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The knowledge and attitude of graphical warning signs on tobacco among males working in the Sri Lanka Railway Department.

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Background: Cigarette smoking has now become a major health burden in Sri Lanka. Government introduced graphical warning signs displaying eight pictures in 2012. Regardless of global studies done on this issue, none have been conducted in the local context. Hence, this study was done with the intention of furnishing this discontinuity.

Objectives: To determine the knowledge and attitude of graphical warning signs on tobacco among males working in the Sri Lanka Railway Department.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study with a cluster sampling method was carried out among 110 male workers aged between 20-60 years. A self-administered questionnaire was used. The significance was tested using the Chi-Square test at a 5% significance level. Results were analyzed using SPSS software.

Results: The overall response rate was 100%. Participants were aware of the diseases depicted in the graphical warning signs (67.9%, n=72) than the ones that were not (29.2%, n=31), and there was a significance difference in this observation ($p < 0.0001$). Out of the displayed diseases, lung cancer was the most widely known disease (89.6%, n=95) and conversely diseases in children were the least known (26.4%, n=28). The people who hadn't appreciated the warning signs (n=16)

stated the pictures being unpleasant to look at (68.8%, n=11) and letters being too small (31%, n=9) as the reasons. From the smokers, 84% (n=42) believed cigarette packets should carry graphical warnings and it should cover 50-100% of the package. The pictures with oral cancer had the best response when the effectiveness and health message was considered while the pictures containing children were rated low in conveying the relevant message.

Conclusions: Graphical warnings have captured the attention of the majority and, both smokers and non-smokers had positive attitudes regarding them. From the eight pictures that are currently been used, five had conveyed the health message to the public more effectively than the other three.