AN INVESTIGATION OF EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS WITH ANTI-SMOKING WARNINGS
Alexandra Hunn, Stuart G. Ferguson, Jenn L. Scott and Natalie Schüz, University of Tasmania

BACKGROUND

- Lab-based studies indicate that warnings:
  - Are perceived as important and effective (Hammond, 2011),
  - Increase knowledge of smoking-related disease (Hammond, 2011)
  - Induce fear and cessation-related thoughts (Hammond, Fong, McDonald, Brown, & Cameron, 2004).

- Also potential for maladaptive responses to anti-smoking messages:
  - Avoidance (Moodie, Mackintosh, & Hastings, 2013)
  - Derogation of messages (Ruiter, Abraham, & Kok, 2001)
  - Self-exemption from smoking-related risk (Weinstein, Marcus, & Moser, 2005).

Aim: To investigate the presence and impact of anti-smoking messages on smokers and never-smokers, using ecological momentary assessment (EMA)

METHODS

- EMA to assess everyday encounters with anti-smoking warnings of 35 smokers and 37 never-smokers.

- Participants carried modified smartphones for approx. 19 days (1352 subject days of monitoring in total).

- Participants:
  - Reported encounters with smoking warnings;
  - Completed assessments on attitudes and reactions to the health warnings, perceived risk, and motivation to quit;
  - responded to randomly scheduled prompts;
  - smokers reported cigarettes smoked.

1. Smoking warnings seen

2. Vulnerability

3. Vulnerability

REFERENCES


RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

1. Compared to never-smokers, smokers encountered more smoking messages: 0.38 vs 1.24 warnings per day
   - Absolute number was very low given that package warnings are designed to be encountered each time a cigarette is smoked.
   - Warnings may be ignored, avoided or covered.

2. Feelings of vulnerability (lung cancer) were higher in smokers than in never-smokers
   - Smokers give realistic estimate

3. Neither smokers nor never-smokers reported higher feelings of vulnerability when health warnings were present
   - Smoking-related health warnings may not be consciously encountered as frequently as expected, especially in smokers (defensiveness?)
   - Smoking warnings not effective in increasing feelings of vulnerability in smokers and never-smokers

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Contact Details: Natalie.Schuez@utas.edu.au