

The
Health Consequences
of SMOKING

A REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL: 1972

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A Report of the Surgeon General: 1972

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Public Health Service

Health Services and Mental Health Administration

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Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 70 cents.
Stock Number 1723-0051

Honorable Carl Albert
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Enclosed is the 1972 report on the health consequences of smoking, as called for by Section 8 (a) of the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act of 1969. As you will see, it continues and strengthens the findings of previous Public Health Service reports that cigarette smoking is a hazard to the health of the American people.

Under this Act, I am also required to submit to you such recommendations for legislation as I deem appropriate.

As you know, it has long been the position of this Department that an adequate health warning should appear in cigarette advertisements along with listings of "tar" and nicotine. We are in support of the current efforts of the Federal Trade Commission to bring this about through the exercise of its regulatory powers. Should these efforts fail, however, we would return to our previous recommendations that this should be accomplished through legislative action.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Elliot L. Richardson
Secretary

Preface

✓ Six times since 1964, the Public Health Service has issued formal reviews of the scientific evidence which links cigarette smoking to disease and premature death. Each successive review, including this one, has served to confirm and strengthen the conclusion of the 1964 Report, that cigarettes are a major cause of death and disease.

In the first three chapters of this report, the relationships between cigarette smoking and cancer, cardiovascular disease, and non-neoplastic bronchopulmonary disease are reviewed and evidence is presented which helps develop our understanding of the mechanisms which are involved in these relationships. In the final three chapters, information is presented on public exposure to air pollution from tobacco, on the relationship between tobacco and allergy, and on the harmful constituents which are found in cigarette smoke.

In the past few years, millions of Americans have stopped smoking because they have persuaded themselves that it is in their own self-interest to do so; we must continue to encourage cessation as the only certain way to protect both the individual and society from the harmful effects of smoking. We must also, however, work towards reducing the dangers of smoking for those who have not quit by developing less hazardous cigarettes and encouraging less hazardous ways of smoking. The chapter which discusses the harmful constituents of smoke is a useful statement of our current knowledge in this field; it should interest not only research scientists but those who are concerned with public education and public policy.

Research in smoking and health continues, as this report shows, both in this country and abroad and under both public and private auspices; furthermore, the range of this research is widening as the significance of cigarette smoking as a public health problem becomes more apparent. In establishing the present series of reports, first under Public Law 89-92 and now under Public Law 91-222, the Congress has given us a means of encouraging the research we need and of building a better understanding of the problem.

JESSE L. STEINFELD, M.D.
Surgeon General

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Preparation of the Report and Acknowledgments

"Smoking and Health. Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service"* was published in 1964. The following documents were subsequently published as reviews of the medical literature as called for by Public Law 89-92.

1. "The Health Consequences of Smoking, A Public Health Service Review: 1967"***
2. "The Health Consequences of Smoking, 1968 Supplement to the 1967 PHS Review"***
3. "The Health Consequences of Smoking, 1969 Supplement to the 1967 PHS Review"***

These documents reviewed the medical literature which had been published since the original Surgeon General's Report. The format of publishing a supplement to a supplement became unwieldy, particularly in the light of the lack of availability of previous reviews to the general public. Therefore, when P.L. 91-222 was signed into law on April 1, 1970, calling for an 18-month interval between the previous report and the new report, the entire field was reviewed with an emphasis on the most recent additions to the literature. The product of this review was: "The Health Consequences of Smoking, A Report of the Surgeon General: 1971."***

The present document, "The Health Consequences of Smoking, A Report of the Surgeon General: 1972," includes a review of the literature which has been published since the 1971 Report was completed. It also includes an evaluation of the state of knowledge in three areas which have not been previously reviewed in these reports: allergy and tobacco, public exposure to air pollution from tobacco smoke, and harmful constituents of cigarette smoke.

The National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health has the responsibility for the continuous monitoring and compilation of the medical literature on the health consequences of smoking and for the preparation of this document. This is accomplished through several mechanisms:

* Referred to in this manuscript as the Surgeon General's Report.

** Referred to in this manuscript as "The Health Consequences of Smoking."

1. An information science corporation is on contract to extract articles on smoking and health from the medical literature of the world. This organization provides a semi-monthly accessions list with abstracts and copies of the various articles. Translations are called for as needed. Articles are classified according to subject and filed by a series of code words and phrases.
2. The National Library of Medicine, through the Medlars system, sends the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health a monthly listing of articles in the smoking and health area. These are reviewed, and articles not identified by the information science corporation are ordered.
3. Staff members review current medical literature and identify pertinent articles.

Initial drafts of the present review were prepared by the staff director, assistant staff director, and consulting editors. The first drafts of the individual chapters were sent to experts for review, criticism, and comment with respect to the articles reviewed, articles not included, and conclusions. The drafts were then revised until they met with the general approval of the reviewers. The final drafts were reviewed as a whole by the Director of the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health, the Director of the National Cancer Institute, the Director of the National Heart and Lung Institute, the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and by six additional experts both within and outside of the Public Health Service.

Acknowledgments

The National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health, Daniel /Horn, Ph. D., Director, was responsible for the preparation of this report. Staff Director for the report was John H. Holbrook, M.D., and Assistant Staff Director was Elvin E. Adams, M.D. Daniel P. Asnes, M.D., and David G. Cook, M.D., were Consulting Editors.

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The chapter on Harmful Constituents of Cigarette Smoke was prepared somewhat differently from the rest of the report, being the culmination of a one-day conference held in June 1970 to review this area of knowledge and to discuss a draft report prepared in advance by staff of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health. Earlier in this section, some of these participants are acknowledged as contributors to other parts of the report, namely, Dr. Daniel Horn, who served as Chairman of the meeting, Drs. Daniel P. Asnes, Fred G. Bock, Dietrich Hoffmann, Albert C. Kolbye, Gardner C. McMillan, Umberto Saffiotti, Leonard Schuman, Benjamin L. Van Duuren, and Ernest L. Wynder.

In addition, acknowledgments should be made to the following who were also participants in the conference:

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Special thanks are due Theresa Klotz, Rosalie Levine, and Mildred Ritchie.