



Smoking Cessation Programme for Ethnic Minorities and New Immigrants

Clerk to Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

The United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service has the mission of promoting the health of the community. We strongly support the enactment of the amendment of the Smoking (Public Health) (Notices) Order (Cap. 371 sub. leg. B) of enlarging the pictorial health warning to 85% for ALL types of tobacco product packaging, and increasing the number of forms of health warning from six to twelve, and adding the quitline 1833 183. We support the proposal of adding new health warnings and more frequent rotation of health warnings to raise the deterring effect to smokers. The amendments line up with WHO's call for countries to adopt plain packaging or pictorial warnings covering more than 85% by 2018. We advocate for at least 85% health warning coverage, with view to plain paper packaging.

There is sufficient evidence that this will reduce smoking rates:

1. In Australia consumption fell 2.9% in quarter and 12.2% over the year, two years after plain-packaging legislation came into effect.
2. Research studies that support pictorial warnings, reviewed in greater depth by the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project. The research on pictorial warnings showed that they are: (i) more likely to be noticed than text-only warning label (ii) more effective for educating smokers about the health risks of smoking and for increasing smokers' thoughts about the health risks and (iii) is associated with increased motivation to quit smoking.
3. Moreover, evidence for the greater potential impact of pictorial warnings have

come from focus groups and interview studies, experimental exposure studies and population-based surveys among Canadian smokers, Australian youth, Dutch smokers.

4. Further for decades, the tobacco industry has taken advantage of the package as a venue for creating positive associations for their product. The use of graphic pictures is an important means of replacing those positive associations with negative associations, which is far more appropriate given the devastating impact of tobacco products on global health
5. Tobacco product comes in different types of packages, this 85% of pictorial warning should apply to all packaging regardless of packaged shape.
6. As 6.4% of Hong Kong's population are ethnic minorities , many of whom have language barrier, we urge the government to put any health warnings in bilingual format, at least in English and Chinese.

Thus we urge the government to put forward policies that are substantiated by scientific evidence and the outcomes are fair that support the health of the population.

Thank you for your attention. For any questions, please kindly contact myself at 2344 3019

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Gurung' with a small mark below the 'g'.

Sharmila Gurung

Ethnic Minority Health Service - Health Service Manager

United Christian Netherosle Community Health Service