

# Package size matters: tobacco packaging, retail merchandising and its influence on trial and impulse sales

[BMJ tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2017/10/12/tobaccocontrol-2017-053962](http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2017/10/12/tobaccocontrol-2017-053962)

Tobacco packaging is an important marketing and promotional tool with graphics (eg, colour) and structure (eg, shape) used to communicate comparative product harm as well as create appeal.<sup>1–11</sup> Concerning the physical dimensions of cigarette packages, those with fewer than 20 cigarettes have been deemed 'kiddie packs', which prompted Canada to ban them nationally in 1994.<sup>12 13</sup> The ban did not apply to other forms of tobacco, however, and smaller package sizes for cigars, cigarillos and smokeless tobacco persisted. While the primary concern of 'kiddie packs' was their enhanced accessibility to children and youth, this paper places focus on how smaller package sizes, including the selling of 'singles,' also contribute to 'impulse' or unplanned purchases.

*Impulse purchases* are commonly defined as spontaneous and 'occurs when a consumer experiences a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy something immediately'.<sup>14</sup> According to British American Tobacco (BAT) documentation, regarding in-store shopping habits, 'two-thirds of today's consumers do not use a shopping list. What this means is that, with the exception of a few specific items which triggered the shopping visit, most of consumer purchase is on impulse—decided at the point-of-sale'.<sup>15</sup> Given such dynamics, BAT indicated that 'it becomes clear that merchandising materials must have high positive impact at point of sales, to draw consumer attention and generate the desired impulse purchase for BAT brands'.<sup>15</sup> Although impulse purchases are possible for a wide range of products, they are more ...