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SMOKING AND HEALTH

Ever since the Surgeon General released the "Report on Smoking and Health" in 1964, cigarette consumption has been striking an uneasy balance between two conflicting events. On the one hand there has been an extraordinarily successful effort during these years on the part of adult smokers to give up smoking and on the other hand a steady, even an increasing number of young people and women who have taken up smoking.

So far, the influence of those quitting has outbalanced the number of new smokers. Some 10 million persons, all of them adults and most of them men, have given up smoking, and consumption has declined from a per capita level of nearly 12 cigarettes per person per day in 1966 to a little less than 11 cigarettes in 1970. The tide has changed, however; cigarette consumption has been evening out in past months and may now be increasing.

What will happen in the next several years will be crucial. If the rate of quitting can be maintained and/or the rate of up-take slowed down, some hope can be entertained that the cigarette problem may finally be controlled. If not, then the past six years will have proven to be a repetition of what happened in the mid-1950's, when consumption dropped for a brief period of time as a result of a health "scare" and then began a gradual return to earlier levels.

A major influence on consumption has been the smoking and health television announcements of the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the National Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association, and the Public Health Service. These have received millions of dollars in television time since the Federal Communications Commission issued its fairness ruling in 1967, which called upon stations accepting cigarette advertising to give a fair hearing to the fact that cigarettes are hazardous.

Everything known about cigarette consumption suggests that the educational efforts of the voluntary agencies and the Federal Government should be greatly increased. Yet available free radio and television time will inevitably decline after January 1, 1971, when cigarette advertising was taken off the air. So long as television time exists in any amount, the voluntary agencies and the Government must fill it with the best and most effective messages they can. But, at the same time, they must now broaden their programs in the other media. This is particularly necessary for the Government, whose program is vital to the total effort and whose materials in many cases are used by the voluntary agencies.

This mass communications effort, however, is not sufficient by itself to solve the problem. In addition, the current program of the Clearinghouse must continue in the following areas:

(1) School and community programs to reach young people. The first step is to strengthen teacher education and to develop better models of classroom curriculum, teacher training, and strategies. Such a program has been in development by the Clearinghouse over the past four years.

(2) Occupational and community programs to reach adults. Research has developed new information on smoking behavior, particularly the "insight development" procedure by which the smoker can discover his own attitudes about smoking. Demonstrations at the Clearinghouse's San Diego, California, project have shown how this information can be used in reaching and motivating adult occupational groups. Both management and labor groups have supported these demonstrations.

(3) An expanded program with the health professions. This would involve cooperative programs with medical and health groups, working in such media as continuing medical education, visitation by medical students to practicing physicians, and development of hospital programs. Such an effort would acquaint physicians with new information on the consequences of cigarette smoking and assist physicians and nurses as well as other health professionals in the management of smoking problems.

(4) Continued efforts to encourage self-protection through less hazardous smoking among those who are unable to stop smoking.

What Happened to Cigarette Smoking 1966-1970

(Highlights from Address by Dr. Daniel Horn, Director
National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health)*

Smokers

MEN: Among males 21 years old and older, 42.0 percent smoke cigarettes in 1970 as compared with 51.9 percent in 1966.

WOMEN: Among women 21 years old and over, 31.0 percent smoke cigarettes in 1970 as compared with 33.7 percent in 1966.

Number Who Have Quit Smoking

The estimated number of adults who have given up cigarettes from 1966 to 1970 rose by 10.2 million. In other words, there were 18.9 million ex-smokers in 1966; today there are 29.1 million ex-smokers.

MEN: Among men, the number of ex-smokers has risen from 13.2 million in 1966, to 19.6 million, an increase of nearly 6½ million men.

WOMEN: For women it has risen from about 5.7 million to 9.5 million, up 3.8 million.

Number Currently Smoking

The estimated number of adults who are current cigarette smokers is 44.7 million in 1970 as compared to 49.2 million in 1966 -- a drop of 4½ million, despite an adult population increase of 7½ million during that four year period.

The drop in men smoking has been from 28.9 million to 24.8 million, down by 4 million, and the drop in women smoking has been a small one of about 300,000, from a little over 20 million to a little under 20 million.

Going Back to Smoking

Some 3,100 current and former smokers who were first interviewed in 1966, were reinterviewed in 1970. The going back to smoking rate was found to be higher in younger men than in older men.

It is 15 percent in the 25-34 year old age bracket and 10 percent in the 35-44 year bracket. After age 45, the return rate is very low, hovering around 5 percent for each successive age group after that.

* Presented at First National Conference on Smoking and Health
San Diego, California, September 9-11, 1970

The highest rate of going back to smoking in the 1966-1970 period was 24 percent among women under 35. That is, about a quarter of the women under 35 who were off smoking in 1966 have gone back by 1970. For the 35-44 age group, it was 14 percent; for the 45-65 age group, it was 10 percent.

Other Statistics

Teenage Smoking

Smoking among teenagers has risen in the past two years. This finding is based on studies made by the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health in 1968 and again in 1970. The new survey shows that 11.9 percent of girls aged 12 through 18 were regular smokers as contrasted with 8.4 percent in 1968. Among boys, the change was from 14.7 percent in 1968 to 18.5 percent in 1970.

Cigarette Consumption

Cigarette consumption figures continue to show an accelerated decline despite an increase of about 3 million persons per year, including about 2 million adults per year.

75.2 million packages-per day	1967
74.5 million packages-per day	1968
72.5 million packages-per day	1969

The per capita consumption per day per person 18 years of age and over is as follows:

11.73 cigarettes per day	1967
11.44 cigarettes per day	1968
10.94 cigarettes per day	1969