

Health warnings clearer on plain cigarette packs

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The graphic health warnings on tobacco packaging are twice as likely to catch the eye of smokers when printed on non-branded packaging, a UK charity's report claims.

The British Heart Foundation's report examined data from the Australian and UK branches of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Project).

In Australia, 1,500 [smokers](#) and ex-smokers completed surveys both before and after the country's removal of designer packs in 2012.

And an analysis of the responses found that two thirds (66 per cent) of the group took notice of the warnings after the changes, compared with just a third (34 per cent) who had acknowledged them in 2010.

This compared with just under a quarter (24 per cent) of the 1,400 UK respondents.

UK charities are now applying pressure to the UK Government to implement standardised [packaging](#) without delay, citing this latest report as further [evidence](#) of the measure's effectiveness.

Cancer Research UK's director of cancer prevention, Alison Cox, said that the report adds further weight to mounting evidence and called on the Government to act now in introducing plain, standardised packaging.

"We've had statements that ministers are 'minded' to proceed, but for every week of delay thousands more children will become addicted to a product that will kill half of them if they become long term smokers," she said.

"We've also had public consultations and evidence reviews, and they've all been clear - the evidence exists and support is overwhelming for this measure. We urge this government to introduce standard packs as soon as possible," she added.

It also emerged that four-fifths (82 per cent) of Australians surveyed were turned off by the look of branding-free tobacco products after their introduction.

Support for standardised packaging among Australian smokers and ex-

smokers doubled from 28 per cent in 2010 to just over half in 2013. This compares to just over a third (37 per cent) of UK smokers and ex-smokers who would back legal enforcement of standardised packaging.

Smoking rates in Australia have also fallen to new lows; with just over 12 in every 100 (12.8 per cent) of people aged over 14 smoking daily. The figure of over-18s who smoke in the UK is just under one in five (19 per cent).

The British Heart Foundation has also insisted that the UK Government introduce standardised packaging before the UK election this spring. According to its chief executive Simon Gillespie, the evidence "couldn't be clearer" and stripping cigarette packs of their branded packaging means important health messages get through.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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