

# Legislation: Health Warnings

"Plain packaging is important because it eliminates the positive imagery associated with the brand and potentially disrupts the process of smoking initiation whereby child smokers become brand loyal."  
 Rob Cunningham and Ken Kyle, 1995

Health warnings about tobacco have been in existence for four hundred years, starting with King James I in England and Fang Yizhi in China, both in the 17th century (see map 1).

Cigarette packs first carried health warnings in the 1960's following scientific reports on the hazards of smoking in the USA and the UK. These early warnings were weak and inconspicuous. Contemporary Canadian warnings are the most vivid in the world and are serving as the model for other countries, such as Brazil. While many countries have some type of health warning on the pack, these are not universal and many that do exist are not as unequivocal, simple and stark as is necessary; some are not in the local language nor on all tobacco products.

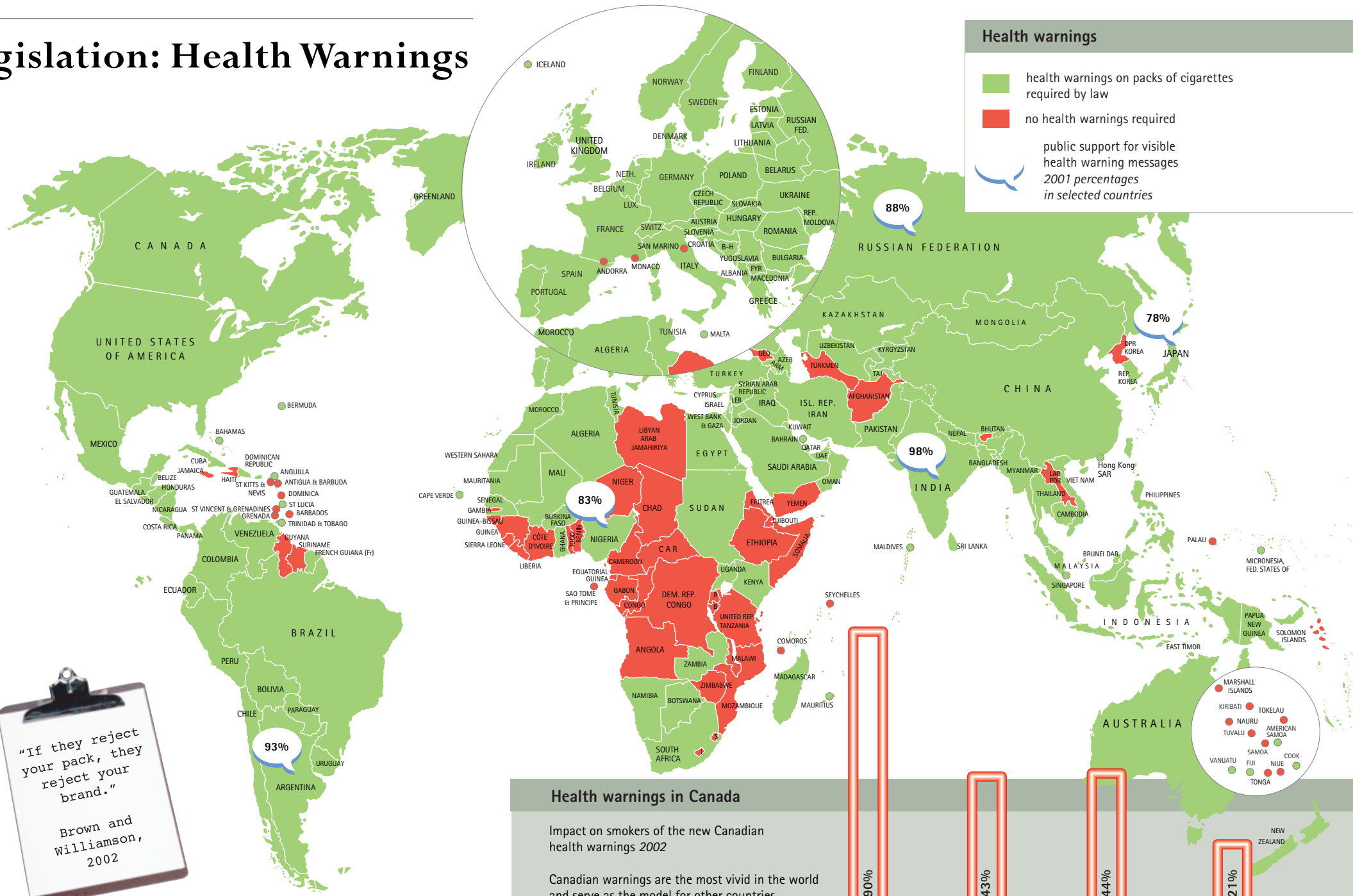
Reports from Canada and Australia suggest that plain packaging may increase both prominence and believability of health warnings. That is, no use of colour, logo or graphic design, but simply a generic pack of cigarettes, with the brand name.

Health authorities now recommend that cigarette packages should not contain tar and nicotine levels as measured by smoking machines, as these do not reflect the actual inhalation of tar and nicotine due to cigarette design (primarily ventilation holes), and individual smoker behaviour (a tendency for

smokers to compensate to get more nicotine from each cigarette) and are thus misleading. Others suggest that a range of values should be presented that better resembles how smokers actually smoke, and

to include this information on the pack of cigarettes in a section on toxic constituents, which also includes levels of carcinogens and carbon monoxide exposure.

"If they reject your pack, they reject your brand."  
 Brown and Williamson, 2002



## Health warnings in Canada

Impact on smokers of the new Canadian health warnings 2002

Canadian warnings are the most vivid in the world and serve as the model for other countries

