

MARKETING APPEALS ON CHINESE E-CIGARETTE PRODUCTS AND PACKAGING

SIGNIFICANCE

In China, in 2021, 15% of youth reported ever using e-cigarettes and 3% reported current use. Flavors like fruit are known to increase product appeal among youth. A ban on e-cigarette flavors other than tobacco has been in force in China since Oct. 2022.

In 2023, this study collected e-cigarettes sold in six major cities in China and assessed them for marketing appeals. To our knowledge, it is the first study to report on marketing appeals on e-cigarette packages from China.

METHODS

- TPackSS (Tobacco Pack Surveillance System) systematic protocol used to purchase e-cigarette packs in China
- Products/packaging was double-coded by native Chinese speakers for marketing appeals such as:
 - flavor
 - corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives
 - technology (e.g., “turbocharged core”)
 - cultural references (e.g., traditional Chinese art)
- Descriptive statistics were calculated

RESULTS: PRODUCT TYPES

- 143 unique e-cigarette packs:
 - 97% **disposable pods** (n=138)
 - 3% **disposable devices** (n=5)

PRESENCE OF MANUFACTURER-LED YOUTH VAPING PREVENTION MESSAGING AND NON-TOBACCO FLAVORS JUSTIFY ACTION:



BAN MANUFACTURER-LED VAPING PREVENTION MESSAGING



REMOVE NONCOMPLIANT PACKS FROM THE MARKETPLACE

NON-TOBACCO FLAVOR APPEAL
concept & flavor descriptors: “cold dew strawberries”

FLAVOR IMAGERY
8-bit strawberry illustration

MANUFACTURER-LED YOUTH VAPING PREVENTION CONTENT
program logo and slogan “protecting future stars”



Learn more about the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS)

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	Tobacco industry	E-cigarette & nicotine product industry	Pharma industry
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RESULTS: MARKETING APPEALS

- 25% (n=35) referenced **CSR initiatives** (e.g., programs to prevent underage vaping)
- Other appeals included **luxury** (n=41), **technology** (n=39), mention of **awards or standards** (n=34), **traditional cultural references** (n=28), and **global appeals** (n=25)
- 62% (n=89) featured **flavor descriptors**:
 - 38% (n=54) tobacco flavor
 - 24% (n=35) non-tobacco flavor, including 21% manufactured *before the ban* and 16% that referenced a *fruit*
- 59% (n=84) had **concept flavor descriptors** (e.g., “pineapple tornado”)
 - 22% (n=31) alongside a tobacco flavor descriptor
- 23% (n=33) had **flavor imagery** (e.g., strawberry, soda)

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the flavor ban, non-tobacco flavor appeals (e.g., fruit) were observed on some packs (although most were manufactured before the ban). Flavor appeals could lead to increased product appeal among youth, as could marketing of youth vaping prevention programs on packs. Findings from this study can be used to assess compliance with existing regulations and inform regulatory actions to protect Chinese youth from the harms of e-cigarettes.

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