

'Power walls' of tobacco products, ads attract both smokers and nonsmokers

February 10 2014, by Annie Deck-Miller

New research from Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) demonstrates that the walls of tobacco marketing and products located behind the counter in many convenience stores, referred to as "power walls," are an effective way to attract the gaze of most shoppers. Maansi Bansal-Travers, PhD, a Research Scientist in RPCI's Department of Health Behavior, is presenting the findings at the annual meeting of the Society on Research for Nicotine and Tobacco, which continues through Saturday, Feb. 8 in Seattle, Wash.

In this study, "Through the Eyes of the Consumer: Attention Paid and Recall of the Tobacco Power Wall Display in a Store Through Mobile Eye-Tracking" (abstract POS1-49), researchers used mobile eye-tracking equipment to record and analyze the location and duration of where and what smokers and nonsmokers observed while inside [convenience stores](#). Participants ages 18-30 were asked to make one of three purchases: a [candy bar](#), a candy bar and a specific cigarette brand, or a candy bar and a cigarette brand of their choosing. Real-time video recorded each participant's retail visit.

Overall, 72% of the participants fixated on the power wall of tobacco products behind the counter during their purchase. Fixations were particularly likely on tobacco ads and cigarette displays. Nonsmokers and smokers viewed the ads for the same duration of time.

"This novel research allows scientists to examine the impact and influence of tobacco marketing inside the retail environment from the

point of view of the smoker and nonsmoker," said Dr. Bansal-Travers. "The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of the eye-catching tobacco marketing and pack displays found in the retail environment, which make tobacco appear normal, interesting and accessible."

According to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission's Cigarette Report, cigarette companies spent more than \$8.8 billion marketing their products in 2011, the most recent year for which data is available. Other studies have concluded that the more cigarette marketing teens are exposed to in retail stores, the more likely they are to smoke.

Andrew Hyland, PhD, Chair of the Department of Health Behavior at RPCI, added: "Innovative research such as this study conducted by scientists at Roswell Park provides a solid, evidence-based foundation for policymakers as they adopt regulations regarding [tobacco marketing](#) and product displays."

Provided by Roswell Park Cancer Institute

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