

## PUBLIC HEALTH

# Smoking Habits Studied

**A year-long survey in high schools of Portland, Oreg., has found similarities in the smoking habits of students and their parents.**

THE FREQUENCY of smoking among high school students depends to a large degree on the smoking habits of their parents. It is also strongly influenced by the degree to which the students participate in extra-curricular, scholastic and athletic activities.

A year-long study of high school children in the Portland, Oreg., area reveals that about one-fourth of 11,060 boys interviewed and more than one-eighth of the 10,920 girls questioned smoke regularly every week. Three-quarters smoke every day and one-quarter at least a pack a day.

The survey included 11 public high schools, five Catholic parochial schools in Portland proper, and five public schools in suburban Portland. One-fourth of the boys and one-half of the girls said they had not even experimented with cigarette smoking.

The percentage of smokers was found to be highest among children of families in which both parents smoke cigarettes, lowest in families in which neither parent had smoked, and intermediate in families in which only one parent smoked.

Where both parents smoked, 31.9% of the boys and 18.5% of the girls were regular smokers. If neither parent had been a smoker, the percentage of boys smoking was only 16.7% and the girls only 6.8%. When one parent smoked, the figures were 25.9% for boys and 13.1% for girls.

Furthermore, the percentage of smokers among children whose parents continue to smoke was shown to be significantly higher than among those whose parents had given up smoking. Smoking behavior of boys tends to conform more closely to that of the father, while smoking habits of girls follow those of the mother.

A higher proportion of smokers was found among those who were scholastically behind their age equals, among those with less ambitious academic goals, and among those who did not participate in organized sports or other school activities.

The survey also revealed that high school smoking is more widespread among students in Catholic parochial schools than among students in public schools. Thirty-two per cent of parochial boys smoked, while only 25.7% of boys in city public schools and 22.4% of boys in suburban public schools smoked.

Each successive school grade was found to have a higher percentage of smokers. Also, the percentage was shown to be inversely related to the educational level of parents, varying from 32.1% for boys and 17% for girls in families in which neither parent graduated from high school to 20.1% for boys and 10.7% for girls in families in which both parents attended college.

This study of high school smoking habits was conducted by the American Cancer Society to find the most effective way of presenting the facts about smoking to teenagers. The Society also sought more information about the amount and pattern of smoking among school students, the motivations toward smoking, and the factors that distinguish smokers from non-smokers.

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## PSYCHOLOGY

## Psychiatrist Interprets Second Thoughts

SECOND THOUGHTS are more revealing of mental condition than are first thoughts, it was indicated by a report by Dr. Stephen A. Appelbaum of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kans., to the American Psychological Association meeting in Cincinnati.

The famous word association test, widely used by psychiatrists to gain an understanding of patients, can be greatly improved just by repeating it and asking the patient

to give "the first word that comes to mind which is different from the one you gave before," he reported.

There is a tendency for any individual on the first trial to give a word most commonly linked with the test word in the language.

In response to "hot," for example, a person is most likely to say "cold." On the second time around, however, when he must give another word, he may say "dog," "cargo," "potato," or "mama." Such a response will give the psychiatrist a much clearer idea of the workings of his patient's mind.

Science News Letter, September 12, 1959

## VETERINARY MEDICINE

## Fido's Sniffles May Be Due To the Hay Fever Season

IF YOUR dog has the sniffles, take him to the vet for a hay fever shot.

Dogs appear to be as sensitive to ragweed pollen as humans, and require the same treatment for the allergy. For instance, a two-year-old fox terrier in southern Michigan developed a runny nose, itching and inflamed eyes during the hay fever season from August through October of 1957.

The dog was given antihistamine which relieved his symptoms until the season ended in October. Dr. Roy Patterson, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, reports in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* (Aug. 1).

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**"PANSY" SNIFFLES**—What Pansy is telling her doctor may some day help hay-fever sufferers the world over. The pup, wheezing with what one doctor described as "the worst case of hay-fever allergy I have ever seen in man or beast," has her symptoms relieved through treatment at the University of Michigan Medical Center.