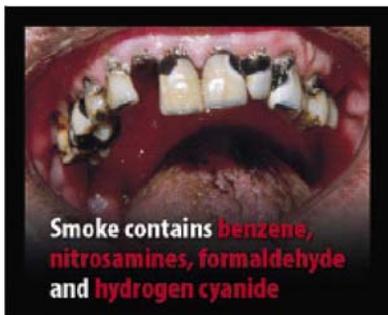


PRE-TESTING AND EVALUATING WARNING MESSAGES FOR TOBACCO PRODUCTS

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The format and framework used for this document is adapted from the “Pre-testing Anti-Smoking Commercials” tool created by The Cancer Council Victoria and the Cancer Institute NSW.

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BACKGROUND

This resource has been created to help regulators and public health advocates pre-test and evaluate health warning messages for tobacco products. The document outlines a simple, yet reliable protocol that can be used to assist in the development of new health warnings or the adaptation of warnings from other jurisdictions. This resource can be used to answer basic questions confronting government regulators, including what types of design features are most effective, and what specific health warning messages and pictures have the greatest impact. The materials can also be adapted to evaluate the specific goals of particular sets of warnings. The approach is based on the need to test a number of different already-developed warning messages in order to determine the most suitable messages for a specific audience and goal.

The protocols described in this document have been designed for those with little or no research experience, and can be adapted to local needs and the availability of resources. Nevertheless, the information collected by these protocols will provide you with high-quality evidence. The focus group sessions described include two components: quantitative survey information that will provide reliable evidence that can be compared across groups and even with pre-testing conducted in other jurisdictions, and qualitative group discussion that will provide in-depth feedback on what features have the greatest impact and how to improve underperforming warnings. These two types of information have been integrated into a single focus group session to maximize resources and provide timely feedback.

For basic information on guidelines for designing new warnings, drafting regulations, or designing more comprehensive evaluations of health warnings, please refer to the *Tobacco labelling and packaging toolkit*, available online at www.tobaccolabels.org.

Finally, we would be interested in learning about your experiences using this resource and welcome any suggestions for improving this tool.

OVERVIEW OF WARNING MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING

There are a number of steps involved in developing and testing health warning messages, whether you are starting with a new set of potential warning messages or adapting already-developed materials:

1. Develop health warning messages
 2. Identify key research questions for testing warning messages
 3. Adapt and finalize design and materials
 4. Identify and recruit target group
 5. Conduct focus group sessions
 6. Analyze data and summarize key conclusions
 7. Revise and re-test warning messages as necessary
- } Design and conduct research

This resource focuses mainly on steps 3-6, which are concerned with the design and testing of warning messages. However, the first two steps, in which potential messages are created/adapted and research objectives are established, are instrumental in guiding the research. These steps are discussed briefly in the following sections, before turning to the main subject of the research protocol for testing health warning messages.

Step 1. Designing Health Warning Messages

Health warning messages on tobacco packages are an effective and cost-effective way of communicating with smokers. Health warnings on packages also provide considerable flexibility and a number of options: packages carry a number of rotating messages—as many 16 in countries such as Canada—and should be revised over time. This allows regulators to communicate a wide range of messages on different themes: for example, different health effects, messages to support cessation, and messages that seek to “denormalize” smoking.

Steps for Designing Health Warning Messages (from the *Tobacco labelling and packaging toolkit*):

- 1. Layout and Design:** Determine general layout and design, including size, position, borders, and general appearance. General recommendations include: at least 50% of the principal display surface, displayed at the “top” of the pack, with a picture that appears on both sides of the pack and occupies at least half of the warning space. The text, which may include marker words, taglines, and explanatory text may be formatted many different ways, but should be noticeable, large enough to easily read, and fairly simple.
- 2. Number of Warnings and Rotation Period:** Determine how many warnings are needed, based on the number of warnings per set, the number of sets needed and how often they will be rotated. General recommendations include: sets of 8-12 individual warnings, rotated every 1-2 years (maximum 4 years).
- 3. Review Existing Warnings:** Examine existing warnings from other jurisdictions to see if any can be adapted or if new warnings should be developed, and to get ideas for possible themes and particular messages.
- 4. Content - Identify priority themes and subjects:** Possible themes and subjects include addiction (addictive substances, testimonials, facts), cessation (benefits, supportive messages, quitting tips, available services), health effects (on self and on others via secondhand smoke, including general morbidity/mortality, specific diseases, quality of life), toxic constituents (lists, effects), and other costs (social, financial, aesthetic). What themes and subjects you choose will depend on your target population(s), the existing level of health knowledge in the population(s), existing/previous messages, and what areas are considered a priority.
- 5. Images and Presentation Style:** Once the theme and subject of a message has been identified, the goal is to develop/select images that make the information vivid and personally relevant. Images are particularly important to the effectiveness of messages and should be selected carefully. Make sure that any symbolic images are appropriate, and that the ethnic profile and age of people depicted in the warnings is appropriate. Presentation styles may include graphic depictions of disease, testimonials, personal experience, use of cultural symbols/icons, or humour.
- 6. Text:** Select accompanying text that is consistent with theme/subject in the image, and conveys a clear and direct message in language that is simple, concrete, and appropriate to the literacy level of the population.
- 7. Develop Warnings:** Once layout and specific content areas are identified, several potential warnings for each theme and subject can be developed (or adapted from existing warnings), each with a slightly different approach (presentation style) or creative concept (e.g. different pictures or text for the same theme).

During the development process, pre-testing can be used to:

- Identify which types of themes are most important
- Identify what types of general design features are most important
- Identify specific types of text and pictures within a particular theme (i.e. help you to choose one warning from a number of alternatives that attempt to communicate the same message theme)
- Identify which warnings from a final set of potential warning messages are best for your purposes

Information on different types of themes and design considerations are available in Chapter 2 of the *Tobacco labelling and packaging toolkit* (see: www.tobaccolabels.org).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the research is to evaluate health warning messages in terms of their capacity to meet specified objectives. Testing of warning messages may be done with the purpose of selecting particular warning messages from a set, or to examine various design approaches.

Step 2. Identifying Key Research Questions

Before undertaking any message testing, it is important to identify the objectives and key research questions for your purposes.

If your purpose is to select particular warning messages from a set, all testing should explore reactions to each of the warning messages in terms of:

- Attention – Will smokers notice and be engaged by the warning message?
- Communication – What message will the warning convey to smokers? Will they understand the message? Will they believe it?
- Identification – Will smokers see the warning message as relevant to them? This is particularly important when adapting warnings from other jurisdictions.
- Effect – What effect(s) will the warning message have? Effects of interest will depend on your objectives, and may include health knowledge, motivation to quit smoking, beliefs about whether the warning will help to prevent smoking initiation among youth, etc.

Because multiple health warnings rotate on packages, individual warnings may try to achieve different objectives. For example, warnings may be specifically designed to motivate smokers to quit, to inform about a particular issue (such as secondhand smoke) or constituent, or to denormalize the tobacco industry and smoking. Your research questions and subsequent testing should follow from these particular objectives. For example:

- If the aim is to stimulate smokers to quit smoking – the objective of the research is to determine which warning messages are most likely to move smokers towards quitting.
- If the aim is to increase awareness of dangers of second hand smoke – the objective of the research is to see which messages are mostly likely to increase knowledge of the dangers of second hand smoke.
- If the aim is to increase awareness and understanding about tobacco emissions and constituents – the objective of the research is to see which warning messages have the greatest potential to increase knowledge of constituents and their effects.
- If the aim is denormalization of the tobacco industry and smoking – the objective of the research is to see which warning messages have the greatest potential to change attitudes and opinions about the tobacco industry and smoking.

Alternatively, you may be undertaking message testing in order to examine different design approaches. In this case, it is particularly important to identify the questions that you would like to answer before designing the research. Examples of questions you may be interested in include:

- Are pictures better than text alone? Where should the text be placed relative to the picture?
- Are larger warnings more effective?
- What colour schemes or types of borders are most effective?

Once you have identified your objectives and key research questions, you can proceed to adapting the materials and conducting the research.

RESEARCH APPROACH FOR TESTING WARNING MESSAGES

The research approach combines brief surveys and focus groups to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative survey data is collected for demographics, smoking behaviour, and individual ratings of the warning messages. Quantitative information is ideal for comparing the effectiveness of different health warnings and particularly for comparing information collected in different focus groups. Qualitative data regarding reactions to and opinions of the warning messages is collected through focus groups.

The focus group sessions involve bringing together a number of groups of people in the target audience, segmented according to appropriate demographics, and prompting them to discuss potential and/or existing warning messages. Focus groups provide an excellent forum for discussing experiences, opinions and attitudes. During the discussion, differing views can be exchanged and explored, with the advantage of the group context being the ability of the group dynamic to both spark ideas and prompt debate of issues.

Normally, 4 group discussions would be considered the minimum amount of research required to address the objectives. However, 6 to 8 groups are typically used, depending on the target audience and how participants need to be segmented. Relevant issues for determining the number of groups are outlined below.

The basic steps outlined in the following sections involve recruiting focus group participants, presenting health warning images, and asking standardized questions and collecting responses in a way that provides reliable and systematic information, as well as in-depth feedback on how to improve particular warnings.

Step 3. Adapting the Research Design and Materials

Although the way that you collect information will be the same, the types of questions that you use to evaluate each health warning message can be adapted to fit specific needs. All health warnings should be evaluated in the four general areas (Attention, Communication, Identification, and Effect), which provide a general indication of how effective a health warning message will be. Based on the particular objectives identified in Step 2, you can adapt the questions for these four general areas. In addition, you can add your own questions to evaluate the specific objectives of individual warnings.

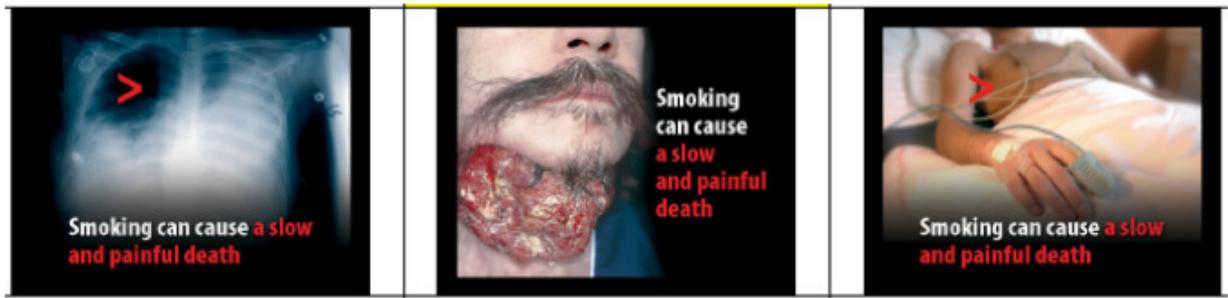
The detailed information that needs to be collected to evaluate each of the four areas is included in the attached Moderator Guide (Attachment 2) and Individual Rating Questionnaire (Attachment 5).

Presentation of warning messages

Your research objectives will also determine how you design your sets of health warning messages and how you present the warnings to participants. The types of comparisons you make are important:

If your purpose is to select particular warning messages from a set, you may want to test various themes or concepts against each other, or compare particular warnings within a theme to see which will best meet your objectives. The warnings in the set that you test should systematically differ on a particular aspect of content or presentation. For example, they may differ in presentation style (e.g. graphic depiction of disease vs. lived experience), use different images/text for the same topic, or use different images with the same text. The example below shows three different images for the same particular message.

Set A: "Smoking causes a slow and painful death."



For practical reasons, you should limit the number of warnings in a set for comparison to a maximum of 5 or 6, and test a maximum of 2 sets during a focus group session. The particular number that you choose will depend on the number of potential warnings you have to test, and how they are grouped for comparison.

If you are examining different design approaches, it may be useful to present warning messages in pairs which differ on some key factor. In such cases, you would manipulate a single feature to evaluate its effectiveness, by creating different versions of the same warning that differ only on the feature being examined. For example, you may evaluate pictorial vs. text-only warnings by testing two warnings that are identical except for the addition of a picture. This approach ensures that differences in scores can be attributed to the use of pictures—the only point of difference between the two warnings.

Set B: Picture vs. text-only



Note that concept or content testing and evaluation of design approaches do not necessarily have to be completed in separate focus group sessions. In many cases, design testing is conducted prior to specific concept and content testing only because basic decisions about text and pictures need to be determined before developing concepts. However, jurisdictions that wish to examine only a few novel design features can incorporate elements of design evaluation and concept/content evaluation in the same focus group session.

There are two general approaches to presenting the warnings to participants. The first approach is to show each set of warnings at the same time, and ask participants to directly compare the warnings and indicate their preference. For example, participants would be shown all warnings in a set simultaneously and asked which of the warnings had greater immediate impact. The second approach is to show participants each warning one at a time and have participants rate the warnings separately. In other words, each warning would receive a score for immediate impact using a standard rating scale, and these scores could then be compared to examine which warning was rated more highly. The advantage of the second approach (individual ratings) is that it

allows warnings to be compared across sets or themes fairly easily, without using statistical techniques. In other words, the impact ratings for each of the warnings in a set could be compared with each of the warnings from another set. This is especially important to identify whether certain themes or subjects are performing poorly compared to others. In other words, it tells you not only which concept is the best execution of a particular theme, but which themes are having the greatest success.

In general, all warnings should be printed to appear as the warning would on an actual cigarette package. That is, in full colour and in the highest quality possible, on cardstock that approximates the size and shape of cigarette packages (format will vary by jurisdiction due to different labeling and packaging regulations). Each respondent should have their own copy of the warnings.

If testing a number of messages in a set, the order of presentation of the warning messages should be varied between focus groups. For the individual rating section, you may also want to vary the order of the warnings between respondents within a group, if that is feasible. This is to minimise the chance of preferences being influenced by the order in which the warning messages are presented.

Adapting written exercises

If you are dealing with a low-literacy population or other language barriers, the individual rating forms may be adapted to better suit the needs of participants. The individual items may be read aloud by the Moderator as participants complete the rating forms for each warning, and a scale like the one below may be used. The open-ended written responses may also be removed, and instead asked during the discussion.



Step 4. Identifying and Recruiting Target Group(s)

Target Audience

In designing the research, the first task is to determine the target audience for the health warning messages and to decide how to “segment” the target audience into separate groups. For warning messages, the target audience is likely to be limited to smokers for adult populations, but may also include both smokers and non-smokers among youth.

The aim of segmentation is to bring together groups of people who have sufficiently similar interests and life experiences to have common grounds for discussion. Focus groups are often segmented on demographic factors such as age and sex. Segmenting by geographic factors, such as rural and urban regions, and other socio-demographic factors is also common, particularly in areas with large disparities.

In the case of health warning messages, smoking behaviour will also be an important variable for determining the target group and appropriate segmentation. Some criteria to consider for the design of the project and for the recruitment of participants to the groups might include:

- Whether to include light and occasional smokers (e.g. < 5 cigarettes per day)?
- Including heavy smokers (e.g. >20 cigarettes per day) in groups, or segmenting by heavy smoking
- Including or segmenting by intentions to quit (e.g. segmenting by intentions to quit, or including only smokers who are considering quitting if you are targeting quitting)

At least part of the decision on how to segment your audience will be based on the available resources and the number of focus groups you are able to conduct: if resources are limited, target audience segmentation should be limited to the most critical factors. Ideally, you would conduct groups until new information stopped emerging, but at least 2 groups from each key demographic group should be conducted. Otherwise you have no way of assessing whether the information you get from the first focus group discussion is representative for that group. The key demographic groups to target will be determined by your objectives.

Each of these focus groups should have an equal proportion of males and females (alternatively, you may run separate groups for males and females if that is more appropriate). Efforts should also be made to include smokers from appropriate socio-demographic backgrounds to reflect the smoking population.

Recruitment

Typically, 8-10 smokers are recruited to each focus group discussion (sometimes not all the people you recruit will attend at the appointed time; it may be best to recruit 10 people and expect 7 or 8 to attend). This number usually allows for constructive discussion of the issues and useful interactions between participants.

Begin by choosing a method to recruit smokers. The most common way to recruit participants is to post an advertisement in a local paper or in a public location with a phone number for potential respondents to call if they are interested, or “in-person”, by directly approaching individuals in a public area. In both cases, the goal is to recruit from an area that has a cross-section of people from your target group. For example, if all of the adult smokers were recruited from an exclusive shopping mall, the target group would not be likely to include smokers from lower socioeconomic groups.

Once contact has been made (either by phone or in-person) with potential participants, they should complete a brief screener to ensure that they fit your desired target group. The recruitment screener should include questions on any information necessary for determining eligibility and appropriately segmenting your audience and assigning them to groups, including age, sex, smoking status, motivation to quit, sociodemographic information (such as education and/or profession), and any other information specific to your objectives. A sample recruitment survey script is attached (Attachment 1).

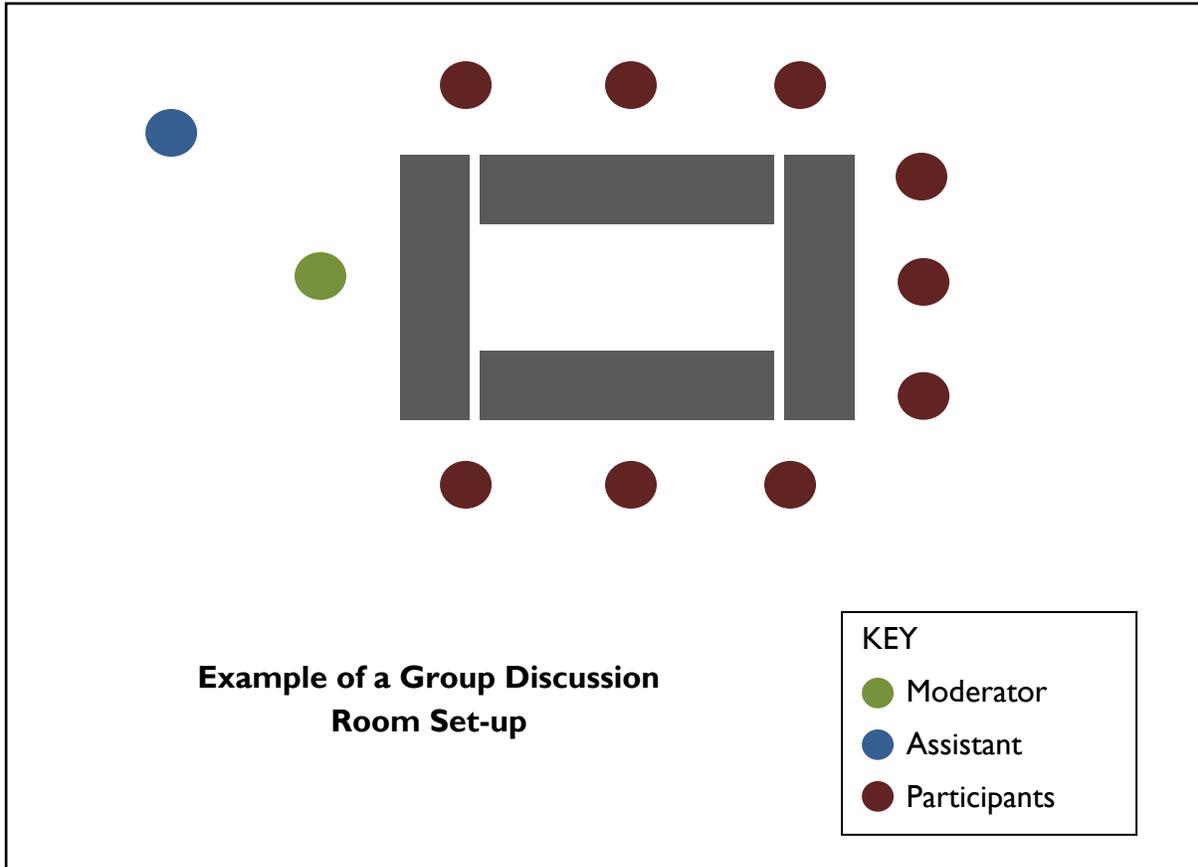
Based on responses to the recruitment screener, you can determine eligibility and assign participants to the appropriate groups. In addition to using basic socio-demographic and smoking criteria, you may also want to exclude persons who have recently (e.g. in past 12 months) participated in another focus group, or those involved in government, market research/advertising, or the tobacco industry.

Although many individuals are willing to participate in surveys, providing some compensation in the form of a small gift or small amount of money can help to encourage participation of people from your target audience. The amount of money or gift offered to potential participants should be appropriate for the local area and a two hour time commitment.

Recruitment should occur fairly close to the focus group date to avoid no-shows. In some cases, it may be possible to conduct the focus group the same day, shortly after the recruitment. If not, then the participant should be provided with information including the date, time, and location of the focus group.

Step 5. Conducting the Focus Group Session(s)

The group discussion should be conducted in a quiet, neutral setting, with participants seated to be able to see each other and the Moderator (preferably in a circle), in order to encourage communication and interaction. Each group will need to be conducted by a Moderator, following the approach outlined in the Moderator Guide (Attachment 2), with an Assistant taking notes.



If possible, the groups should be audio-taped so that they can be reviewed for analysis. If this is not possible, it will be important to ensure that adequate notes are taken during and/or immediately after each group, and two assistants should be present to take notes. A form has been attached to assist with note taking (Attachment 3). This form should be completed by the Assistant for each warning message in each group. Make sure that the group number and the warning message number/name are recorded on each note taking form.

As outlined in the Moderator Guide, the Moderator should start each group discussion by introducing themselves and explaining the research, including audio-recording and maintaining confidentiality. Participants should be given a chance to ask any questions they may have about their participation in the research, and their consent should be obtained before proceeding further. Once consent is obtained, start by having each participant introduce themselves to the group.

At the beginning of the group, participants are provided with a set of forms, including a Background Questionnaire (Attachment 4) and a stapled set of Individual Rating Questionnaires (Attachment 5) - one for each warning message, and a final page comparing all messages. Each participant is also provided with a booklet

containing full-colour mock-ups of each of the warning messages, printed to appear as the warning would on an actual cigarette package (format will vary by jurisdiction due to different labeling and packaging regulations).

The order of the warnings should be varied within each group, and may also be varied for each participant's booklet within a group. This is to minimise the chance of preferences being influenced by the order in which the warning messages are presented. The organiser should record the warning message number/name on the top of each rating sheet before handing them out. It is important that the order of the messages in the booklet of mock-ups match that of the rating forms for each participant.

Before starting the ratings of the warnings, participants should complete the Background Questionnaire (Attachment 4). Then, the first stage of the group involves viewing and individually rating each of the warning messages (using Attachment 5). The benefit of having all participants rate all messages first is that each group member can make their own decision about each warning message, rather than being influenced by group pressure. This makes for a richer discussion in the focus group, when similarities or differences in views about each warning message can be explored in more detail.

In some cases, the moderator might start with a "practice" warning to make sure the process/scales are understood. At this stage it is very important that the moderator asks participants whether they understand how to use the rating form and its agreement scale, and clarifies any misunderstanding or queries about the scale if necessary.

All participants are instructed to view each warning message, one by one, and complete the accompanying rating form for each. The Moderator should ask participants not to speak when viewing the warning messages and completing the forms. Once all participants have completed their individual ratings, participants will be asked to compare all the warnings they have rated. The moderator should ask them to complete the comparison rating page and demographic questionnaire (the last pages of the forms). Once these have been completed, all rating forms should be collected. The Moderator should ensure that all forms for a group are kept together and later labeled.

The next stage of the group involves an open discussion of the warning messages, led by the Moderator, following the approach of the Moderator Guide (Attachment 2). Focus group discussions are more like a conversation than a set of structured questions. The discussion should be as informal as possible and participants should be encouraged to speak openly and freely. The Moderator will need to probe with questions such as "Why?" and "What does that mean to you?" in order to understand participants' responses.

The group discussion is also an excellent opportunity to collect specific feedback on the pictures and the words used in the warnings, and any specific questions or concerns you may have about a particular warning. For warnings that were rated highly, what aspect of the warning was most effective? For warnings that were rated poorly, what could be improved?

During the discussion of each warning message, the Assistant should record notes (using Attachment 3) throughout the session, including content of the discussion, quotes from participants and concluding observations from the groups, according to the main themes in the discussion guide (Attention, Communication, Identification, Effect) and any other questions asked that are specific to your objectives. The assistant should also note any emotional reactions or aspects of group interaction, which may affect the validity of the information collected.

The order that warnings are discussed should be varied for each group, and the order that the warning messages are discussed in each group should be recorded.

At the end of the discussion, the Moderator should thank participants and let them know that their ideas have been a valuable contribution, and also give out any compensation.

Step 6. Analysis of Results

Rating sheets

After all of the groups have been completed, all of the rating sheets should be collated and the results analysed. For each warning message, the proportion of people who agreed (agree + strongly agree) or disagreed (disagree + strongly disagree) with each statement should be calculated. Similarly, the proportion of people who thought each warning would be effective (effective + very effective) or ineffective (ineffective + very ineffective) for each purpose should be calculated. A comparison of these percentages for each message can give a clear summary of people's preferences. On the final rating page, the proportion of people who nominated each warning as the best (or worst) warning can be calculated. If desired, more detailed analysis can be conducted comparing the proportion of each demographic group (eg. males and females; younger and older) who agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Group discussion

After each focus group session, the moderator and assistant should meet to review and complete the notes taken during the discussion. At this point, they should evaluate how the focus group went and what changes might be made in the topics when conducting the next focus group.

Using the Assistant's notes as a guide, a full report of each discussion should be prepared which reflects the discussion as completely as possible, using the participants' own words. This should include the key statements, ideas, and attitudes expressed for each area of discussion and each warning. If possible, recordings of each group should be listened to and either fully transcribed or additional notes taken to ensure that all of the issues and opinions from the groups have been documented.

The discussion notes and transcripts should be collated, and the results for each warning message should be coded according to the main themes and objectives for the research. To do this, start by creating codes following the main themes (e.g. attention, communication, identification, effect), and then make finer sub-codes. As you go through the documents, mark passages and statements according to your codes. You will likely identify additional categories as you perform this exercise. Transcripts and notes may also be coded using qualitative analysis software, if available.

Once data is collected and coded, begin to summarise it by organising the statements from each group according to the themes and codes you've created. At this point, you can compare the comments from each group, for each warning. This can help to identify varying responses from different demographics, etc., and also whether groups are generally saying the same thing or if new ideas are still emerging.

The findings should be further combined and summarised across groups to provide an overall picture for each warning. During this stage of the analysis, it is important to ensure that all of the opinions expressed during the groups are taken into consideration, not just the most common opinions. Sometimes an opinion might be held by only a small number of participants, but it might be very important in terms of whether a warning message is likely to be effective. Make sure you are including the full range of responses and not only those that confirm findings and conclusions that are already established.

When comparing the warning messages and considering preferences, keep in mind that the best message is not necessarily the one that group participants liked the most. It is not necessary for a warning message to be liked for it to be effective. Rather, for smokers, the most effective warning may be one that makes them feel

most uncomfortable or concerned. Remember that the best warning message is the one that best achieves the objective(s) (in terms of informing about a health effect, motivating quit attempts, calling a Quitline, etc.). To do this, it needs to be noticed, to convey the desired message, to be relevant, and to prompt the desired behaviour.

Combined research information

The results from the rating sheets and the analysis of the discussions should then be combined and compared to find the most effective warning messages. The analysis of the completed rating forms will provide a snapshot of how the warning messages compare on a number of important dimensions, while the information from the focus group discussions will give more detailed explanations for those differences.

Any reports that are prepared using this information should start with a description of the objectives of the research, the selection of participants and composition of the groups, and a commentary on the group process, so the reader can assess the validity of the reported findings. The findings should be presented in terms of your objectives and the main areas of evaluation for the warnings, including quotations when possible, particularly for key statements.

ATTACHMENT 1: RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The following is intended as a generic version of a questionnaire that can be used for recruiting participants to the research. It can be used for recruiting face-to-face or by telephone. For each project, other specific details of the target audience and group segmentation will need to be added to these questions.

Introduction:

“Hello my name is [insert name] and I’m calling from [organization]. We are recruiting people 18 and over and who smoke to take part in a research discussion group. We are not conducting a survey now, but are asking smokers to take part in a focus group discussion on [insert days]. I would like to ask you a few qualifying questions which will take only 3 or 4 minutes. If you are eligible, you will be invited to participate in a discussion group [where you will receive [incentive] in appreciation for your time (optional)]. Your participation is voluntary and your answers will be kept confidential and will be combined with those of other participants. Could I please ask you a few questions to find out if you are eligible for the research?”

1. Record sex: [do not read]

- Male (check quotas)
- Female (check quotas)

2. What is your age? _____

Consider for separate groups based on age (e.g. 18-24 years in one group (or set of groups), 25 or over in another)

3. Do you smoke cigarettes?

- Yes (continue)
- No (thank and terminate)

4. On average, how many cigarettes do you smoke per day? _____

[May want to exclude those who smoke less than daily less than 5 cigarettes per day, or use for segmenting into groups]

5. Are you planning to quit smoking within the next 6 months? [optional, depending on whether this is used for segmenting groups]

- Yes
- No

6. In the last 2 years, have you or anyone in your household worked in any of the following industries? [read]

- Provincial or federal government (thank and terminate)
- The tobacco industry (thank and terminate)
- None of these (continue)

[depending on context, may also include in list: advertising/market research, or health promotion]

[if necessary, insert other socio-demographic questions here]

[optional] 7. Have you ever attended a focus group discussion or an individual interview at any survey company, which was arranged ahead of time and for which you received payment?

- No (go to eligibility)
- Yes (continue with 10a-c)

- 7a. How many times have you ever participated in a discussion group or an individual interview?
- Once or twice (*go to 10b*)
 - 3 times or more (*thank and terminate*)

- 7b. When was the last time you participated in a discussion group or an individual interview?
- Within the last 12 months (*thank and terminate*)
 - Not within the last 12 months (*go to 10c*)

7c. What was the topic discussed?

Specify: _____
(*If product, advertising, packaging related to tobacco, thank and terminate*)

If eligible: Based on your answers to those questions, you are eligible to participate in the research project. Participating in this research would involve attending a focus group session with about 6-8 people to talk about issues related to smoking. The group will last between one and a half and two hours. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation. You may decline to answer any of the questions you do not wish to answer and may terminate the study at any time. All of the information you provide will be treated confidentially, and comments made during the discussion will be combined in order to ensure they remain confidential. All information collected will be kept in a secure location and used for research purposes only. In addition, you will be given [insert incentive] as a token of appreciation for your time.

If the participant wants an explanation about what a focus group is: A focus group is made up of approximately 6-8 people and a moderator who gathers the opinions and the reactions of all participants.

8. Are you interested in participating in the research?
- Yes (*continue*)
 - No (*thank and terminate*)

The group you are eligible for is on [date] at [time], and will be held at [location].

9. Are you able to attend at this time?
- Yes (*continue*)
 - No (*thank and terminate*)

10. The discussion you are invited to participate in will be audio-taped to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Please be assured that your comments and responses are strictly confidential and we require the material and topics discussed in the focus group to be held confidential by you. Would this be a problem for you?

- Yes (*thank and terminate*)
- No (*continue*)

11. Participants will be asked to read materials and write out some responses. Are you able to take part in these activities?

- Yes (*continue*)
- No (*thank and terminate*)

12. As I mentioned, you are being invited to a group discussion with 6-8 other people. How comfortable are you in participating and speaking out in group discussions of this size?

- Very comfortable (*continue*)
- Somewhat comfortable (*continue*)
- Not very comfortable (*thank and terminate*)
- Not at all comfortable (*thank and terminate*)

If ineligible (e.g. ‘thank and terminate’): “I’m sorry, you are not eligible to participate in this research, but thank you for your time today.”

If participating: “Thank you for agreeing to participate. Again, the session will be held on [date] at [time], at [location], which is located on [address, directions]. Please ensure that you show up about 10 minutes prior to the start of the discussion, so that the discussion can start on time. Please bring photo ID with you to confirm with the moderator, and glasses if you need them for reading. The focus group will last no longer than 2 hours.

If for any reason you cannot attend the session, please notify us as soon as possible at [phone number] so we can find a replacement. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, please feel free to contact us. [insert Ethics Board contact and additional information if required].

We will telephone a few days before the session to confirm your attendance – when would be the best time to reach you? (*record*)

Thank you for your time today.”

ATTACHMENT 2: MODERATOR GUIDE

Purpose of the Discussion Guide

This discussion guide has been developed for the use of the group Moderator to prompt discussion amongst the participants. This guide will be used to steer discussion to the topic areas to be covered, and the specific questions of interest within each topic area.

For the purposes of qualitative research, it is not necessarily intended that these questions be asked exactly as they are worded here. Focus group discussions are more like a conversation than a set of structured questions. The discussion should be as informal as possible and participants should be encouraged to speak openly and freely. The Moderator will need to probe with questions such as “Why?” and “What does that mean to you?” in order to understand participants’ responses. The Moderator will also need to make sure that all participants in the group have an opportunity to express their opinions.

Because each group of participants may be different, a responsive approach should be used for the research. Therefore, a level of flexibility should be taken in the conduct of each group to allow individual and group reactions to issues and to the warning messages. For this reason, the groups may vary in terms of the detailed topics and the order in which issues are discussed.

Explanation to Participants

- Introduce group Moderator and Assistant. – *“Hello, my name is, I will be conducting the group discussion today, and this is, who will assist me by taking notes.”*
- Thank participants for their time and contribution.
- Explain what the research is about - *“We’re here to talk about issues to do with smoking and tobacco warning labels”.*
- Explain recording and confidentiality of participant information. – *“With your permission we would like to record the group. The recording will only be used to help us with analysing the results. Your personal details are confidential, and we will not keep or pass on any personal information about you. Is it OK for us to record the group?”*
- Give participants a chance to answer any questions they have after reading the information letter. Prompt for completing the consent forms and then collect them before continuing.
- Explain the importance of honest opinions – *“Your views and experience are important, so we would like you to tell us what you think and feel about your experiences and about each of the warning messages we show you. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the issues we are discussing today, so it is important that you provide us with your honest opinions and that you understand that we will not make any judgements of you for your opinions. Also, as we are talking about your personal opinions and experiences, it is not necessary for everyone to agree with each other. It is helpful for us to find out the different opinions that people have, as well as where people have the same opinions, so please feel free to tell us whatever you think and feel, even if it might be different to what other people in the room are saying.”*

Introduction

“Before we start with the topic, it would help us to know a little bit about each of you. Could we go around the group and please tell us your first name, how long you have been smoking for and the number of cigarettes you normally smoke per day.”

These questions/answers help participants feel more relaxed knowing that others in the group are similar to themselves.

Background Questionnaire (Attachment 4)

“At this point, I’d like to ask you all to fill out this short questionnaire that tells us a little more about your background.”

Hand out the Background Questionnaire, and give participants time to complete it before continuing.

Part 1: Individual ratings of warning messages (Attachment 5)

1A. Rating each warning message

Hand out booklets with copies of each warning (printed on 4x3" cardstock, in varying order for each respondent), and Individual Rating Questionnaires (each participant gets a copy of Page 1 for each warning message, and one copy of Page 2).

"We will start by looking at some warning messages and getting your individual responses before we discuss them together. Please refer to the booklet in front of you, which has copies of each warning message, and complete Page 1 of the questionnaire for that warning message. When you have completed Page 1 for each warning message, please stop and wait for further instructions."

Remind participants to remain quiet and not discuss the warning messages at this stage.

The order of showing the warning messages should be varied for each group. This is to minimise the chance of preferences being influenced by the order in which the warning messages are presented.

1B. Comparative rating of warning messages

Show all messages and ask participants to complete Page 2 (comparison).

Once this has been done, collect the questionnaires and begin the group discussion.

Part 2: Group Discussion

Note: *This is a full list of all possible questions. The items included in the script for a particular group asked will depend on the content of the messages shown, and the items actually discussed will depend on the particular focus group discussion.*

2A. Rating each warning message

"Now that you've had a chance to review the warnings on your own, we'll move to a group discussion about each of the warnings you've just seen, one at a time. Please give us your own honest opinions, even if they are different from others in the group. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, and you are not being judged on what you share today."

Have participants view each warning message, in the same order this time. After viewing each message, prompt the group with the following questions for each topic area.

1. Attention - noticing:

- "Does this warning catch your attention? What in particular catches your attention?"

2. Communication – message, comprehension, credibility:

- "What message is this warning trying to get across?"
- "Does this warning message tell you anything new or anything you didn't already know? What?"
- "Is this important information?" [for constituent labelling only]
- "Was there anything you didn't understand, or that wasn't clear in the warning message? What?"
- "Do you believe what this warning is saying? What don't you believe?"
- "What do you think/how do you feel about the picture?"

- “What do you think/how do you feel about the headline text?”
- “What do you think/how do you feel about the explanatory text?”

3. Identification – personal relevance:

- “Who do you think this warning message is aimed at? Why?”
- “Is this message relevant to you personally? Why/why not?”

4. Effect – call to action:

- “Is there anything in this warning message that leaves you feeling more concerned about your smoking? What?”
- “Is there anything about this warning message that would get you to think about quitting? What?”
- “Does this message change how you think about the chemicals in cigarettes/smoke? How?” [*for constituent labelling only*]

If there are specific objectives for your warning messages, you can insert questions on their effects here.

5. Suggestions for improvement:

- “How would you improve this warning?”
- “Any other comments?”

2B. Comparing warning messages

After each warning has been viewed and discussed, show all warnings together and prompt participants to compare them.

6. Comparison:

- “Of all the messages you’ve seen today, which warning message do you think is the best? Why?”
- “Of all the messages you’ve seen today, which warning message do you think is the worst? Why?”

If you have specific objectives for your warning messages or are testing particular design elements, you can insert questions comparing the warnings on those aspects here. For example:

- *if you had a specific objective for targeting youth: “Which of these warning messages is most likely to help to prevent youth from starting smoking?”*
- *if you were testing different graphic designs that used the same content: “Which of these warning messages are you most likely to notice? Why?”*

ATTACHMENT 3: ASSISTANT NOTE-TAKING GUIDE

(copy Part A for each warning message; complete for each group)

Session information:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place: _____

Draw a seating plan including respondents' first names (and basic characteristics) for reference, and include with the notes. In the appropriate spaces below, record participants' responses (in their own words if possible), as well as the general conclusions reached for each point/warning. Also, note any emotional reactions, the interactions of the group (such as level of participation and interest, whether there are dominant/non-participating members), and any other observations that you think may be helpful when interpreting the findings.

Part A. Rating each warning message

Attention

Will smokers notice the warning message? What will they notice? _____

Communication

What message will this warning convey to smokers? _____

What issues are there with comprehension? _____

Will smokers believe the warning message? _____

What do smokers think of the picture? _____

What do smokers think of the headline text? _____

What do smokers think of the explanatory text? _____

Identification

Will smokers see the warning message as relevant to them? _____

Effect

What effect will the warning message have? _____

Suggestions for improvement:

How could the warning message be improved? _____

ATTACHMENT 4: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the questions below to help give us a better understanding of your background.

1. Are you . . .
 - Male
 - Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. Do you currently smoke cigarettes . . . (select one)
 - Daily
 - Occasionally
 - Not at all

4. On average, how many cigarettes do you smoke per day? _____

5. Are you planning to quit smoking . . .
 - within the next month,
 - within the next 6 months,
 - sometime in the future beyond 6 months, or
 - are you not planning to quit?

6. Do you have any children who are . . .
 - Under one year old: Yes No
 - Between 1 and 5 years old: Yes No
 - Between 6 and 12 years old: Yes No
 - Between 13 and 17 years old: Yes No
 - 18 years or older: Yes No

7. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
 - Less than high school
 - Completed high school
 - Some college
 - Completed college
 - Some university
 - Completed university

8. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you . . .
 - Employed full-time
 - Employed part-time
 - A student
 - Unemployed or looking for work
 - Retired
 - Self-employed
 - Not in the workforce/homemaker

Thank you. Please wait quietly for other people to finish.

ATTACHMENT 5: INDIVIDUAL RATING QUESTIONNAIRE

(each participant gets a copy of Page 1 for each warning message, and one copy of Page 2; the order of the questionnaire sheets and warnings in the participant booklet should match)

Msg.: _____
 Session#: _____
 ID#: _____

Please complete the following page for each warning message.

Draw a circle around the number that best shows your response to each statement:

This warning message...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	In the middle	Agree	Strongly Agree
...grabs my attention	1	2	3	4	5
... is easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5
...makes me stop and think	1	2	3	4	5
...taught me something new	1	2	3	4	5
...is believable	1	2	3	4	5
...is relevant to me	1	2	3	4	5
...is frightening	1	2	3	4	5
...makes me feel more concerned about smoking	1	2	3	4	5
...makes me think about the health risks of smoking	1	2	3	4	5
...would make me think about quitting	1	2	3	4	5

Thinking about the TEXT in this warning:

Please rate the effectiveness of the text in this warning, by circling one number on the scale below.

LEAST effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MOST effective

What do you LIKE about the text, if anything? _____

What do you DISLIKE about the text, if anything? _____

Thinking about the PICTURE in this warning:

Please rate the effectiveness of the picture in this warning, by circling one number on the scale below.

LEAST effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MOST effective

What do you LIKE about the picture, if anything? _____

What do you DISLIKE about the picture, if anything? _____

How effective would this warning message be in each of the following ways...?

	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective
Making people think about the health risks of smoking	1	2	3	4
Motivating smokers to quit smoking or think about quitting	1	2	3	4
Helping to prevent youth from starting smoking	1	2	3	4
Overall, how effective is this warning?	1	2	3	4

Once you have completed this form for all warnings, please stop here and wait for further instructions.

Please complete the following section considering all the warning messages.

Please put the warning messages in order from most effective to least effective overall, in your opinion. Indicate your choices by writing the [letter/number] of the warning in the appropriate space below.

LEAST effective							MOST effective
--------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	-------------------

[Optional: comparison questions for specific objectives, depending on the warnings used.]

For example:

- Which one of the warning messages most made you stop and think?
(Check one only)
 - [insert picture of first warning]
 - [insert picture of second warning]
 - [insert picture of third warning]
 - [insert picture of fourth warning]
 - [insert picture of fifth warning]
 - [insert picture of sixth warning]
- Which one of the warning messages do you think would be most effective for informing people about the health effects of tobacco?
- Which one of the warning messages do you think would be most effective for encouraging smokers to reduce their tobacco use?
- Which one of the warning messages do you think would be most effective for preventing youth from starting smoking?