



Pictorial warning discourages smoking

ISLAMABAD (PPI)- The scary pictures of diseased lungs, a brain damaged from a stroke and other disturbing images that appear on cigarette packs in Pakistan, are effective in informing people about the harms of smoking and motivating smokers to quit.

Pakistan is one of the countries which introduced pictorial warnings in recently and, over the past nine years, 27 other countries have introduced similar pictorial warnings on tobacco packaging. Many other countries are considering doing so.

A survey conducted by PPI revealed that pictorial warning introduced by Ministry of Health proved far affective as it has discouraged the growing trend of smoking among the people, special youngsters. Due to the frightening pictures displaced on cigarette packs people were shy to pur-

chase tobacco related items.

"Our research findings show that graphic pictures can enhance the effectiveness of warning labels by making them more noticeable, increasing thoughts about the hazards of smoking and increasing motivation to quit," said a doctor Dr Riaz Khan.

He was of the view that pictorial warning on cigarette packs will help to curb the menace of smoking in the country.

A chain smoker Farrukh Azeem said he has been smoking from last eight years but after the pictorial warning, he is trying to get rid of. "I use to inhale one pack of cigarette everyday but now I gulp only four cigarettes in a day. I will quit it completely very soon, he added.

Waqas Vicky Paanwala in Super Market, also admitted that pictorial warnings proved effective as people are shy to

buy cigarettes. Though the developments have damaged my business but after all, it is fruitful for youngsters. He said vendors related to tobacco industry were worried about their future.

Another health expert was of the view that instead, there is convincing evidence that symbols and pictures are more effective, especially for sections of society that are illiterate and cannot read the warnings.

Written health warning such as 'smoking is injurious to health' has not been found to be effective in discouraging people from smoking.

Tobacco companies spend tens of millions of dollars every year turning new users into addicts and keeping current users from quitting. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that the public is well informed of the serious dangers associated with tobacco use, he concluded.