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## **Effects of Online Comments on Smokers' Perception of Antismoking Public Service Announcements**

### **Abstract:**

On YouTube anti-smoking PSAs are widely viewed and uploaded; they also receive extensive commentary by viewers. Viewers of these health messages are exposed to the comments accompanying them. This study examined whether such evaluative comments with or without uncivil expressions influence evaluations when viewed subsequently by others. Results showed PSAs with positive (i.e. anti-smoking) comments were perceived by smokers as more effective than PSAs with negative (pro smoking) comments. Smokers in the no comment condition gave the highest perceived effectiveness (PE) score to PSAs. Smokers' readiness to quit smoking moderated the effect of comments on PSA evaluation. The most hardcore smokers considered the PSAs ineffective no matter what comments they saw. Smokers reading negative uncivil comments reported more negative attitude toward quitting and a lower level of perceived risk of smoking than those reading negative civil comments but positive civil and positive uncivil comments didn't elicit different responses.