Your Money or Your Life: Interplay Between Appeal Type and Valence Framing in Reducing Smoking Behavior

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INTRO
• Smoking is one of the leading causes of preventable death globally, yet it remains a common behavior
• We know little about which future consequences should be highlighted to encourage smoking cessation
• Study aim: Explore the efficacy of two types of framing of smoking cessation consequences: appeal type (time vs. money) and valence (gain vs. loss).

METHODS
• A pre-registered field experiment conducted via a digital therapeutics app
• N = 2,935
• 2x2 between-subjects design (Appeal type [Money-Time] x valence [Gain-Loss])
• Experimental manipulation
• Outcome variables (analysis): 1) number of cigarettes reported day of intervention (Poisson Regression), 2) motivation (1-6 Likert scale, Ordinal Regression), 3) smoking cessation rate at end of program (Logistic Regression)

RESULTS
• Significant interaction (p < .001) between message appeal type and valence framing in the short-term so that messages focusing on money (time) are more likely to produce immediate reduction in smoking when framed as a gain (loss)
• No significant effect for the intervention on motivation or smoking cessation

DISCUSSION
• Results illustrate psychological differences between money and time, between attitudes and behaviors, and between short-term and long-term behavior change
• Study highlights importance of considering both appeal type and valence framing when designing smoking cessation messages
• Given the scalability and cost efficiency of framing interventions, results could also be valuable health organizations, policymakers, and news outlets crafting health promoting messages

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