

# Health Warning Label Compliance in Mexico: Tobacco Industry Exploiting Strong Legislation

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## Background

Prominent pictorial health warning labels (HWLs) are effective in communicating health risks and supporting cessation. With text warnings on packs covering 100% of the back and one side, and with a pictogram on the front upper 30%, Mexican HWLs rank among the largest globally. We assessed their compliance.

## Methods

- Using the TPackSS systematic protocol, we collected unique cigarette packs in five cities in Mexico between Oct-Nov 2021.
- Packs with current Mexican HWLs at the time of data collection were double-coded for compliance.

## Results

- All 189 packs with a current HWL complied with warning location; 88% complied with coverage.
- Only 62% had all the correct label elements; low compliance was driven by the absence of black outlining around pictogram text.
- Pictogram implementation was the worst indicator at 28% compliance and combined compliance of all four indicators was 19%.

In Mexico, the **tobacco industry** is **manipulating pictograms** to diminish HWL visibility/readability.

High **financial penalties** for **non-compliant companies** might assure correct HWL implementation.



◀ Explore the  
Tobacco Pack Surveillance  
System (TPackSS)

[globaltobaccocontrol.org](http://globaltobaccocontrol.org)

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▲ Pictogram as displayed in the HWL regulation

Example of non-compliant HWL on Pall Mall pack collected in Mexico—manipulated elements include darkened image, zoomed-out crop, no black outline around text ▼



## Additional Information

- Data collection was conducted across 12 tobacco vendors in low, middle, and high socioeconomic areas of Mexico City, Guadalajara, Leon, Durango and Merida.
- Compliance indicator variables: warning location, coverage, label elements (text and background color, pictogram text outlined in black), and pictogram implementation (image is the same as shown in the regulation)
- Larger pictograms will increase their visibility and their efficacy.

## Authors

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