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TOBACCO INDUSTRY DEVELOPED PRODUCT STRATEGY TO CONCEAL TOXICITY OF CIGARETTES

British American Tobacco (BAT) developed cigarettes which produced low-yields of nicotine and tar under standard testing protocols while delivering much greater amounts of nicotine and tar to smokers, according to a **Public Health** article published online today (Wednesday February 8, 2006) by *The Lancet*.

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Issued by Udani Samarasekera,
Press Officer, *The Lancet*

David Hammond (University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada) and colleagues reviewed internal tobacco industry documents on smoking behavior research undertaken by Imperial Tobacco Limited (ITL) and BAT. The BAT research reveals that consumers smoke to achieve a certain level of nicotine and will compensate for low-yield cigarettes by smoking them more intensely. BAT research also suggests that human smokers typically draw puff volumes almost twice as large as the International Standards Organization (ISO) smoking machine. The internal documents describe BAT's strategy to maximize the discrepancy between the low machine yields—which are often printed on packages and used in marketing campaigns—and the levels of tar and nicotine actually delivered to smokers. The documents also show that BAT pursued this product strategy despite the health risks to consumers and ethical concerns raised by senior scientists. BAT also marketed these cigarettes as low-tar alternatives for health-concerned smokers.

Professor Hammond concludes: "Overall, these documents depict a deliberate strategy whereby BAT and ITL designed products that would fool their consumers and regulators into thinking these products were safer or less hazardous when they were not . . . Moreover, this product strategy remains in place today, as does the tool of its deception, the ISO cigarette testing protocols. The current review leaves little doubt that the ISO standards should be discarded in favour of new standards that meet the needs of consumers and regulators, rather than the tobacco industry."

See also accompanying [Comment](#).

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