

# Label comprehension and risk perceptions of Heated Herbal Product

## iSENZIA in Czechia

CORESTA | October 2024

Martin Fitzpatrick<sup>1</sup>, Layla Malt<sup>1</sup>, Matthew Stevenson<sup>1</sup> and Thomas Nahde<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Imperial Brands PLC, 121 Winterstoke Road, BS3 2LL, Bristol UK

<sup>2</sup>Imperial Brands Reemtsma, An Imperial Brands PLC company, Hamburg,



FIND OUT MORE

### INTRODUCTION

Smoking is a cause of serious diseases in smokers, including lung cancer, heart disease and emphysema and is reported to directly cause more than 7 million deaths per year <sup>1</sup>. Public health experts worldwide have concluded that it is the harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke generated by burning tobacco, and not the nicotine, which are the cause of smoking-related diseases <sup>2, 3, 4</sup>. Public health bodies including the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities advise adult smokers who are either uninterested or unwilling to quit smoking to transition to potentially harm reduced next generation products (NGP).

One NGP category is Heated Herbal Products (HHP). These products do not contain tobacco leaf but instead use a herbal substrate (e.g. tea) as a base to which nicotine is applied. These consumables are inserted into a device and then heated in a controlled manner, but not burned, to release nicotine. This

typically involves lower temperatures to avoid combustion and reduces the number of toxicants an individual is exposed to. To make a meaningful contribution to population level harm reduction, these products need to be accepted and adopted by smokers and not appeal to unintended users such as never smokers, ex-smokers, and youth. HHP are not risk free but contain far fewer harmful and potentially harmful constituents (HPHC) than tobacco smoke, and may represent an opportunity to reduce population health risks caused by smoking.

It is important that products and their risks are understood by the public to ensure maximum impact on Tobacco Harm Reduction. A qualitative study assessing label comprehension and risk perceptions of iSENZIA herbal sticks was conducted to assess understanding among legal age users and non-users of tobacco and nicotine products (TNP). To investigate label comprehension and risk

perceptions, 56 adult participants were recruited in Czechia and categorised into sub-groups depending on product use status. Participants attended individual interviews and reviewed:

- Visuals of a PULZE heating device
- A user guide
- Images of iSENZIA packaging including product information and health warnings.

The interviewer then qualitatively assessed participants' comprehension of iSENZIA labelling, packaging, general product characteristics and risk perceptions relative to cigarette smoking.

### METHODS

#### Design

This study employed a cross-sectional design with semi-structured interviews assessing participants' comprehension of the packaging presented. 56 Participants were interviewed individually by an experienced interviewer using a set of predetermined questions, although participants were encouraged to elaborate further. 8 participants were recruited into 7 pre-defined sub-groups to meet the study requirements, which were:

- Adult (25+) cigarette smokers
- Young adult (20-24) smokers
- Adult HTP/EVP users
- Young adult HTP/EVP users

- Past TNP users
- Adult never TNP users
- Young adult never TNP users

#### Method

Participants were invited to attend individual interviews and were presented with visuals of the PULZE device and user guide, in addition to images of iSENZIA packaging (see Figure 1) including product information and health warnings. The interviewer then qualitatively assessed participants' comprehension of iSENZIA labelling, packaging, general product characteristics and risk perceptions relative to cigarette smoking. Interviews were conducted in Czech with transcripts recorded for review.

### RESULTS

#### Product Comprehension

TNP users were more accurate at describing the products than non-users. All participants understood that iSENZIA contained nicotine and was only to be used by adults, however, some were not clear that former and never TNP users should not use the product. Upon further investigation, it was understood that participants were responding to who "could" use these products as opposed to who should when reviewing the packaging which states "intended for adult smokers". There was some misunderstanding as to whether the iSENZIA sticks contained tea, as some participants mistook the list of allergens as a list of ingredients. There was some confusion over how to activate the crushball flavour capsule.

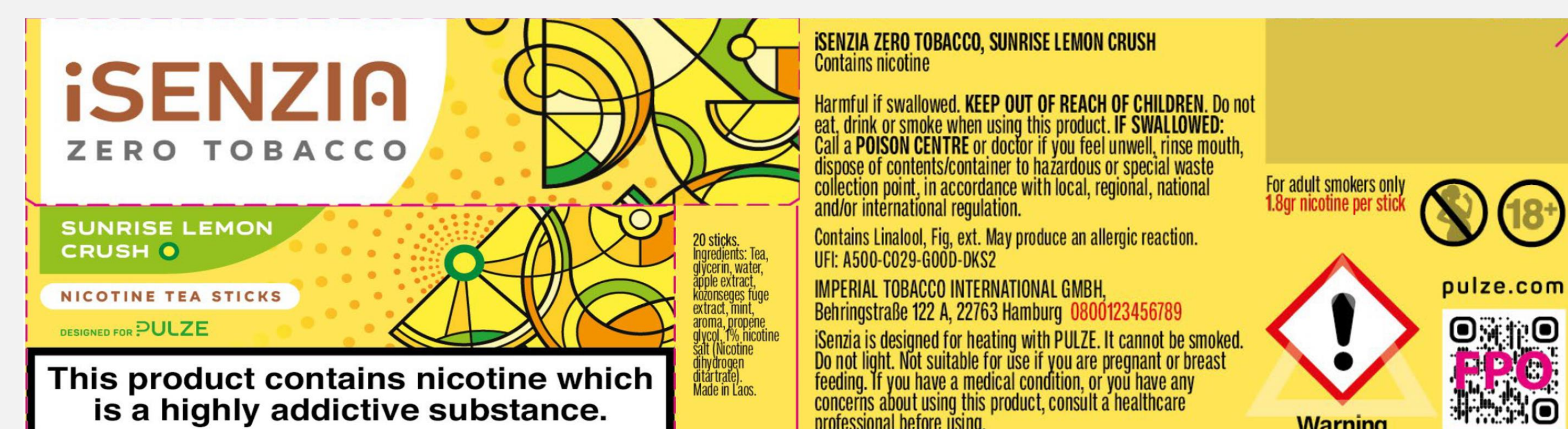
#### Risk Perceptions

Perceptions of harm for iSENZIA were rated as lower than cigarette smoking for all sub-groups. Participants generally reported that iSENZIA posed a significant risk of developing an addiction to nicotine with some sub-groups rating the perceived addictiveness the same as conventional cigarettes. Some participants noted the nicotine content label on the iSENZIA packaging and considered that this may be higher or lower than a cigarette and changed their ratings accordingly, however the results were inconsistent.

### CONCLUSIONS

The results of this qualitative study demonstrate that many of the key aspects of the iSENZIA package and labelling were well understood by both intended and unintended user populations. This included the age requirement to purchase and consume iSENZIA and that they were not intended for use by pregnant women or children. Participants comprehended that the product contained no tobacco leaf but did contain nicotine and was not risk free. Whilst there was some misunderstanding that iSENZIA was not intended to be used by former or never users, misinterpretation of the question wording could account for this as participants frequently answered in the context of who "could" physically use the product. Future studies should aim to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation in this area through clearer wording, however, overall comprehension was high indicating these products are generally understood and may be perceived as less harmful by adult smokers and make a meaningful contribution to Tobacco Harm Reduction.

Figure 1: Example image of iSENZIA packaging shown to participants in this label comprehension and risk perception study.



	iSENZIA should not be used by children	iSENZIA contains no tobacco	iSENZIA contains nicotine	iSENZIA contains tea	iSENZIA should not be used by never smokers	iSENZIA should not be used by former smokers	iSENZIA should not be lit and smoked like a cigarette	Crushball must be activated to release flavour	iSENZIA is less harmful than cigarettes
25+ Cigarette Smokers	100%	100%	100%	50%	12.5%	50%	100%	12.5%	75%
20-24 Cigarette Smokers	100%	100%	100%	75%	62.5%	62.5%	100%	75%	75%
25+ HTP/EVP Users	100%	75%	100%	100%	62.5%	50%	100%	75%	100%
20-24 HTP/EVP Users	100%	100%	100%	87.5%	37.5%	12.5%	100%	37.5%	87.5%
Past Tobacco Users	100%	87.5%	100%	75%	37.5%	25%	100%	0%	75%
25+ Never TNP Users	100%	100%	100%	62.5%	0%	25%	100%	0%	75%
20-24 Never TNP Users	100%	62.5%	100%	50%	12.5%	0%	100%	12.5%	75%
Total	100%	89%	100%	71%	32%	32%	100%	30%	80%

### REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. (2020). "Tobacco". From <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>.
2. Institute of Medicine (2001). Clearing the Smoke - Assessing the Science Base for Tobacco Harm Reduction. Washington, D.C., The National Academies Press.
3. Stratton K, Shetty P, Wallace R and Bondurant S. Clearing the smoke: the science base for tobacco harm reduction--executive summary. Tob Control, 2001, 10(2): 189-195.
4. Perfetti T, Rodgman, A. . The Complexity of Tobacco and Tobacco Smoke. . Beiträge zur Tabakforschung International, 2011, 24: 17.