

Welcome to the eighth edition of *Tobacco Facts for MPs*, a regular newsletter to highlight the latest in tobacco legislation, research and litigation.

Focus

New amendments to Smoking Regulation Act, latest evidence on how smoking is harming men's health and why current health warnings and campaigns don't go far enough.



News: Smokefree dining

Congratulations to Health Minister Craig Knowles for announcing legislation to ban smoking in dining areas throughout the State. Once approved by Parliament, the phase in will start straight away with restaurants, cafes, shopping centres etc and dining areas in clubs and hotels will have 12 months notice. This great step forward will benefit public health enormously by eliminating the adverse health effects of passive smoking for staff and patrons in most hospitality venues. Bar areas however, have been exempted following strong opposition from the Australian Hotels Association.



AHA's "pro-smoking" campaign

Opposition by AHA chiefs to smoking bans in hotels falsely claims that: there has been no successful passive smoking claims in Australia; that smoke-free businesses in the ACT are suffering economic losses; and that the smoking problem can be solved mechanically with air conditioning. The AHA continues to place its members in jeopardy by ignoring: legal obligations under OHS laws and disability discrimination, union demands for safe workplaces, opinion polls supporting bans and economic evidence showing bans are good for business.



Smoker's droop - the hard FACTS

Impotence, or penile erectile dysfunction, is the repeated inability to have or maintain an erection.

- Smoking increases the risk of erectile dysfunction by around 50% for men in their 30s and 40s.
- Worldwide, 152 million men are estimated to have some degree of erectile dysfunction (ED). With prevalence growing to 322 million in 2025.
- Around one million men in Australia are affected and with our ageing population the incidence of ED will escalate.
- A study by the Australasian Society of Impotence Medicine conducted in 1999 found that 30 per cent of men believe erectile dysfunction harmed their relationship.

Other impacts to male sexual health caused by smoking

- Reduced volume of ejaculate
 - Lowered sperm count
 - Abnormal sperm shape
 - Impaired sperm mobility
- (Source: <http://www.ash.uk/papers/impotent.html>)

Sex expert says...

Erectile dysfunction (ED for short and formerly known as impotence) is increasing as a recognised medical problem. ED is mainly caused by blood flow problems within the penis itself. ED is found more commonly in men who have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and diabetes. Excessive alcohol intake and smoking also contribute. Smoking is increasingly recognised as a factor in a number of studies. The Massachusetts Male Ageing Study in 1987 initially documented smoking as a factor as did the 1996 Perth study by the Keogh Institute. Young men who smoke will not appreciate the connection between ED and smoking, as it usually presents in the older man with the other risk factors. At this stage stopping smoking maybe too late due to irreversible changes in the penile vasculature.

It is now thought that blood flow to the female genitals may also be affected by these risk factors. Thus older women with sexual arousal problems may not have a hormone deficit but rather an effect from smoking. It is appropriate to improve warnings about the potential effect of smoking on sexual function. This may alert younger smokers to a previously undisclosed and certainly unwanted side effect.

Michael P Lowy, Sexual Health Physician
Australian Centre of Sexual Health, Sydney

Women and smoking

For facts on how the tobacco industry has targeted women and undermined their health and fertility, see edition no.6 at <http://www.ashaust.org.au>

Tobacco Facts for MPs

Comment: Status of tobacco control

NSW has had a history of highs and lows in tobacco control with signs recently of a renewed political commitment to tobacco control. After an uneventful lull during the 1990s, recent progress includes tougher restrictions on tobacco advertising at point of sale, smokefree dining and shopping centres soon to become the norm and a new state Tobacco Action Plan for 2000-2004 is ready for launching.

During the 1980s, NSW was a leader in tobacco control launching the first Australian QUIT campaign by the then Health Minister Laurie Brereton. Major campaigns in other states followed and trends measured before and after the commencement of the campaigns showed an immediate 2.6% drop in overall adult smoking rates. However, since 1990, smoking rates have either stalled or are rising amongst children.

Smoking prevention is still a leading priority for health groups and key elements of an effective state plan need to include:

- Well executed, sustained mass media educational campaigns
- Evidence based, accessible addiction services for the 9 out of 10 smokers who want to quit
- Outreach services with focus on sub-populations with high smoking prevalence
- Strong, independent and multi-disciplinary research and evaluation and
- A sustained level of funding in excess of \$3 per capita.

Dr Andrew Penman

Chief Executive, NSW Cancer Council

Smoking and hair loss

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* suggested a link between smoking and grey hair in both men and women and between smoking and baldness in men. The observational study however, did not identify a causal link.

(*British Medical Journal*, 1996 Vol 313 December, p21-28)

“My brain? It’s my second favourite organ” (Woody Allen, *Sleeper*, 1993)

Smokers suffer premature ageing

Smoking destroys the ability of the skin to renew itself effectively, thus accelerating the ageing process, according to a study from a team of researchers at Japan’s Nagoya City University Medical School. Cells exposed to smoke produced far more of the enzyme responsible for breaking down skin. The researchers also found that smoke caused a drop in the production of fresh collagen by up to 40%.

(Source: *Archives of Dermatological Research* 2000; 292: 4 :188-194)

“Smoking is clearly hazardous to your erection”

Dr Lawrence Levine, Rush Medical Center, Director of Male Sexual Function Program (Source: “60 Minutes” program on smoking and impotence CBS November 1998)

Passive smoking & impotence link

A study that followed 513 men for up to 10 years found that men whose lifestyles put them at risk for heart disease were also at higher risk for erectile dysfunction (ED). Men who smoked, were overweight, had high blood pressure, or ate fatty diets were more likely to develop impotence.

Dr. Henry Feldman and his colleagues at New England Research Institutes in Watertown, Massachusetts, reported, “The well-known things that are bad for your heart are bad for sexual health”. Of note was that smoking – both active and passive (exposure to tobacco smoke) — was a key risk factor. Men who currently smoked cigarettes or cigars, and those exposed to passive cigarette smoke at home and work, had twice the rate of impotence of other men.

(Source: *Preventive Medicine* 2000; 30:328-338)

Sex still used to sell smoking

In 1999, researchers at the Children’s Hospital in Boston, US examined a number of music videos and found that over 26% of MTV videos portrayed tobacco use, and that in all of these “smoking videos” the tobacco was coupled with a high level of sexuality. It has also been found that smokers are frequently the lead characters in movies and are often portrayed as likeable, attractive and successful.

Recent “blockbuster movies” in which leading characters were portrayed as smokers include: *Titanic*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Independence Day*, *Men in Black* and *Jerry Maguire*. For evidence on how the tobacco companies exploit the film industry to promote smoking, see Cancer Council fact sheet at (<http://www.nswcc.org.au/pages/tobacco/movies.htm>)

Poll shows smokers ill-informed over threat to sexual health

A UK poll supports the position of health groups that current health warnings on cigarette packets are five years old, past their use by date and in need of more comprehensive and integrated consumer information with graphic pictures, similar to new warnings approved by the Canadian Government. The survey by ASH UK found that only 12% of smokers (13% men, 11% women) named smoking as a cause of male impotence.

(Source: <http://www.ash.uk/papers/impotent.html>)

Hot Docs – Big Tobacco kept risks hidden from smokers

An industry memo from 14 years ago reveals that the industry’s international agency Infotab was monitoring research and media on the link between smoking and impotency but didn’t bother to tell smokers about the devastating effect.

<http://www.pmdocs.com/getimg.asp?pgno=0&start=0&bool=impotence&docid=2501126928&docnum=2>

Parliamentary Questions Service

If you would like assistance with a tobacco-related question please contact ASH on 02 93341876

Visit www.ashaust.org.au for copies of newsletters, links to references, tobacco industry documents, fact sheets, media releases, tobacco and health policies and links to international, national and state organisations committed to tobacco

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