

Abstract:

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act granted FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture, marketing, and distribution of tobacco products to protect public health and reduce tobacco use by minors. A provision of this act requires FDA to establish and make publicly available a list of harmful and potentially harmful constituents (HPHCs) in tobacco so that it is understandable and not misleading to the public. The primary objective of this study is to determine how to best present information on tobacco's HPHCs to consumers in a way that is understood and not misleading. A secondary objective is to test for differences in effectiveness of formats for presenting HPHC information by education level. In Aim 1, we will develop four visual formats to communicate information about the quantity of HPHCs in tobacco products to be used for subsequent testing (Aim 2). Each format will present information on the quantity of constituents of tobacco smoke selected from the list of HPHCs for which FDA has determined that testing methods are established and widely available. The most simplistic of these formats will provide only numerical information listing the yields of tobacco ingredients for the constituents. The remaining formats will convey this information using visual or graphical presentations. Information about the health effects associated with each constituent will be included. In Aim 2, we will test which format from Aim 1 is most effective by using a between-subjects experimental design. The sample, 2,000 smokers aged 18 years or older, evenly split between low and high education level, will be recruited from GfK's KnowledgePanel®. Participants will be randomly assigned to receive one of the four treatments (information formats for a list of five HPHCs) or control (no information). Participants will complete a short survey about verbatim and gist knowledge of HPHCs, understandability of the HPHC information presented, and the extent to which information presented might be misleading. For some outcomes (e.g., understanding information in visual display formats) comparisons will be made between treatment groups. For other outcomes (e.g., knowledge about HPHCs and beliefs about the health risks of HPHCs), comparisons will be made between treatment and control.