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Dissuasive Cigarette Sticks: A Logical Complement to Plain Packaging?



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Overview

- Cigarette sticks as marketing tools
 - Opportunities to create dissuasive products
- Current study
 - Perceptions of current and dissuasive sticks
 - Female young adult smokers
- Policy implications and opportunities
 - Limitations and further research



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Cigarettes as marketing tools

Cigarette packages widely used to create symbolic meanings

Smokers buy more than an efficient nicotine delivery mechanism

- Access images of glamour, sophistication or ruggedness
- Use these to define and display themselves




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Cigarette Sticks as Marketing Tools

Pack differentiation increasingly mirrored in stick differentiation

- Several innovations
 - Designer tipping
 - Slimmer, elongated cigarettes




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Plain Packaging

Aims to:

- Disrupt brand associations and remove connotations
 - Promote smokefree behaviours (reduced initiation and increased cessation)

Could the cigarette stick become a 'new canvas'?





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Research Questions

- How do female young adult smokers interpret cigarette sticks?
 - Could dissuasive sticks reduce the appeal and cachet of smoking?




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Methodology

Phase 1

Focus groups with female daily and social smokers

- Confirmed clear differences in perceptions of differently coloured sticks

Phase 2

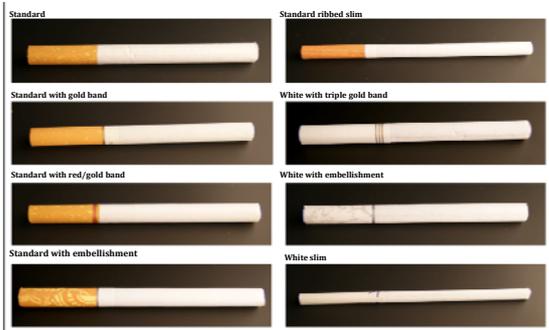
Fourteen in-depth interviews with young adult female smokers (social and daily) aged 18 to 24 years

- Stimuli included images of current cigarette sticks and dissuasive sticks developed by a graphic artist



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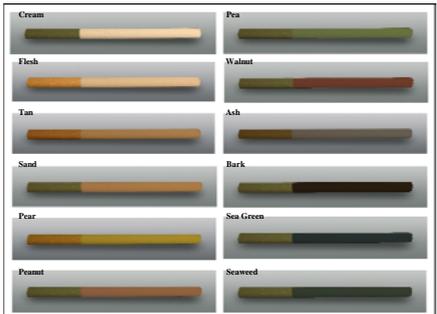
Current Sticks





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Dissuasive Sticks





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Findings

Accoutrements of Social Acceptability

- Participants saw decorated and white sticks as a means of 'cleansing' smoking
 - "...so it sort of felt like I was being cheap, – so I thought if I bought more expensive cigarettes that I wouldn't feel so bad about – feel so cheap about smoking".*
- "Cool" cigarettes assisted participants' ambivalence
 - "Perhaps cause it's more of pure – I don't know – perhaps more of a pure look compared to the traditional one. I think most people who smoke probably want to live in an illusion that it's not that as bad for you as everyone knows it is."*



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Findings

Dismantling and marring the façade

- Strong reactions against dissuasive sticks
 - Green filter tips especially disgusting
 - "slime", "scum", "vomit" and "poo"
- Linked negative health outcomes to the very act of consumption
 - "You don't really see much of the tar that goes into them. You don't see obviously long term results... when you're actually doing the thing (smoking), there's nothing that shows just how bad it is, what you're doing. Definitely a gross-coloured smoke would help it."*



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Findings: Marring the façade

Dissuasive sticks exposed smokers and reinforced negative opinions of smoking

- "it would be a lot more obvious what you were doing I guess it would draw more attention that you don't probably want, so I probably wouldn't be as inclined to do it in a public place."*
- "If I saw someone smoking these and I was just a social smoker, then it'd probably remind me how dirty it was and maybe I would have been able to stop a lot earlier ... I wish they had brought it in... they would have made me stop."*



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Policy Implications and Conclusions

Participants felt dissuasive colours would deter smoking initiation and decrease tobacco consumption

- Strongest effects on social smokers

Plain packaging denormalises smoking

- Plain sticks could complement this measure
- Represent an important question to explore further in the path to 2025



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