

SMOKESCREEN

November 2006

NO HEALTH BENEFIT FROM 'LIGHT' CIGARETTES

The US National Cancer Institute has concluded that smoking "light" cigarettes carries the same risk of lung cancer, heart attacks and other tobacco-caused disease as regular cigarettes. They state that the marketing of these products as delivering less tar and reducing risk is "deceptive" and smokers' choice of these products as an alternative to quitting makes this deception an "urgent public health issue."

The Truth About "Light" Cigarettes: Questions and Answers, National Cancer Institute website. <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/light-cigarettes>

The Low-Tar Lie, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/lowtar/>



Susie.

A nice name doesn't make something less deadly.

Smoke "low tar," "light" or "mild" cigarettes and despite their smooth taste, you are likely to inhale the same amount of tar and nicotine as from regular cigarettes. www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/light-cigarettes. Low tar cigarettes. Death repackaged.

CANCER RESEARCH UK



"Low tar" tobacco is marketed in light packaging to get round regulations forbidding terms such as "light" or "mild"

BAT BREACH OF THE FAIR TRADING ACT? NZ Commerce Commission to investigate

Following complaints by health groups, the Commerce Commission is investigating British American Tobacco New Zealand's alleged misrepresentation that light or mild cigarettes have health benefits. Health groups are calling for prosecution of tobacco companies, with strict penalties.

NEW ZEALAND SMOKERS DUPED

Professor Janet Hoek, of Massey University's Department of Marketing, agrees that national and international research shows many smokers are misled by words such as 'light' and 'mild'. Her research revealed that young people – the group most at risk of taking up smoking - were often confused about what these terms meant. Over half of interviewees thought light cigarettes had less tar than regular cigarettes, and around a third agreed that light cigarettes would be easier to quit.

Is New Zealand Dragging The Chain?

The short answer is yes! We're no longer keeping up with best practice; Australia and Brazil have banned terms like 'light' and 'mild', the European Union did so years ago, and Canada is in the process of doing so. Article 11 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, developed by the World Health Organization and which New Zealand has signed and ratified calls on signatories to ensure that tobacco labeling on packaging is not misleading or deceptive.



TOBACCO INDUSTRY DECEPTION

In the 1970s, amid growing concerns about the health effects of smoking, the tobacco industry produced a number of cigarette designs that were supposedly lower in tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide than conventional cigarettes. Internally known as 'health image cigarettes' these were marketed to the public as 'safer' even though the tobacco industry knew this wasn't the case, though the tobacco industry claims it has never told smokers that 'low-tar' cigarettes are safer. But its internal documents tell a different story.

Hammond et al. Secret science: tobacco industry research on smoking behaviour and cigarette toxicity. Lancet online, published 8 February 2006. Retrieved on 5 October 2006 from <http://www.ashaust.org.au/pdfs/LightsBATLancet0602.pdf>.

"Quitters may be discouraged from quitting, or at least kept in the market longer..."

Creative Research group, Project Viking, Volume 11: An Attitudinal Model of Smoking, 1986, February - March, prepared for Imperial Tobacco Limited (Canada)

"This is what our management really expects R&D to do. Things like marketable low tar and nicotine cigarettes ...The question as to whether such cigarettes are really safer does not matter..."

R. M. Gibb. Memo to Dr. S. Green, 1995, 13 February.

"All work in this area should be directed towards providing consumer reassurance about cigarettes and the smoking habit. This can be provided in different ways, e.g. by claiming low deliveries, by the perception of low deliveries and by the perception of 'mildness'."

P. L. Short, Smoking and Health Item 7: the Effect on Marketing, 1977, 14 April (Minnesota Trial Exhibit 10,585).

WHO calls low tar 'MISLEADING'

After reviewing the evidence, the World Health Organisations' Scientific Advisory Committee on Tobacco Product Regulation concluded that tar, nicotine and CO numerical ratings based upon current ISO/FTC methods are misleading, and recommends that they be banned along with all other misleading health and exposure claims.

The smoke from each cigarette contains, on average, - 16 milligrams or less of tar - condensed smoke containing many chemicals, including some that cause cancer; and 1.2 milligrams or less of nicotine - a poisonous and addictive drug; and 15 milligrams or less of carbon monoxide - a deadly gas that reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen.

Ministry of Health Warning

SACTob Conclusions on Health Claims Derived from ISO/FTC Method to Measure Cigarette Yield http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_interaction/tobreg/en/iso_ftc_en.pdf



BIG TOBACCO

GUILTY AS CHARGED

In August 2006, U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler issued a final opinion in the U.S. government's landmark lawsuit against the major tobacco companies under anti-racketeering legislation. The Judge found in favour of the government on nearly all allegations, including that tobacco companies purposely deceived the public about the hazards of "low tar" cigarettes.

From Judge Kessler's judgement:

"They suppressed research, they destroyed documents, they manipulated the use of nicotine so as to increase and perpetuate addiction, they distorted the truth about low-tar and light cigarettes so as to discourage smokers from quitting, and they abused the legal system in order to achieve their goal - to make money with little, if any, regard for individual suffering, soaring health costs, or the integrity of the legal system."

"In short, defendants have marketed and sold their lethal product with zeal, with deception, with a single-minded focus on their financial success, and without regard for the human tragedy or social costs that success exacted."

Special Reports: Justice Department Civil Lawsuit, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids website. Retrieved on 9 October 2006 from: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/doj/>

TOBACCO FACTS

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death, accounting 5000 deaths per year.
- Tobacco is a powerful cancer-causing product that can cause cancer in many different parts of the body.