



# A Short Note on Updated Alcohol Health Warnings-Informing Consumers and Reducing Harm

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## DESCRIPTION

Alcohol labelling informs consumers about the composition of the product as well as the risks associated with alcohol consumption. We identified the mandatory elements and health warnings in Nigeria's alcohol regulations and evaluated selected product labels on alcoholic beverages produced in Nigeria to determine compliance with the requirements. We used a descriptive case study. Labelling requirements were culled from two alcohol regulations and one related document obtained from the National Food and Drug Administration's website. Information on the labels of 59 selected Nigerian beers and spirits was evaluated using six mandatory elements: List of ingredients, allergens, nutritional information, percentage of alcohol by volume, "drink responsibly" statement and age restrictions. Standard drinks per container, drinking instructions, link to an alcohol education website, "drinking while pregnant" logo/text, and drink driving logo/text were also evaluated. There are different regulations for beer and spirits in Nigeria. Alcoholic beverage labels do not have to carry health warnings. There was no single product label that contained all six mandatory elements. Six mandatory elements were present on 61% of product labels examined: List of ingredients, ABV, responsible drinking statement and age restrictions. Nigeria's alcohol labeling regulations do not meet the World Health Organization's labeling recommendations. In Nigeria, the alcohol industry is not fully compliant with labeling requirements. Enhanced labelling, including health warnings, should be made mandatory as a strategy to raise awareness of alcohol-related risks, while industry labeling practices should be monitored to ensure compliance. Although alcohol has a negative impact on various health outcomes, public awareness of the health risks associated with alcohol consumption is still relatively low. The World Health Organization recommends labeling al-

coholic beverages to raise awareness and ensure consumers make informed choices. Current labeling practices are not standardized across countries, as they are for medicines, food products and soft drinks. Inconsistencies in the display of information, as well as other factors such as the range of interventions and assessment methods, led to divergent practices and outcomes, leaving consumers without critical information for decision-making. Experiments show that warning labels can influence self-reported intentions to reduce consumption. Although health warnings are cited as one policy approach to reducing alcohol consumption, they can be implemented and evaluated in different ways, which may affect whether they can be considered effective. When combined with other policies aimed at reducing alcohol consumption, the impact of health warnings is maximized. The rapid review used a multifaceted search strategy to locate primary studies of health messages and/or product information on alcohol packaging as well as their impact on consumer outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The review advocates large, colourful labels on the front of alcoholic drinks, as well as using plain packaging to increase the visibility of health messages. It also advocates the use of explicit, negatively framed statements that link alcohol to specific diseases. Color-coded schemes and pictorial warnings can further improve the effectiveness of alcohol labels. We found insufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of product information alone in influencing consumer attention, understanding, recall, judgment, and behavioural adherence. Alcohol labels that are well designed can have a positive impact on consumer attention, understanding, recall, judgment and behavioural compliance. The findings have implications for alcohol labelling research and policy.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author's declared that they have no conflict of interest.