notified by the tobacco control section of the government's Department of Disease Control (DDC) and asked to remove all the offending packages from sales outlets. The company asked for and was granted permission to obliterate the illegal pictures and wordings by placing a white paper cover over them.

Not long afterwards, British American Tobacco asked DDC to consider a model prepared by the company for its Pall Mall cigarette packs. The design contained a phrase promoting the product, with a logo stating, "Sun Ripened Tobacco" and the accompanying phrases, "Naturally Sun Ripened Tobacco" and, "More Taste." The company also enclosed a photocopy of a document from the Department of Intellectual Property accepting BAT's request to register this as a trademark.

In a decisive blow for health, the proposal was turned down by DDC—shutting the door on a promotion that covered part of the health warning on the cigarette package.

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**BULGARIA: TAX RISE TO CURB SMOKING**
Having previously had little or no effective tobacco control policies, Bulgaria sprang into action recently when its finance minister not only announced a 45 percent rise in tobacco excise tax to be applied from next year, but also stated why the new government, elected in July, was taking the measure. While it will raise much needed revenue, the minister emphasised that it was primarily a health measure.

Bulgaria is the second heaviest smoking country in Europe, after Greece, partly influenced by its former position as the most important tobacco supplier within the former socialist bloc of central and eastern European states. More than half of men and more than a third of women are smokers, with the population suffering correspondingly high rates of tobacco-induced disease. The government is also to ban smoking in all public spaces from June next year. For those whose experience of Bulgarian public places is of some of the smokiest in the world, the implementation of this major change will be of particular interest.

**INDIA: COUNTERING THE IMPACT OF PACK WARNINGS**
A new type of product, already familiar in other countries, was launched onto the Indian market recently and is now readily available at easily accessible tobacco outlets at all the markets which young people frequent. The product is called a "smokeshirt," a name that might suggest that it is made of cloth; however, it is an attractive, sophisticated cover for a cigarette packet. Creatively designed pamphlets promoting smokeshirts are being distributed in up-market areas, apparently targeting Indian young women and girls. They give detailed information about smokeshirts, positioning them as a stylish...
accessory with designs to suit everyone’s taste. They are available in a variety of top grade textiles, the leaflets say, from stripes and polka dots to leopard skin print, to match one’s clothes and suitable for any occasion.

Currently, smokeshirts are being imported from Germany. Made by a company called Lifestyle and Fashion, they were invented by two brothers, Joerg and Michael Knobloch. Their aim was to enable smokers to cover up the graphic health warnings on cigarette packets that are now being adopted in many countries. The Knobloch brothers, who describe the smokeshirt as a “lifestyle product”, reportedly conducted extensive research of patent offices around the world to ensure that they were launching a unique product, as well as selecting product features and pricing based on market research in Germany. They also researched pack sizes of cigarettes around the world to determine the dimensions of their product. A design team then produced a range of smokeshirt designs.

India delayed the implementation of pictorial warnings time and again from 2006, due to pressure from the tobacco industry, but they were finally enforced on 31 May 2009. The launch of smokeshirts in India, just a few months before the pictorial health warnings were implemented, is clearly a way of countering the impact of the new warnings. Along with the implementation of pictorial warnings, India’s new regulations prohibit the sale of any product which can be used to cover or obscure the warnings. Thus, with the new regulations coming into force, the sale of smokeshirts has become illegal in India, but they continue to be on the market. Smokeshirts also have a complementary necklaceband, whose use makes the smokeshirts easily accessible and visible, making it unnecessary to keep them in a purse or pocket.

Apart from India, smokeshirts are available in European clothing and design shops from Portugal to Hungary and in many locations in China. A statement from the Knobloch brothers about their product reads, “Our retail partners aren’t taking any risks because our products practically sell themselves in no time at all, and they offer excellent value for money. We receive follow-up orders all the time, and we are able to fill them immediately, because it’s always our policy to overproduce during the first manufacturing run. We see this as an important service we offer our retail partners.”

As increasing numbers of countries add the requirement for pictorial health warnings to their tobacco control laws, they will need to address the likely emergence of smokeshirts to counter the effect of the warnings. They will not only need to legislate specifically against products intended to cover up the warnings, but, unlike India, show that they mean business by acting quickly and decisively to enforce this and all other tobacco control regulations.

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MICHAEL RUSSELL
The distinguished research scientist Michael Russell, whose work was so important to understanding why people smoke and how they can be assisted to stop, has died aged 77. Born in Capetown, South Africa, he studied medicine in the United Kingdom, at Oxford and Guy’s Hospital, London, returning to South Africa and working as a junior doctor at Groote Schuur Hospital. After deciding to specialise in psychiatry, he and his wife, Audrey, both deeply unhappy with apartheid, returned to London to train at the Maudsley hospital. Working in Griffith Edward’s Addiction Research Unit at the Institute of Psychiatry, he chose smoking as his research thesis topic and in 1971 published a seminal paper concluding that nicotine was the motive force behind smoking.

Recognising the need to measure smoke intake accurately, Russell recruited biochemist Colin Feyerabend to develop a method for measuring blood nicotine. By 1974 he could quantify intake with precision and even measure non-smokers’ exposure from passive smoking, one of many “firsts” in the field. As his understanding grew of smokers’ self-titration to maintain nicotine levels, he was also one of the first (at least outside the tobacco industry) to understand how lower emission cigarettes were flawed.

It was Mike Russell who persuaded a pharmaceutical company to produce the world’s first nicotine chewing gum, designing a randomised trial to test its efficacy at the Maudsley clinic, as well as later co-developing nicotine nasal spray. His work thus laid the foundations of the nicotine replacement industry.

In addition to the full spectrum of tobacco pharmacology, Russell’s research also covered wider aspects of applied cessation. He showed, for example, how the mere completion of a questionnaire about smoking by patients waiting to see a family doctor led to a measurable long-term reduction in their consumption, with brief advice from the doctor yielding around five per cent one year abstinence. He was a familiar figure at tobacco control meetings, where his sometimes fiery defence of his views contrasted with kind and caring support to successive directors of Action on Smoking and Health and other tobacco control workers. Russell was appointed Professor of Addiction in 1986.

He was the recipient of the Alton Ochsner Award, an international prize for outstanding research on tobacco and health, in 1996, and the Ferro Award of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco in 1998. Having returned to independent South Africa, Michael Russell’s last few years of retirement in Capetown were marred by Alzheimer’s disease. He is survived by Audrey and his sons James and Nicholas.

Professor Michael AH Russell, 9 March 1932 to 15 July 2009.

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