

## Introduction

- The tobacco industry uses misleading descriptors, colors, and symbols on cigarette packaging to alleviate smoking-related health concerns<sup>1</sup>
- The WHO FCTC Article 11 calls for bans on misleading packaging and labelling<sup>2</sup>
- In the last five years, Indonesia (2013), the Philippines (2015), and Vietnam (2015) have banned some forms of misleading packaging

## Objectives

- Assess compliance with misleading packaging and labeling regulations
- Describe the use of alternative misleading packaging
- Compare packaging from pre (2013) and post (2015/2016) bans

## Methods

- Census of cigarette packs on the market purchased in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam in 2013 and 2015/2016
- Tobacco vendors in 4 low, 4 middle, and 4 high socioeconomic areas sampled from three major cities in each country using systematic protocol
- Packs displaying health warning label in rotation coded; packs qualitatively compared

## Results

### Package compliance with regulations on misleading descriptors (2015/2016)

Country	Banned misleading descriptors	n	# non-compliant packs (%)
Vietnam	Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild	88	3 (3.4)
Philippines	Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild, extra, ultra	77	0 (0)
Indonesia	Low tar, light, ultra-light, mild, extra mild, slim, special, full, flavor, premium	207	50 (24.1)

## Results (continued)

### Alternative misleading packaging used on packs (2015/2016)

- 41 packs displayed “blue”, “silver”, or “gold” (n=372)
  - 18 packs displayed “soft”, “smooth”, or “mellow” (n=372)
  - 19 packs were slim packs or contained slim cigarettes (n=370)<sup>a</sup>
- <sup>a</sup>1 missing value from Indonesia and 1 missing value from Vietnam



### Comparing packs pre (2013) and post (2015/2016) misleading packaging bans



Some brands, like “W” from Indonesia, removed letters from descriptors post ban



Some brands in Vietnam (featured above) and the Philippines replaced “lights” with color descriptors and changed sub-brand names without misleading descriptors to fit naming scheme for product line

Examples of packs from the Philippines: displaying “blue”, “smooth”, slim pack



## Conclusions

- Misleading descriptors are permitted in brand names in Indonesia, but many packs still display banned descriptors outside of the brand name
- The tobacco industry uses alternative packaging and exploits loopholes in regulations
- Regulations should extend to ban misleading descriptors in trademarked names and countries should consider implementing plain packaging

## References

Tobacco Pack Surveillance System, [globaltobaccocontrol.org/tpackss](http://globaltobaccocontrol.org/tpackss)

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