

## Menthol cigarettes: Tobacco control policy in Thailand

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### Abstract

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Thailand has more than 12.5 million smokers (8 million smoke cigarettes). About 19% of cigarette smokers smoke menthol cigarettes. This article reviews previous research related to menthol cigarettes in order to improve public health policy regarding tobacco control. The review shows that menthol cigarette smokers' risk of developing diseases was equivalent to that of those who smoke non-menthol cigarettes. However, menthol cigarette smokers believe that menthol had medicinal benefits and therefore were less harmful than normal cigarettes. The tobacco industry uses menthol cigarettes to target young and new smokers as well as those who intend to quit smoking. This strategy will either increase the number of smokers or not reduce the number of smokers as much as expected.

The challenge for tobacco control policy in Thailand is to comply with the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control by prohibiting the use on cigarette packs of the word "menthol" or other terms which could imply as a cooling property and to ban menthol cigarettes in Thailand.

**Keywords:** menthol cigarettes, tobacco control, smoking behavior