

# DO ALCOHOL WARNING LABELS WORK?

FINDINGS FROM A REAL-WORLD EXPERIMENT

## WHAT DID WE DO?

The Northern Territories Alcohol Labels Study placed new rotating colourful warning labels on alcohol containers in a government liquor store in Whitehorse, Yukon. Three waves of surveys were conducted in Whitehorse, and Yellowknife served as the comparison site. Shortly after the launch of the new labels, Canadian alcohol industry lobby groups interfered with the study, forcing a pause in the labelling and removal of the cancer warning.



## WHAT HAPPENED?

### PEOPLE REMEMBERED WHAT THE LABELS SAID.

Consumers exposed to the new labels had **10%** greater odds of knowing the link between alcohol and cancer, were **3X** more likely to be aware of Canada's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines, and had **50%** greater odds of remembering "daily" low-risk drinking limits.



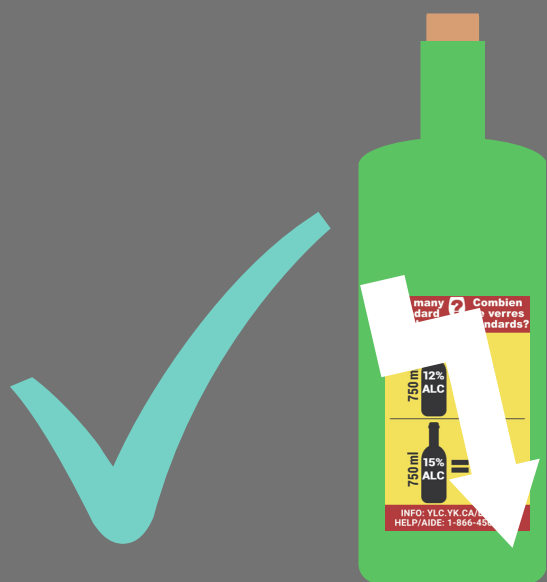
### PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT THE LABELS.

Consumers reported noticing, reading, thinking about, and talking with others about the new labels, and consumers exposed to the new labels were more likely to report cutting back on drinking because of them.



### PEOPLE DRANK LESS.

The Whitehorse liquor store saw a **6.6% decrease** in sales of labelled products during the intervention period relative to two comparison sites. The 3% of Whitehorse liquor store products that **\*didn't\*** have labels saw a **6.9% increase** in sales.



## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Brightly coloured alcohol warning labels with a cancer warning, national drinking guidelines, and standard drink information help consumers make more informed and safer alcohol choices. Policies mandating alcohol warning labels should be a priority for alcohol control strategies in Canada and globally.

## References

Hobin et al., (2020) .Testing alcohol labels as a tool to communicate cancer risk to drinkers: a real-world quasi-experimental study, *JSAD* / Schoueri-Mychasiw et al., 2020. Examining the impact of alcohol labels on awareness and knowledge of national drinking guidelines: a real-world study in Yukon, Canada, *JSAD* / Vallance et al., 2020. Baseline assessment of alcohol-related knowledge of and support for alcohol warning labels among alcohol consumers in northern Canada, and associations with key sociodemographic characteristics, *JSAD* / Zhao et al., 2020. The effects of alcohol warning labels on population alcohol consumption: an interrupted time-series analysis of alcohol sales in Yukon, Canada, *JSAD* / Weerasinghe et al (2020). Improving Knowledge that Alcohol Can Cause Cancer is Associated with Consumer Support for Alcohol Policies: Findings from a Real-World Alcohol Labelling Study, *Int J Environ Res Public Health* / Hobin et al., 2020. Effects of strengthening alcohol labels on attention, message processing, and perceived effectiveness: a quasi-experimental study in Yukon, Canada, *IJDP*.

[alcohollabels.cisur.ca](http://alcohollabels.cisur.ca)