

Analysis of Roll-Your-Own Tobacco pack characteristics in Argentina

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Background

Packaging is a vital **marketing tool** for tobacco companies and a **key channel for communicating product-related risks** to governments.

Methods

- We purchased **116 RYO tobacco packs** (11/2022–05/ 2024), in:
- We conducted a **descriptive analysis** of the following pack characteristics (including price in USD and flavour):



Results

- The sample included **50 brands**.
- Most packs were **pouches** and contained **30 grams** of tobacco (see Table 1).
- 51.7% were flavoured**.
- Unflavoured packs** featured **natural descriptors** (51.8%) and **light colours** (48.2%).
- Flavoured packs** used **flavour descriptors** (88.3%) and **bright colours** associated with the flavour (86.7%).
- 47.4% did **not** display a **warning-image covering 50% of the front-pack**
- The warning image and message were frequently obscured by a tax stamp.

Discussion

We found a **wide variety of flavoured RYO tobacco in Argentina**, which may increase appeal among young people. We also observed **colours and descriptors** previously used on cigarettes to **suggest reduced risk**.

The main **limitation** is our purposive, **non-probabilistic sample**, as national sales data was unavailable; we included all brands and most variants found at points of sale.

Objective

To analyse the **characteristics of roll-your-own (RYO) tobacco packs** in Argentina and assess their **compliance with health warning regulations**.

Table 1. Characteristics of RYO tobacco packs by type (flavoured and unflavoured)

Characteristics of RYO tobacco packs	RYO Tobacco Type Flavoured N=60 (100%)	Unflavoured N=56 (100%)	TOTAL N=116 (100%)
Average price (USD)	\$5.1	\$4.7	\$4.9
Flavour			
Fruit	26 (43.3%)	-	26 (22.4%)
Vanilla	13 (21.7%)	-	13 (11.2%)
Chocolate	9 (15.0%)	-	9 (7.8%)
Other (e.g. mint, coffee, Amarula)	12 (20%)	-	12 (10.3%)
Pack structure			
Tobacco Quantity			
30g	46 (76.7%)	40 (71.4%)	86 (74.1%)
40g	11 (18.3%)	4 (7.1%)	15 (12.9%)
50g	1 (1.7%)	8 (14.3%)	9 (7.8%)
Other: 35g, 45g, 100g, 150g	2 (3.3%)	4 (7.1%)	6 (5.2%)
Pack Type			
Pouch	55 (91.7%)	54 (96.4%)	109 (94.0%)
Other (e.g. box, cylindrical pack)	5 (8.3%)	2 (3.6%)	7 (6.0%)
Pack graphics			
Main pack colour refers to the flavour	52 (86.7%)	1 (1.8%)	53 (45.7%)
Flavour and/or intensity descriptors	53 (88.3%)	34 (60.7%)	87 (75.0%)
Main pack colour "Natural"	7 (11.7%)	27 (48.2%)	34 (29.3%)
Natural descriptors (e.g. "additive-free")	7 (11.7%)	29 (51.8%)	36 (31.0%)
Place of Origin			
Argentina	25 (41.7%)	29 (51.8%)	54 (46.6%)
Europe	31 (51.7%)	21 (37.5%)	52 (44.8%)
Other: Uruguay	4 (6.7%)	2 (3.6%)	6 (5.2%)
Warning compliance			
Warning not covering half of the pack (text)	13 (21.7%)	19 (33.9%)	32 (27.6%)
Warning not covering half of the pack (image)	24 (40.0%)	31 (55.4%)	55 (47.4%)
Message is not fully visible	43 (71.7%)	52 (92.9%)	95 (81.9%)
Image is not fully visible	53 (88.3%)	52 (92.9%)	105 (90.5%)

Conclusions

The findings help to understand **how tobacco companies promote RYO tobacco via the packaging**, with the use of colours, descriptors, and flavours that **may help increase product appeal and influence perceptions of harm**.