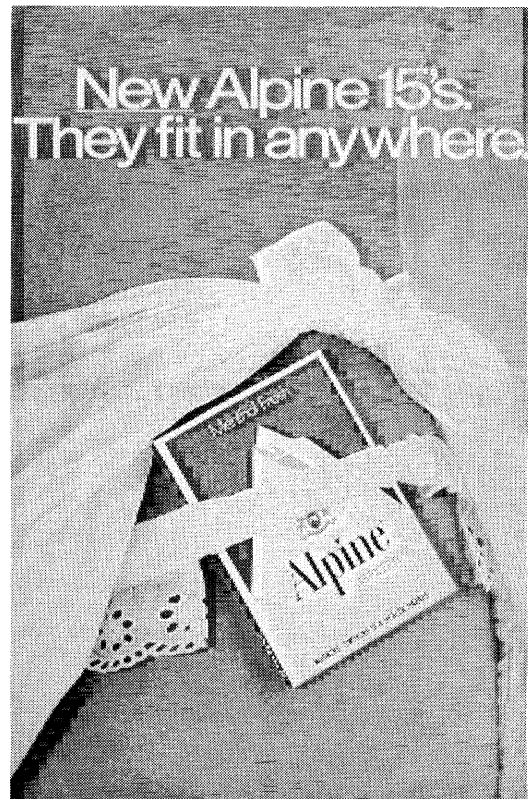


## AD WATCH

## Small packs for small customers?

RJ Reynolds in Malaysia has introduced a new pack of six cigarettes into its Salem brand line (figure below), joining Benson and Hedges and Lucky Strike (both selling packs of six) and Dunhill (packs of seven) in competition for the small pack market. Sales of single cigarettes and small packs are common if not the norm in many developing countries because low disposable income places larger packs out of reach of most smokers. The same marketing logic obviously applies in more affluent nations insofar as those with least income (poor and unemployed people and children) will find it easier to find money for a small, cheaper pack than for the standard, more expensive pack.

In 1986 the government of South Australia became the first in the world to ban small packs of cigarettes (defined as containing fewer than 20) after research showed that two heavily advertised Philip Morris brands in 15 pack size were being bought by a higher proportion of teenage smokers (56.3%) than adult smokers (8.8%) in one month.<sup>1</sup> Since then, all Australian states have followed suit. At the time, I was advising the Minister for Health in South Australia, Dr John Cornwall, and sat in on meetings with deputations sent by Philip Morris to plead for a stay of execution. I vividly recall a poker-faced executive arguing to the minister that their survey evidence indi-



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cated that old aged pensioners, another group with low income, were the principal market: "Surely your government is not trying to make things even harder for our old folk," he argued. The Alpine 15s advertisement reproduced above clearly shows an appeal that any reasonable person can see is aimed at a grandmother rather than a teenage girl!

It has been argued that provision and promotion of small packs might assist in helping smokers cut down and eventually quit.<sup>2</sup> Such a concern though, must be balanced against the likelihood that small packs are seen by the industry primarily as starter or "kiddie" packs to help ease children into smoking.<sup>3</sup> Health workers in developing countries should be equally wary of industry attempts to position this issue as simply a matter of market forces demanding small packs. There are hundreds of millions of teenage lips throughout the Third World between which the industry would love to guide their products. The small pack strategy is almost certainly part of this plan. - SIMON CHAPMAN

1 Wilson DH, Wakefield MA, Esterman A, Baker CC. 15s: they fit in everywhere, especially the school bag. *Community Health Studies* 1987; 11 (suppl): 16-20.

2 Kozlowski LT. Pack size, reported cigarette smoking rates, and public health. *Am J Public Health* 1986; 76: 1337-8.

3 Chapman S. Smaller packs of cigarettes. *Am J Public Health* 1988; 78: 92-3.

## Camel flip flops

The clever nicotine pushers at RJ Reynolds never stop thinking up smooth moves. A pair of beach thong sandals – free in exchange for sending in 15 Camel cash coupons or buying a packet of three cigarette packs – has “CAMEL” engraved in reverse on the sole (figure). Wearers leave “camel tracks,” perhaps thousands of them in a day at the beach. Although the imprints clearly advertise Camel cigarettes, the required government warning is not part of the design.

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