

Teenagers put-off smoking by standardised tobacco packaging

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(Medical Xpress)—A new survey adds further weight to the growing evidence that standardised tobacco packaging could help discourage teenagers from smoking.

The [survey](#), carried out by the British Heart Foundation (BHF), asked 2,500 13- to 18-year-olds from the UK and Australia about their attitudes to tobacco [packaging](#). Only around a third (36 per cent) of UK [teenagers](#) surveyed were put-off smoking by current packaging compared to nearly half (48 per cent) of teens in Australia, where standardised packaging is already in place.

Worryingly, 10 per cent of teenagers in the UK make the incorrect assumption that certain cigarette brands are healthier than others - twice as many as Australian teens (5 per cent).

The poll also revealed support for standardised packaging from UK teenagers, with three quarters of those surveyed saying they think standardised packaging should be introduced in the UK.

Earlier this year the Government said plans to introduce standardised packaging in the UK would be put on hold until ministers had assessed its impact in Australia. Following their survey, the BHF says the legislation should be implemented without delay.

BHF chief executive, Simon Gillespie, said: "The message from our young people is loud and clear: current health warnings aren't up to the job and the UK Government must step up to the mark and introduce standardised packs.

"Australia has led the way on standardised packs, the Scottish Government has committed, and now the rest of the UK must act to protect future generations from a deadly habit."

An upcoming debate in the House of Lords will focus on a cross-party amendment to the Children and Families Bill, which could see introduction of standardised packaging in the UK.

Dr Claire Knight, health information manager at Cancer Research UK, said: "The cost of smoking is immense - financially and socially. Smoking is the single greatest avoidable risk factor for cancer and it increases your risk of 14 different types of cancer. Starting [smoking](#) at a young age greatly increases the risk of lung cancer.

"This is why we strongly support plain, standardised packaging of tobacco as a way to help reduce the attraction of the cool, glamorous cigarette packets designed to encourage [young people](#) to take up this deadly habit."

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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