

Bangladeshi's perceptions of a standardized shape & size for smokeless tobacco

Background



21% of adults in Bangladesh use smokeless tobacco (SLT), with the highest rates of use among women, rural, & low-income groups.¹



Zordha and gul are the most popular forms of SLT and are sold in wide variety of shapes (e.g., cylindrical, sachets), sizes (in grams), and packaging material (e.g., plastic, tin).²



Product shape, size, packaging, and branding (e.g., color, imagery, claims) can influence consumers' attraction to products and perceptions of harm from their use.³⁻⁷



The variation in shape and size of SLT products can also limit compliance with required graphic health warning labels covering 50% of the top principal area on the front and back of the pack.²

Figure 1: Current and standard SLT packs discussed in focus groups.



-----Current zordha packs -----| ----Current gul packs----| Standard zordha | Standard gul

Study Design



We held 28 focus groups with current SLT users (14 groups) and never tobacco users (14 groups). All participants were recruited in low-income urban and rural areas in Dhaka, Sylhet, and Khulna.

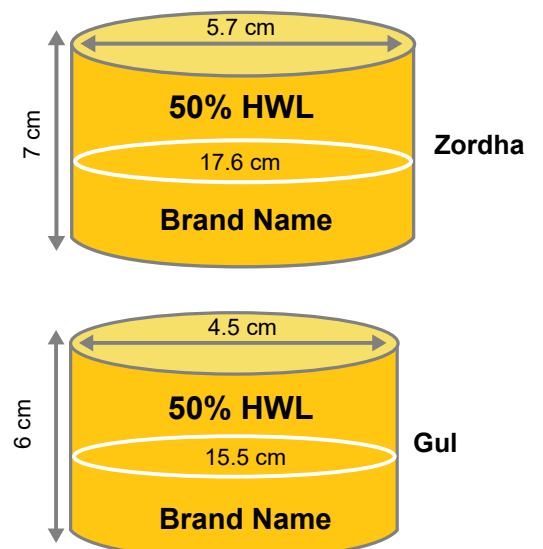


Each focus group reviewed (a) current zordha and gul packs and (b) study designed standard zordha and gul packs (Figure 1). Standard packs were manufactured in Bangladesh following specifications in Figure 2.



Groups compared the standard packs to the current packs in terms of attractiveness, noticeability of the health warning labels on the pack, and perceived harm.

Figure 2: Standard pack specifications



Key Findings



- Across user and non-user groups, the standard packs were seen as superior to current packs in terms of attractive color and imagery, durable design, product size, and material.

“This [standard pack] one looks the best. The color is nice, the container’s size is good, and the tin with which it is made of is of good quality.”

Non-user group, Rural Khulna, Women

- The higher price of the standard zordha pack also made the product seem superior for one SLT user group of women from rural Dhaka.

- All groups discussed the placement of health warnings on standard packs were more noticeable than warnings on current packs.

“The [current packs] we saw earlier cannot be understand if it is harmful or not. The warning message is given on one side in those items. The warning message is given all around on this [standard] container. It can be visible from all sides.”

Non-user group, Urban Dhaka, Men

“The picture and the texts are clear. The [standard gul] size is big. It can be seen from a distance.”

SLT user group, Urban Sylhet, Women



Noticeability of warnings

Perceived harm



- Both user and non-user groups also discussed that warnings on standard packs increased concern about use compared to the warnings on current packs, particularly for standard gul, and could potentially reduce use among never users and current users.

“The pictures on both sides of the standard gul say that it’s very dangerous. The picture will catch your eyes whichever way you turn this container. The containers available in the market are small, as a result, nothing is discernible. Everything is clearly visible on this pack.”

SLT user group, Urban Dhaka, Men

Conclusions



The standard pack shape increased noticeability of graphic health warnings if they were applied as required.



The prominence of warnings on standard packs also raised harm perceptions, which may influence behavior.



However, standard pack features, such as tin material and sturdy pack design may increase product appeal. Other complementary policies such as plain packaging and increased health warning size could reduce appeal.

References

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