

TDS
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10th March, 1977.

Mr. R.M. Gibb,
P.O. Box 6500,
Montreal.

Dear Bob,

I was delighted to see your "Position" paper which I found logical and elegant. You ask if there is any inconsistency with my papers. Well there is one near-inconsistency. You say epidemiology etc. "seems valid when applied to smokers as a group but only holds as a statistical probability when applied to the individual". I had that in mind when I talked about 'probabilistic' causality. However, in my current paper I am going further and saying - for a number of reasons I could develop - that epidemiology tells you nothing about the probability of John Smith getting this or that disease. If you go back to Boltzman in 1890 or so and consider a molecular system then entropy + information is a constant - the more chaos the less information - but both entropy and the information concerned relate only to the macro-system. Temperature measurements tell you nothing whatever about one single identified molecule; you can only talk probabilities about its velocity if it is unidentified i.e. if it becomes the faceless shorthand for its set.

While I would agree smoking affords pleasure and relieves stress, I don't think we can argue that this benefit is shown by smoking behaviour on cigarette withdrawal. Our critics would compare addictions of all kinds and would leave your 'best perceived' argument in ruins.

I agree with you on the need for a position paper - you may remember we tried to do this for research in "Basis for Research in Smoking". But in areas other than R. & D. there is an urgent need and I think your paper would be a useful basis (for discussion) to start from. Of course, it may be suggested that it is better in some countries to have no such paper - "its better not to know" and certainly not to put it in writing.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

S.J. GREEN

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