

Background

Cigarette brand variants are a marketing technique used by tobacco companies to target consumer-specific preferences by altering pack color, design, descriptors, flavors, and brand variant names.

Uruguay is the only country in the world with a single pack presentation law, limiting cigarette companies to one unique presentation of each tobacco brand.

Methods

We bought cigarette packs in Montevideo, Uruguay in order to assess compliance with the single pack presentation law. The protocol built on the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) study conducted by the JHSPH Institute for Global Tobacco Control. Uruguay's Tobacco Epidemic Research Center of Uruguay (CIET) assisted with selecting 25 neighborhoods distributed across 5 income strata, as well as hubs within each neighborhood.

Starting at the neighborhood hub, a systematic walking protocol was conducted to identify one of four vendor types (kiosk, minimarket, supermarket, full-service convenience store). At the neighborhood vendor we purchased any unique pack that we did not already have in our sample.



Infographic produced at Piktochart.com

Results

- Purchases were made in 9 of 25 neighborhoods
- 56 unique packs were purchased
- 51 of the packs displayed the Uruguay health warning label
- 26 unique legal brands were purchased
- Packs from 3 brands had more than one color combination
- Packs from 5 brands differed in terms of at least one pack presentation element (other than color)
- Packs from 16 brands came in more than one size (10, 14, 20 pack)
- Packs from 4 brands used both hard and soft packaging materials



Conclusions

- Tobacco companies are not complying with Uruguay's single pack presentation law
- In addition to using color and other presentation elements to present brand variants, cigarette companies are also producing "single brand packs" in more than one size (10, 14, and 20 packs) and in more than one packaging material (hard or soft pack)
- The law could be amended to include size and packaging material in the list of prohibited brand variant characteristics

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