

Institute for
Global Tobacco Control

Tobacco Industry's Use of Outer Packaging in Mexico Increases Marketing Space

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Acknowledgement & Disclosure

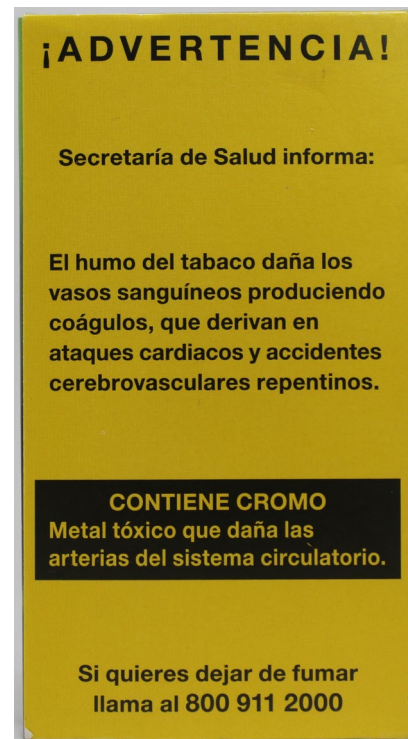
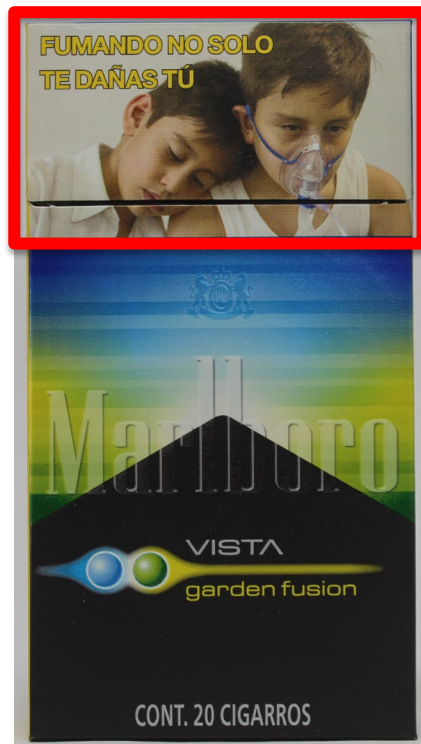
- This work was supported with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use (bloomberg.org)
- Competing interests: Dr. Cohen is a paid consultant in litigation against a tobacco company

	Tobacco industry	E-cigarette & nicotine product industry	Pharma industry
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Any of the authors have received funding (including consultancy) from any of the following sources in the past 5 years:	NO	NO	NO



Background

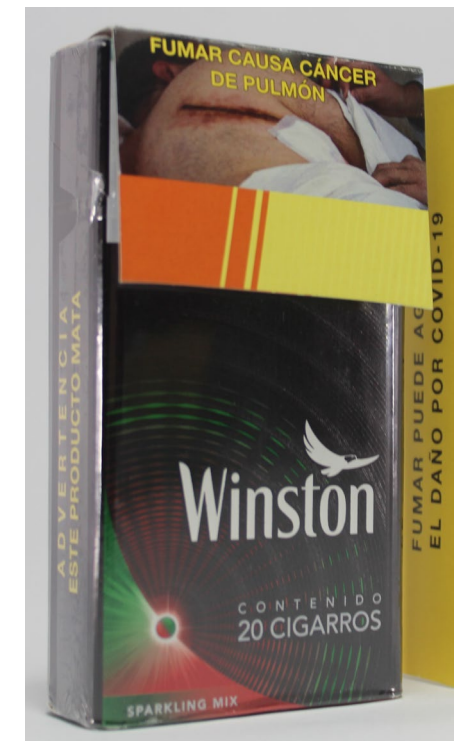
- Mexico requires health warning labels (HWLs) on cigarette packs covering 30% of the front and text HWLs on 100% of the back and one side
- The tobacco industry has used inserts and onserts (information attached to packaging) to increase marketing space



Insert



Onsert



Significance

- Outer packaging encloses primary package that directly contains cigarettes
- Outer packaging provides additional space for marketing and can obscure health warning labels (HWLs)
- Study examined outer packaging of cigarettes purchased in Mexico for marketing features that potentially undermine policy



Methods

- Following the TPackSS protocol, unique cigarette packs were systematically purchased in Mexico in Oct-Nov 2021
 - One or more unique exterior features such as color or stick count
- Packs were purchased in 12 neighborhoods of different socioeconomic status in each of five diverse cities
- Packs were double coded by three independent coders for marketing appeals





Results

Pack Type & Web Presence

- 262 unique cigarette packs were purchased; 24 were enclosed by outer packs
- **12 (50%)** outer packs were of a **box/tin style**, as opposed to **sliders**
- Most outer packs (**63%**) directed people online, such as the **company website and/or QR codes**



Tin outer pack

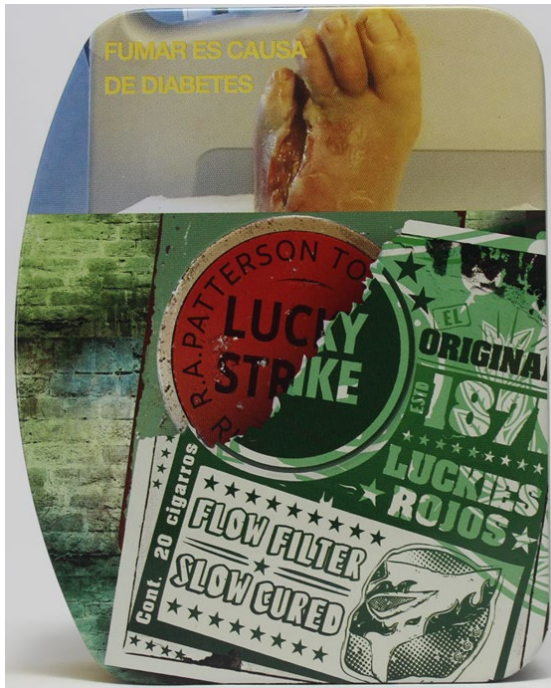


Slider outer pack



“Limited Edition”/Mexican National Appeal

- **10 (42%)** outer packs presented **limited-edition** descriptors and **7 (29%)** featured **Mexican national appeal** imagery/descriptors
- **Four** of the packs with national appeals had a statement that the outer pack can be **used as an ashtray**



Lucha libre mask (Mexican freestyle wrestling)



“long live Mexico September 2021”; “Mexico always clean. You can use this can as an ashtray”



“Limited Edition”/Mexican National Appeal



Inside of previous Lucky Strike outer pack, which celebrates 150 years of Lucky Strike, leading consumers to scan the QR code to "find out more" (Other text: "In 150 years, we have witnessed great stories, such as the one from the first masked fighter")



Differences in Design/Information

- **10 (42%)** outer packs advertised a **change to the appearance** of the primary pack
 - “New image, same taste”
- A Winston outer pack **advertised a different brand variant** than presented on the primary pack
 - “Sparkling mix” vs “oasis mix”



Outer pack

Primary pack



Primary pack

Outer pack



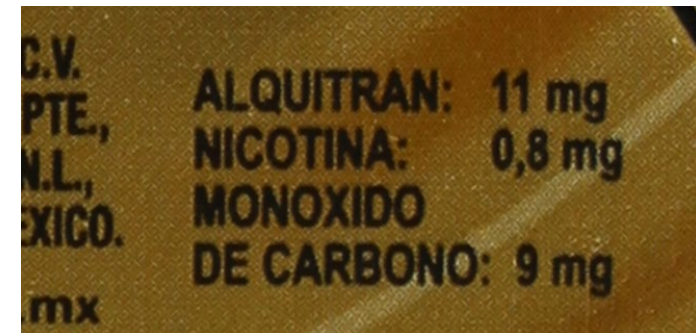
Differences in Design/Information

- Differences in **tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide** amounts
 - One Pall Mall outer pack **conveyed higher levels** compared to what was stated on the primary pack

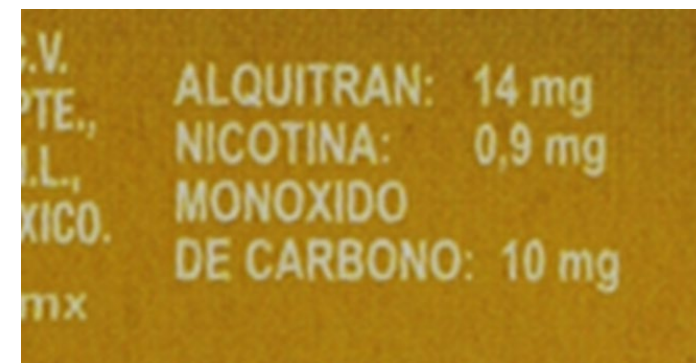


Primary pack

Outer pack



Primary pack



Outer pack



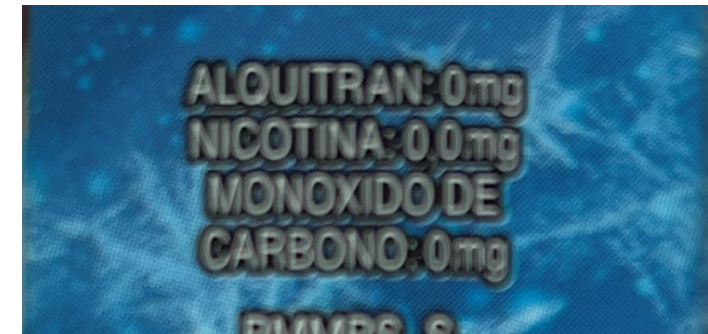
Differences in Design/Information

- Differences in **tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide** amounts
 - Two Marlboro outer packs had **zeroes** for the amounts; the primary packs did not

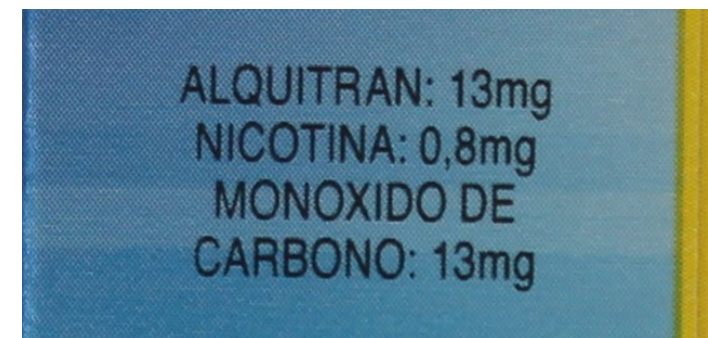


Outer pack

Primary pack



Outer pack



Primary pack



Conclusions

- In Mexico, outer packaging...
 - demonstrates a range of marketing appeals
 - could be a way for tobacco companies to counteract HWL regulations
 - may mislead consumers on content emissions
- Tin outer packs can be kept as collectors' items and advertising their use as ashtrays encourages consumers to keep them
 - Packs are the same price as without the tins

These findings stress the importance of plain and standardized packaging, including eliminating outer packaging, to protect consumers from appealing marketing and misleading claims.



Access our letter:



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