

Advertising Campaigns About the Dangers of Tobacco

A large proportion of people in China don't realize that smoking causes illness, disability, and death.¹ Education about the dangers of tobacco can prevent people from starting to smoke and encourage smokers to quit.

Educational advertising campaigns, including television, newspapers, the internet, outdoor billboards and warnings on tobacco products, can increase awareness of the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke and convince more people to quit smoking. In other countries, multi-media campaigns about the dangers of tobacco have been correlated with:

- Increased overall awareness that smoking is harmful²
- More smokers who consider quitting²
- More smokers who quit smoking²
- Multi-media campaigns can also be used to get the attention of health professionals and encourage them to focus on the problem of tobacco.³

Effective warning labels are the most cost-effective method of advertising about the dangers of tobacco.⁴

- Labels on cigarette packs and other forms of tobacco improve awareness of the dangers of smoking and increase desire to quit.⁵
- Labels should cover more than 50% of the front and back of the pack, and may include graphic pictures, such as diseased lungs.⁶

Anti-smoking campaigns can reduce youth smoking and prevent children from starting to smoke:

- Effective television ads can:
 - Prevent as many as 50% of young teens from becoming future smokers⁷
 - Decrease the number of teens who try smoking in the near future, and change the attitudes of non-smokers so that they are less likely to try smoking later in life⁷
- Since a teen is 2.7 times more likely to smoke if one or more close friends smoke,⁷ an anti-smoking campaign that prevents one teen from starting to smoke can have a protective effect on many friends and family members.
- Teens exposed to advertising about the dangers of tobacco are:
 - 1.5 times less likely to think smoking makes them look cool⁸
 - 1.6 times less likely to think that they will try smoking in the future⁸
 - 2.6 times more likely to report that taking a position against smoking is important to them, which can protect themselves and others from peer pressure to smoke⁸
- Teens were 20% more susceptible to starting to smoke cigarettes in an area where annual funding for tobacco control programs was cut by 80%, ending a multi-year campaign directed at youths.⁹
- Well-designed television campaigns for adults are also effective in reaching adolescents.³

References

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