



Naval Health Clinic, Health Promotion

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Choice



TOBACCO: Facts

For those who still don't know – let me emphatically state that cigarette smoking is a true addiction, more powerful than dependence on alcohol, heroin or cocaine. To grasp this well-documented fact, one really doesn't have to study all the supporting scientific evidence. One simply needs to consider that no other drug is self-administered with the persistence, regularity and frequency of a cigarette. At an average rate of ten puffs per cigarette, a one to three pack-a-day smoker inhales 70,000 to 200,000 individual doses of mainstream smoke during a single year. Ever since its large scale industrial production early in this century, the popularity of the modern cigarette has been spreading like wildfire. Here is the first, and perhaps the most significant answer to the cigarette question: Addiction is in a cigarette.

Probing into what makes a cigarette so irresistible, we find that much of the recent research corroborates earlier claims: It is for the nicotine in tobacco that the smoker smokes, the chewer chews, and the dipper dips. Hence, the nicotine is in a cigarette. In contrast to other drugs, nicotine delivery from tobacco carries an ominous burden of chemical poisons and cancer-producing substances that boggle the mind. Many toxic agents are in a cigarette. However, additional toxicants are manufactured during the smoking process by the chemical reactions occurring in the glowing tip of the cigarette. The number is staggering: More than 4,000 hazardous compounds are present in the smoke that smokers draw into their lungs and which escapes into the environment between puffs.

But there is still more in a cigarette than addiction, poisons, pollution, disease, and hypocrisy. A half century of aggressive promotion and sophisticated advertising that featured alluring role models from theatre, film and sport, has invested the cigarette with an enticing imagery. Imagery which captivates and seduces a growing youngster. The youngster, indispensable for being recruited into the future army of smokers, does not start to smoke cigarettes for the nicotine, but for the false promises they hold. Hence, deceit is in a cigarette.

In summary, no drug ever ingested by humans can rival the long-term debilitating effects of tobacco; the

carnage perpetuated by its purveyors; the merciless irreversibility of destiny once the victim contracts lung cancer or emphysema; the militant denial on the part of those who, with the support of stockholders and the sanction of governments, legally push their lethal merchandize across borders and continents killing every year two and one-half to three million people worldwide. All things added together: **Death is in a cigarette.**



American Cancer Society's 31st
Great American Smokeout

