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香港家庭醫學學院

The Hong Kong College of Family Physicians



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9 January 2017
Prof. Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Chairman
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Prof. Hon LEE,

Proposal to Amend the Health Warnings on Packets and Retail Containers of Tobacco Products

Hong Kong College of Family Physicians is responsible for training and postgraduate education of family doctors in Hong Kong.

Smoking causes numerous diseases including at least 14 types of cancer, coronary artery disease and various lung diseases. Smoking is by far the biggest preventable cause of cancer and is the single greatest preventable cause of premature death in the world.

Each year tobacco kills nearly 6 million people globally including more than 600,000 non-smokers caused by exposure to second hand smoke. World Health Organization warns that at least one in two smokers will die prematurely due to smoking related diseases. In Hong Kong, smoking not only causes the loss of about 7,000 lives every year, but also incurs considerable medical expenses. A reduction of smoking prevalence would save a significant number of lives and lowering the economic and medical burden.

The most effective measures to reduce tobacco use and encourage smoking cessation are:

- Raising tobacco tax
- To increase the size of health warning on cigarette packets

The College supports the Government with the proposal

1. *To cover 85% of the surface area of the two largest sides of cigarette packets or retail containers and to make suitable arrangement for the orientation of the health warnings (“the 85% proposal”).* At least 2-3 % decrease in smoking prevalence is expected after implementing plain packaging or expanding the size of the health warning.



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2. *To update the health warnings and increase the number of forms of health warning from 6 to 12. In fact the most gruesome pictures serve as better preventive warning. This will also educate smoker of the numerous related diseases.*
3. *To include “QUIT SMOKING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS 請為你的下一代戒煙” and Department of Health’s Quitline (1833 183) in the health warning. This serves as better warning and reminder to the older and long term smokers.*

The College applauds the continuous effort of the Government to limit the mortality and morbidity caused by smoking and to safeguard the health of Hong Kong citizens. We look forward to closer collaboration with the Government to tackle the health damages caused by smoking.

Yours sincerely,

Dr CHAN Ming Wai Angus
President