

Abstract: Dissecting Heterogeneity of Treatment Response of First Episode Schizophrenia  
PI: Anil Malhotra  
3P50MH080173-05S2

The rate of smoking by young patients with first episode (FE) schizophrenia is up to five times higher than that for other young adults. Developing smoking interventions for FE patients is critical for preventing the long-term smoking-related morbidity and early mortality suffered by people with schizophrenia, a chronic disorder affecting 3.5 million Americans. A mainstay of public health efforts worldwide (including the proposed FDA cigarette labeling) are health warnings. Currently, no research has assessed how young people with FE schizophrenia respond to tobacco warnings that are designed for use with the general population despite characteristics of FE schizophrenia such as psychotic symptoms and cognitive deficits that suggest that FE patients may respond differently to warning messages. This supplement will provide data on the acceptability and efficacy of standard text and picture cigarette warnings and will facilitate development of effective materials for FE patients. Further, young people, both those with and without schizophrenia, spend large amounts of time watching television and on the internet. For these groups, short videos may be more effective than text and print warnings. To address important knowledge gaps, we will recruit 100 patients with FE schizophrenia (50 current smokers and 50 non-smokers) and 100 health controls matched for age, sex and smoking status. Subjects will be presented text/picture and video warnings and, for each warning, subjects' perception of the warning's effectiveness and subjective response will be assessed. One month later, subjects will be assessed for retained knowledge and effects of the warnings. Given the high smoking rates of FE patients despite currently available health information, the primary hypotheses are that FE patients will assess warnings to be less effective and also have less subjective response to warnings than control subjects. Secondary hypotheses are that video warnings will be rated more effective by and produce more subjective response from both patient and control subjects. Exploratory analyses will examine the effect of the warnings on smoking knowledge, attitudes and behavior in both groups and the effects of symptoms and cognition on warning outcomes among FE smokers.