly product, so it’s interesting to see what might happen if and when this is removed. It’s important to remember that smoking remains the single biggest preventable cause of death in the UK, so preventing more people from starting and helping smokers to quit is vital. We look forward to the possibility of removing the silent salesman of [cigarette packets](#).”

**More information:** Moodie, C., Mackintosh, A., Hastings, G., & Ford, A. (2011). Young adult smokers' perceptions of plain packaging: a pilot naturalistic study Tobacco Control, 20 (5), 367-373 [DOI: 10.1136/tc.2011.042911](#)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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