

HARMS OF CIGARETTE SMOKING

Deadly; Highly Addictive; Aggressively Marketed

The combination of a deadly addictive product with aggressive marketing, often targeted at young people and other vulnerable populations, e.g., low income, marginalized communities, creates the perfect storm for the public health disaster that is cigarette smoking.

Of the 7.3 million deaths caused by tobacco use, smoking kills 5.8 million people globally each year¹; it is the leading cause of preventable death in the world. Tobacco use (primarily smoking), killed 100 million people in the 20th century and is projected to kill one billion in the 21st century if current trends continue.² Despite significant global declines in smoking since 1990 (31% among men and 45% among women), there are more smokers now (1.1 billion) than there were in 1990.¹ This is due to population growth and continued massive efforts by the tobacco companies to market their products, especially to young people and other vulnerable populations, along with their success in defeating evidence-based tobacco policies (e.g., smoke-free laws, tobacco taxes, advertising bans) that have proven successful when passed and implemented.

The economic costs of tobacco use, particularly due to smoking, are substantial, as they include healthcare expenditures for treating the tobacco-caused diseases and human capital lost as a result of illness and/or premature death caused by tobacco.³ Tobacco use is estimated to cause 1.85 trillion (USD) in economic damage globally each year.⁴

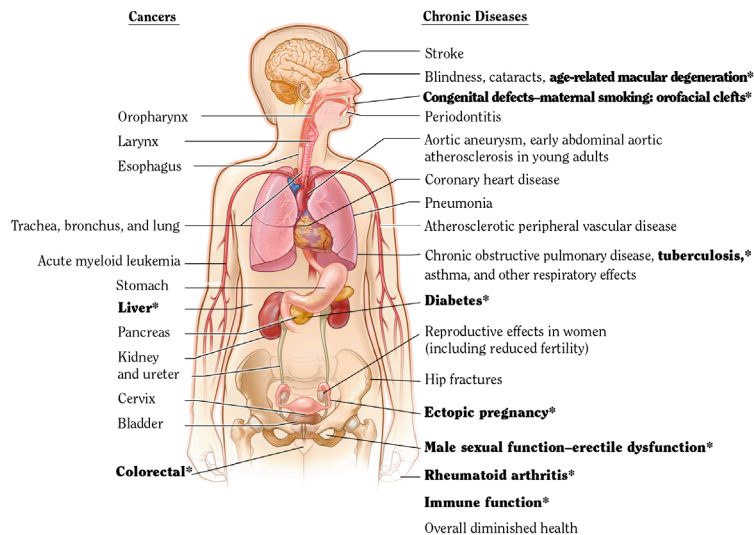
The harms of smoking are long established, despite the tobacco industry's decades of hiding, denying, and distorting the science about them, as well as their constant

50% Cigarettes kill **½ of lifetime smokers.**

↓10 years Smokers lose at least ten years of life, compared to those who never smoke.⁸

promises of change — never fulfilled. In 1964, the U.S. Surgeon General first documented the harmful effects of smoking in a landmark report that summarized the state of the scientific evidence regarding tobacco use at that time.⁵ Evidence since then has established, and continually added to, the degree of smoking's harms and the diseases it causes. Fifty years after the 1964 report, another Report of the Surgeon General stated that smoking was even more dangerous than previously known and that smoking affects nearly every organ in the human body.⁶

Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body



1964 U.S. Report of the Surgeon General; 2014 SGR Updates in bold

Tobacco smoke contains more than 7000 chemicals, 70 of which of which are known to cause cancer and others which cause other diseases and conditions.⁷ Smoking is a proven cause of heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and stroke, among many other diseases and conditions.⁶

Of the 36 health outcomes from smoking identified by the Global Burden of Disease, these four — (1) Coronary Heart Disease, (2) Tracheal/Bronchus/Lung Cancer, (3) Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and (4) Stroke — account for 75% of the 5.8 million annual early deaths from smoking.¹

Smoking is Highly Addictive; Nicotine is the Key

While cigarettes are perhaps the most lethal consumer product in history, the reason so many continue to smoke, even as the harms have become known, it is the addictive power of nicotine and the ability of the industry to maximize addiction. The companies have long recognized that nicotine addiction is the key to their business, even as they swore before policymakers that their products were not addictive.

In a landmark trial in the United States in which tobacco companies were found guilty of racketeering, including misleading the public for decades, the judge found that “For decades, defendants [Tobacco Companies] have recognized that controlling nicotine delivery, in order to create and sustain smokers’ addiction, was necessary to ensure commercial success.”

Other findings regarding nicotine from the trial included⁹:

- Defendants were well aware that smoking and nicotine are addictive;
- Defendants publicly denied that nicotine is addictive
- Defendants concealed and suppressed research data and other evidence that nicotine is addictive;
- Defendants have falsely denied that they can and do control the level of nicotine delivered in order to create and sustain addiction.

In the Words of the Tobacco Companies Themselves:

I believe the thing we sell most is nicotine.

We are basically in the nicotine business... Effective control of nicotine in our products should equate to a significant product performance and cost advantage.

We are, then, in the business of selling nicotine, an addictive drug effective in the release of stress mechanisms.

Aggressive Marketing

Because they lose millions of smokers each year to death and quitting, tobacco companies spend billions of dollars every year to recruit new smokers and keep existing ones. Some of the most sophisticated marketers in history, they have created iconic brands and campaigns to accomplish these objectives. Despite decades of denial, their own documents detail how they viewed young people, often teenagers, as “replacement smokers” for the ones they lose each year. They have and continue to develop marketing and promotion campaigns to make smoking attractive and alluring and to reach their desired targets through massive multi-dimensional marketing campaigns.

They know that by enticing experimentation, it takes little time to addict a customer for life. The effectiveness of these campaigns is well documented in other resources, but it is critical to an understanding of the smoking epidemic to include not only the highly addictive, lethal product, but also the massive efforts to promote its use.



Only when the truth came out about the harms of cigarettes did we finally begin to make progress on reducing it and saving lives. As illustrated below, since at least the 1950's, the tobacco companies denied the harms of smoking despite knowing about them, created products (e.g., light cigarettes) and waged campaigns to reassure smokers and dissuade them from quitting, and promised to change.

This continues today as the companies profess to be pursuing a "smoke-free world." They introduce new products they claim are only for smokers while designing and

aggressively marketing them to appeal to broad audiences of non-smokers, including young people, and opposing policies like tobacco taxes, nicotine reduction, etc. that would work to strongly encourage smokers to quit.

In the ongoing effort to reduce smoking and its ravishing impact, it is critical that efforts are driven by science, not by the claims of those whose products have addicted and killed tens of millions of smokers and who always put profits before truth, science, and health.

Decades of Denial; Trust Science, Not Tobacco

1954

If we had any thought or knowledge that in any way we were selling a product harmful to consumers, we would stop business tomorrow.

GEORGE WEISSMAN
PHILIP MORRIS VP

1998

I don't know if anyone dies from smoking tobacco, I just don't know.

GEOFFREY BIBLE
PHILIP MORRIS
CHAIRMAN

2021

And as our company continues to pursue its mission to deliver a smoke-free future, I will do everything in my power to build on my predecessors' progress and accelerate our pace of change.

PHILLIP MORRIS
INTERNATIONAL

1964

Cigarette smoking is causally related to lung cancer in men.

The magnitude of the effect of cigarette smoking far outweighs all other factors.

Cigarette smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States to warrant appropriate remedial action.

REPORT OF THE
U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

2006

Despite their internal knowledge, defendants continued, from 1964 onward, to falsely deny and distort the serious health effects of smoking.

U.S. JUDGE
GLADYS KESSLER

Key Takeaways

- Cigarettes are lethal — causing coronary heart disease, tracheal/bronchus/lung cancer, COPD, stroke, and many other health problems — and killing half of lifetime smokers
- Cigarettes are highly addictive, which is how they hook new users and maintain or increase use among current smokers
- Tobacco companies have known and denied the science on harm and addiction for decades in order to oppose lifesaving, evidence-based policies that reduce smoking
- Tobacco companies spend billions each year to entice and addict a new generation of smokers

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