

Making cigarette sticks unattractive next step for plain packaging

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

As New Zealand moves towards legislating for plain packaging of cigarettes, the Government should consider measures that extend and improve upon Australia's model, ASPIRE2025 researchers from the University of Otago believe.

Professor Janet Hoek says that she and colleagues have found that

cigarette sticks with printed health warnings or unattractive colours could enhance the effects of plain packaging and further reduce the appeal smoking has to young people.

In their paper published in the prestigious *BMJ* journal *Tobacco Control*, the Otago researchers and colleagues in Australia conducted an online survey of 313 New Zealand smokers.

Professor Hoek says the team tested reactions to images of four cigarette sticks that either featured printed warnings or had unattractive colours, such as yellow-brown and green.

"We found that smokers were significantly less likely to choose the test sticks and found all significantly less appealing than the status quo—a white cigarette with a brown filter tip," she says.

A "minutes of life lost" graphic that went from one minute near the tip up to 15 near the butt had the strongest aversive effect relative to the other sticks tested.

"Requiring cigarette sticks and rolling paper to feature such a graphic, or to be produced in dissuasive colours, would likely increase the impact [plain packaging](#) will have on those who smoke, while also deterring others from taking up smoking," Professor Hoek says.

More information: Janet Hoek et al. Dissuasive cigarette sticks: the next step in standardised ('plain') packaging?, *Tobacco Control* (2015). [DOI: 10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2015-052533](https://doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2015-052533)

Provided by University of Otago

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