

MEDICINE

Smokers Will Not Quit

► ONE OUT OF EIGHT cigarette smokers among 2,000 adults surveyed recently said they got no pleasure out of smoking—but they did not intend to give it up.

However, even among those who said they smoked because they got pleasure from cigarettes, only one in seven was entirely happy about the habit because they connected it with lung cancer.

The lung cancer image apparently has been accepted by many smokers and non-smokers because more than half of the 2,000 interviewed spontaneously mentioned cigarettes when asked, "Can you think of any habits people may have that cause cancer?"

An American Cancer Society official told SCIENCE SERVICE that he withheld until further scrutiny any opinion of the bill Sen. Maurine B. Neuberger (D.-Oreg.) is introducing to curb cigarette smoking.

However, Dr. Daniel Horn, the Society's director of program evaluation, said: "I do

believe there should be required labeling of the nicotine and tar content on cigarette packages because this varies from brand to brand. People are entitled to know this."

Dr. Horn said the legal aspects of cigarette smoking are complicated and delicate.

"There is an unwillingness of the public to have Government interference in their personal habits, which is left over from the Prohibition era," he pointed out.

In spite of the general acceptance of the cigarette-lung cancer link, the Cancer Society official said the recent survey showed an increase of smokers with population increase. The number of men smoking among the 2,000 adults interviewed was the same as in a survey made seven years ago—59%, but the number of women smokers increased from 31% to 36%.

Dr. Horn reported on the recent survey at the American Cancer Society's symposium for science writers in Phoenix, Ariz.

• Science News Letter, 81:181 March 24, 1962

PUBLIC HEALTH

Cigarettes on Trial

► THE ATTACK on cigarettes as a cause of lung cancer by the Royal College of Physicians in London, England, has fanned a controversy that has gone on since the Indians taught Sir Walter Raleigh to smoke.

Not only a matter of health is at stake; tobacco is a multi-billion-dollar industry that pays the U. S. Government alone nearly two billion dollars in taxes.

Both sides debating the effects of cigarette smoking have been equally vocal. The Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC) headed by the well-known scientist, Dr. Clarence Cook Little, best represents the industry's viewpoint.

Over the past decade, cigarette smoking has been attacked by such medical organizations as the American Cancer Society and

the National Cancer Institute of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Three major objections to the Royal College of Physicians' report were raised by TIRC:

1. It does not examine the total evidence, but considers only selected material related to a single aspect of human experience—smoking.

2. It professes to have considered views that disagree with the conclusions presented.

3. It claims to demonstrate impartiality by reviewing "other possible explanations which must be considered."

Dr. Little's committee questions whether lung cancer has really been increasing in recent years. Present diagnostic facilities and death registration, along with increased knowledge of lung cancer, are factors not taken into consideration in comparing the present incidence of the disease with the past.

Ten and more years ago the death certificate of a person dying of lung cancer might have read "pneumonia," "tuberculosis," "heart failure," or even contained such an item as "senility and other ill-defined conditions."

When criticizing the report's recommendation for specific actions to be taken against cigarettes by government and physicians, TIRC singled out the statement: "It should be realized that since we cannot identify the substances in tobacco smoke that may be injurious to health, no firm claims for the safety of modified cigarette tobaccos or filters can be made."

TIRC asked if it would not have been better to add, "further research is required to ascertain the truth."

Research projects by the hundreds are going on to bring out all the complex factors related to smoking and lung cancer as well as other ailments such as heart disease.

As far back as 1959, the Public Health Service issued a statement implicating cigarette smoking particularly as a leading cause of lung cancer.

"No method of treating tobacco or filtering the smoke has been demonstrated to be effective in materially reducing or eliminating the hazard of lung cancer," the statement reported. "Unless the use of tobacco can be made safe," it concluded, "the individual person's risk of lung cancer can best be reduced by the elimination of smoking."

Encouraged by the report of the Royal College of Physicians, Sen. Maurine B. Neuberger (D.-Oreg.) is introducing legislation that would require printing the tar and nicotine contents on each cigarette pack.

In 1959, however, a similar bill proposed by Rep. John A. Blatnik (D.-Minn.) never got out of committee for a Congressional vote.

• Science News Letter, 81:181 March 24, 1962

Most comets, like all the objects in the solar system, move counterclockwise around the sun, but the newly discovered comet Seki travels clockwise through the solar system.



MEXICAN ATOMS EXHIBIT—An inflated plastic structure has been raised in Chapultepec Park where young scientists from Mexican secondary schools will show their best science fair projects in the Atoms at Work exhibit for a month, beginning April 2. The Mexican National Nuclear Energy Commission and the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission sponsor both the exhibit and the student science fair.