

## POS1-95

### ARE E-CIGARETTE COMPANIES TARGETING YOUTH? AN EMPIRICAL STUDY BASED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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**Background:** As the e-cigarette industry increases their promotional efforts through traditional and online marketing channels, there has been a major concern about whether youth has been targeted by such efforts. There is a critical need for empirical findings on the impact of e-cigarette promotional messages on youth. This study investigates how social media platforms have been used by e-cigarette companies to reach youth. **Methods:** We selected two representative social media sites as our study targets, namely YouTube and Sina Weibo (the most popular Chinese microblogging website). A set of e-cigarette related keywords was submitted to the official search engines of the two sites. For each search, the top 20 results returned by YouTube and the top 1000 results returned by Sina Weibo were collected. A final sample of 196 videos and 999 messages was analyzed. The youth access to such e-cigarette information was also determined by assessing whether YouTube and Sina Weibo have any age restriction to view these videos and messages. **Results:** In our dataset, 94% (n=185) of the 196 YouTube videos and 68% (n=677) of the 999 Sina Weibo messages were promoting e-cigarette use. There are four categories of induction information from these promotional messages. The first category exaggerates the benefits of e-cigarette use. The second category aims to ease the public concerns of e-cigarette use. The third category tries to promote the "cool" factor of e-cigarette use through images of fashion or positive association. The last category contains offers to lower the barriers to e-cigarette purchases. None of the sampled e-cigarette videos in YouTube and messages in Sina Weibo blocks youth viewing. Notably, males and females of 13-17 years were found among the main audience of two promotional videos in YouTube. **Conclusion:** E-cigarette companies are targeting youth through social media applications. Given the prevalence of social media use among youth, research is critically needed to gain a better understanding of such youth-targeting strategy and practice, with public policy implications.

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**JUSTIFICATION:** This study could help public health authorities gain a better understanding of e-cigarette information in social media and inform regulatory decision making.

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## POS1-96

### AN INVESTIGATION OF EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS WITH ANTI-SMOKING WARNINGS

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Information about the health risks associated with smoking is encountered in a variety of forms in everyday life. The use of graphic health warnings on tobacco products is mandated by law in numerous jurisdictions around the world. Lab-based studies indicate that such warnings are perceived as important and effective, are successful in increasing knowledge of smoking-related disease, and induce fear and cessation-related thoughts. While these findings are promising, the impact of smoking health warnings in day-to-day life has not been assessed in detail. The current study employed ecological momentary assessment (EMA) to assess the everyday encounters with anti-smoking warnings of 30 smokers and 24 never-smokers. Participants were required to carry modified smartphones for up to three weeks (912 subject days of monitoring in total) and to report encounters with smoking warnings along with responding to randomly scheduled prompts;

current smokers were also required to report cigarettes smoked. Assessments focused on attitudes and reactions to the health warnings, perceived risk, and motivation to quit. Our results suggest that, compared to non-smokers, current smokers encounter significantly more health warnings during their day-to-day activities (2.02 vs 0.54 warnings per day), although the absolute number was surprisingly low given that package warnings are designed to be encountered each time a cigarette is smoked. While some under-reporting is possible, the finding suggests that warnings may be ignored, avoided, or covered. Feelings of vulnerability to smoking-related disease were not significantly higher in smokers than never-smokers, suggesting a strong optimistic bias of the smokers in this sample. Feelings of vulnerability were found to predict smokers' intention to quit. Furthermore, both smokers and never-smokers reported higher feelings of vulnerability when health warnings were present. The results of this study suggest that while smoking-related health warnings may not be consciously encountered as frequently expected, they do appear to be related to intentions to quit.

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**JUSTIFICATION:** Important to understand the effect of tobacco warnings

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## POS1-97

### A SMOKE-FREE COMMUNITY HOUSING POLICY: CHANGES IN REPORTED SMOKING BEHAVIOUR – FINDINGS FROM WATERLOO REGION, CANADA

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**BACKGROUND:** In October, 2009, Region of Waterloo Council (Canada) approved a smoke-free housing policy for all regionally owned and operated affordable rental housing units (2722 households). This policy came into effect on April 1, 2010 and made all new leases signed with Waterloo Region Housing 100% smoke-free (including balcony or patio areas). Existing lease holders were 'grandfathered' – meaning they could still smoke in their units. Tenants have been surveyed over time to understand support for the policy, reported exposure to secondhand smoke, and impacts on smoking behavior. **METHODS:** An envelope containing a cover letter that described the smoke-free housing policy, the survey questionnaire, and a letter that provided instructions on how to access language translation support for completing the survey was delivered by a private courier to every household in the portfolio in the winter of 2010 (pre-policy), and the winter of 2011 and 2013 (post-policy). **RESULTS:** The survey was completed by 26% of households (n=717) in 2010, 25% of households (n=685) in 2011, and 23% (n=618) in 2013. At the time of the post-policy survey, the proportion of households that had a smoke-free lease was approximately 12% (2011) and 31% (2013). Reported support for the policy was 72% pre-enactment (2010), and increased to 79% in 2013 (p=0.003). In 2010, the majority of respondents reported they are exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS) in their home at least sometimes (58%); in 2011 and 2013, 50% reported they are exposed to SHS in their home. Of respondents who identified as smokers, 41% reported they had tried to quit in the last year (2010 and 2011) and 45% in 2013. Since the policy, 45% (2013) of smokers reported they go outside to smoke more often than before the smoke-free housing policy. **CONCLUSIONS:** After 3 years, approximately one third of households have a smoke-free clause in their lease. The housing policy is associated with positive changes in smoking behavior and exposure including increased quitting attempts, an increase in reported outdoor smoking, and reduced reported exposure to SHS. Support for the policy increased modestly after it was implemented.

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