

Consumers Know Best

Submission to the Legislative Council Committee on the
Undesirable Medical Advertisements (Amendment) No.2 Bill

By Better Hong Kong Movement and The Lion Rock Institute

Key Findings

- The effect of advertising on consumers is less than what the administration claims – it neither misleads consumers nor causes delay in medical treatment.
 - Consumers rely on multiple sources of information for making decisions on medical and health products or services – prohibiting advertising will limit consumer to sources such as word-of-mouth – which is impossible to regulate.
 - Consumers support mandating warning labels as a condition on advertising for health and medical products or services.
 - Consumers want more information, not less.
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Our Stance

- The administration has yet to provide evidence nor figures on incidences in which consumers were misled by advertising thus delaying medical treatment – there are no grounds for putting forward the legislative proposal unless the administration can prove otherwise.
 - Prohibiting advertising for medical and health related products limits consumers rights to information which is against the interests of the people of Hong Kong.
 - Government should not contradict itself by killing the alternative healthcare industry on one hand while subsidizing it on the other.
 - LEGCO should not support this legislative proposal but could consider mandating medical and health related advertising to put a warning label as suggested by our research.
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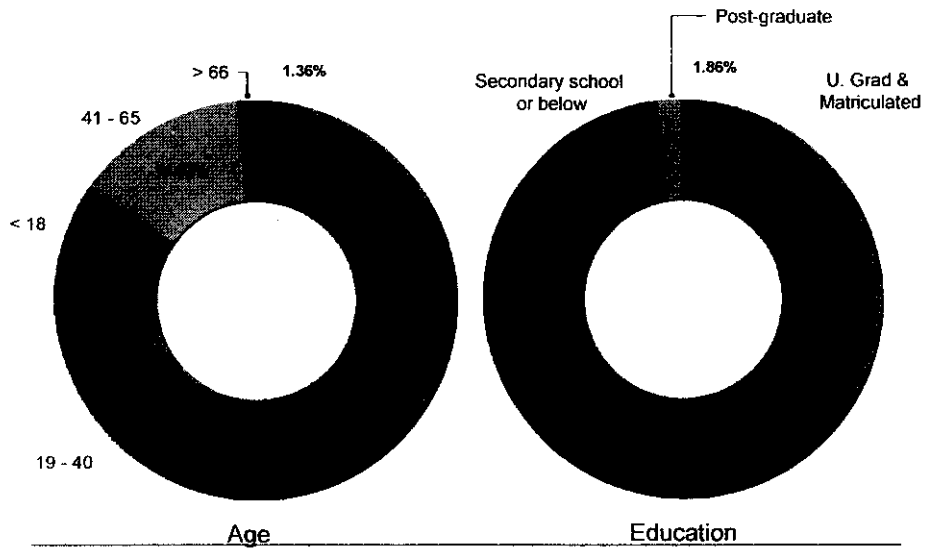
The Survey

Conduct of the survey and
profile of respondents

Conduct of Survey

- 2nd Feb 2005 – 15th Feb 2005
 - Total # respondents: 1028
 - 15-question face-to-face questionnaire
 - Method: Street interception random sampling
 - Location: Residential districts & transportation hubs
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Profile of respondents

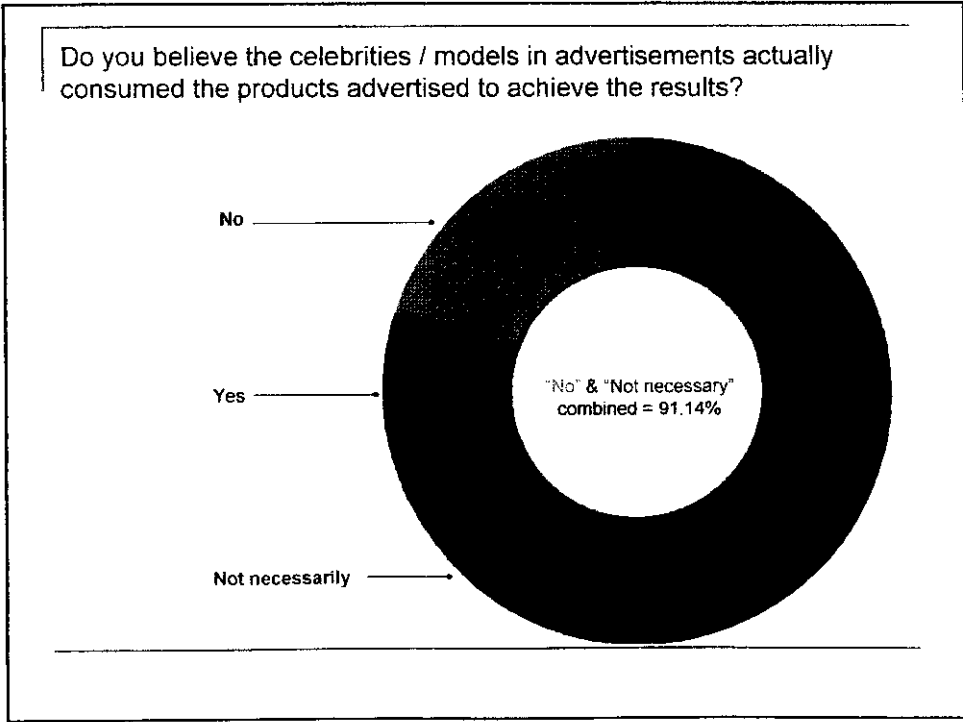
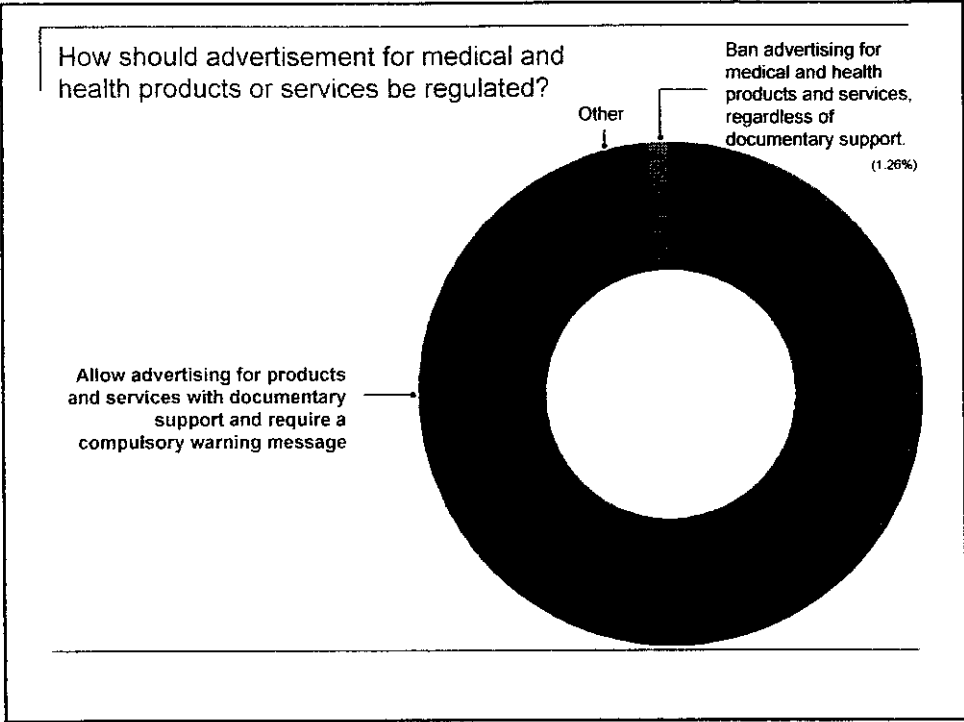


Health Products Consumption

Have you used any health food, product, or services with curative effects in the past three years?

Yes

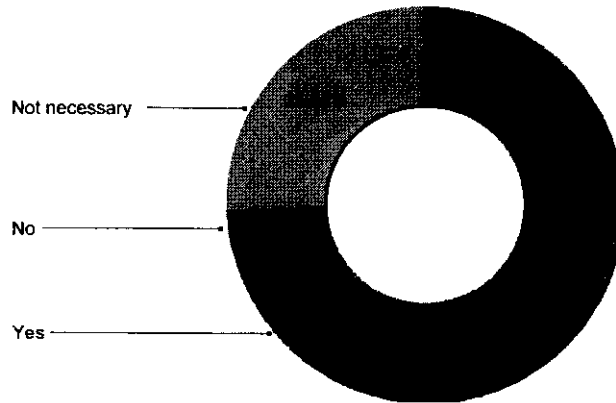
No



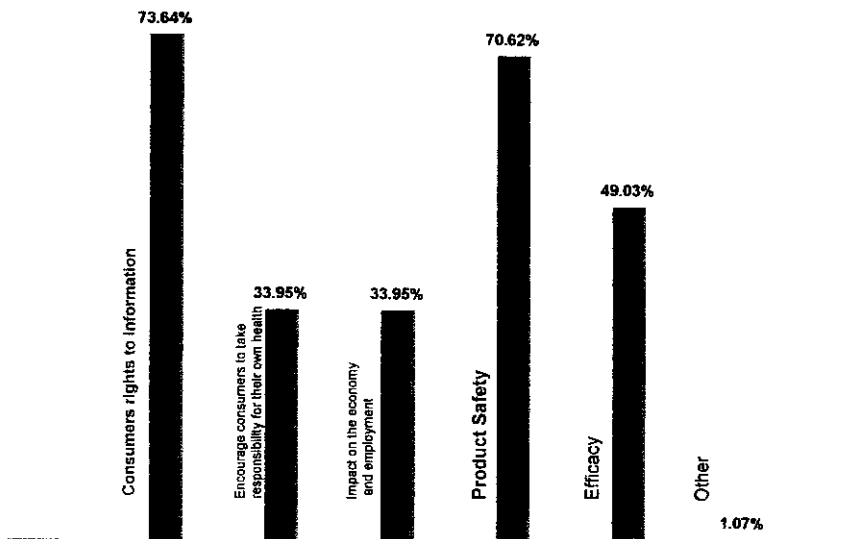
Disclaimer on advertising for medical and health products or services:

"This product or service should not be applied as treatment for any disease.

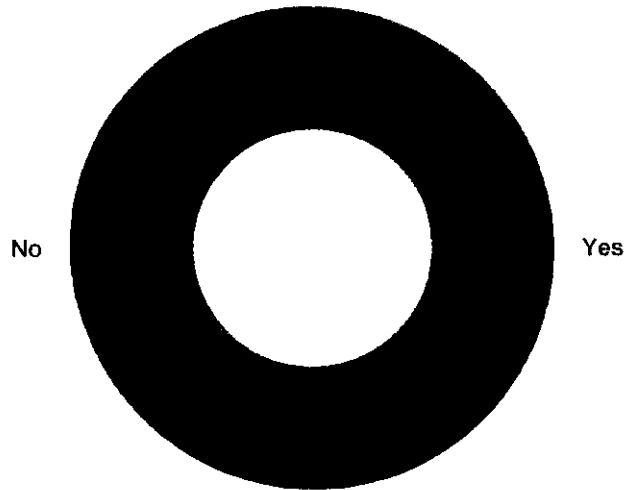
It cannot diagnose, prevent, or treat any disease. Consumers should seek diagnosis and advice on treatment from medical professionals."



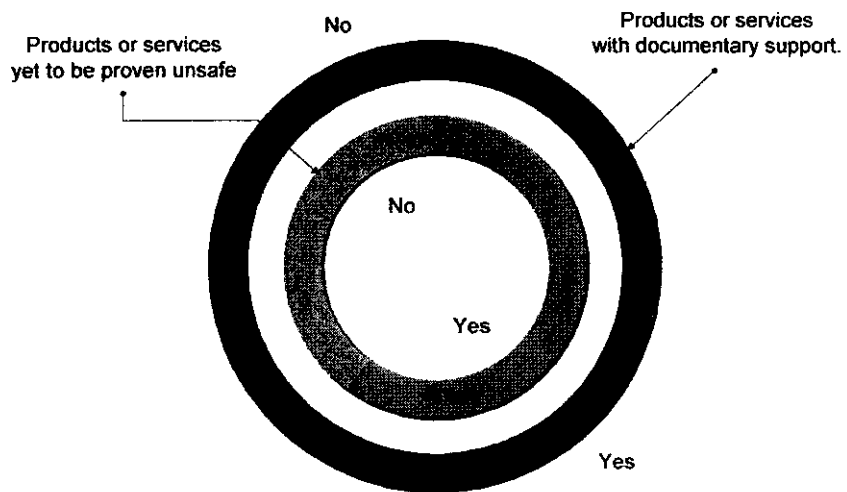
Key considerations legislators should look at when scrutinizing the law on regulating advertising for medical and health products or services.



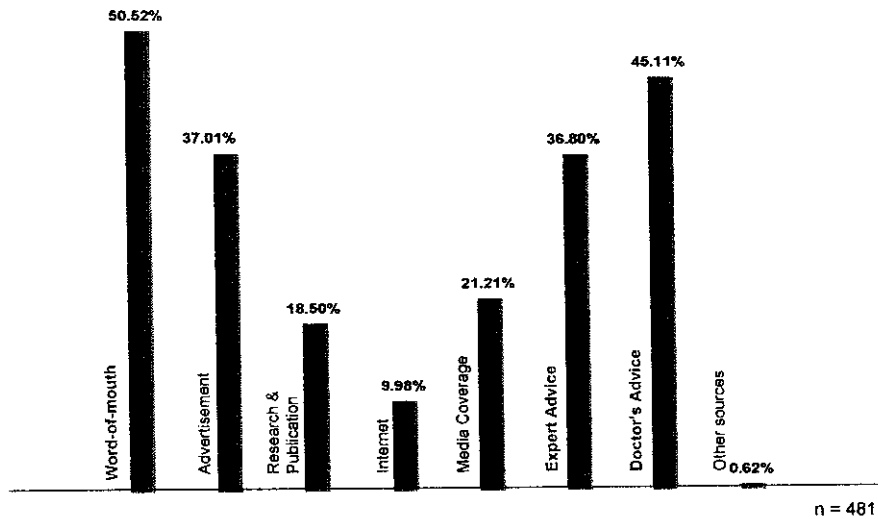
Will the banning of medical / health products and services advertising hurt consumers rights to information?



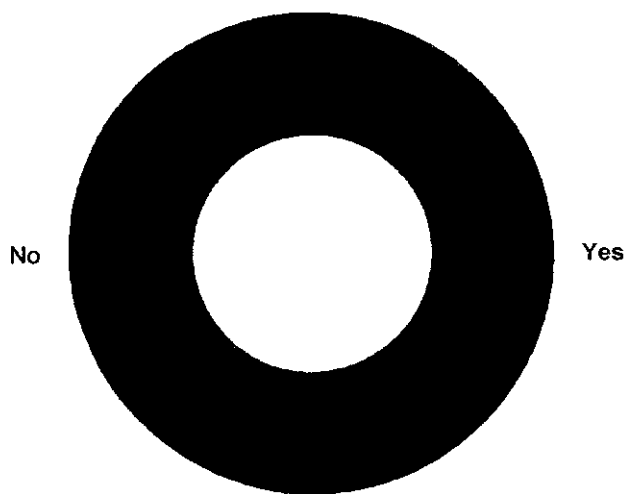
Should advertising for medical / health products and services be allowed to protect consumers choice and right to information?



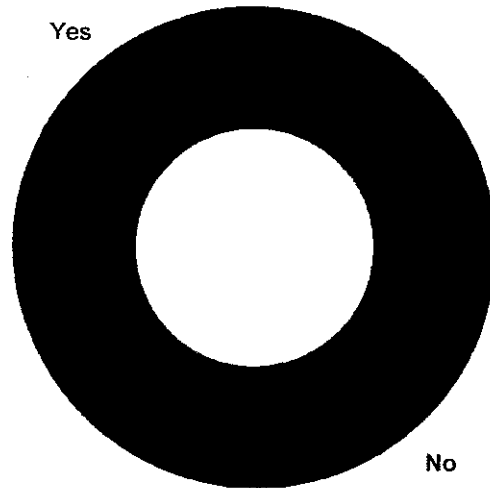
Consumer Choice Considerations In the Use of Health Products and Services



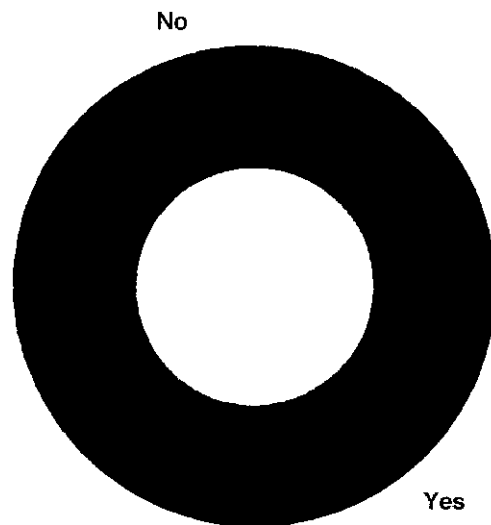
Will more choices and information help solve HK's health care problems?



Do you get adequate information on health and medical issues from registered doctors?



Do you think public hospitals should also offer alternative medical services, such as traditional Chinese medicine and natural therapy?



Conclusion

- The effect of advertising on consumers is less than what the administration claims – it can neither mislead consumers nor does it cause delay in medical treatment.
 - Consumers rely on multiple sources of information for making decisions on medical and health products or services – prohibiting advertising will limit consumers to sources such as word-of-mouth – which is impossible to regulate.
 - Consumers support mandating warning labels as a condition on advertising for health and medical products or services.
 - Consumers want more information, not less.
 - Consumers are discriminating and responsible users of information concerning their health.
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Recommended Action

- **Do not restrict advertising or access to information.**
 - **Consider only mandating advisory labels on health products.**
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End of Presentation

Thursday, 17th Feb 2005

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Contacts

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