

Minutes SPG Meeting  
Hamburg May 25-27 1987

Those Present: Dr R E Thornton - BATCo Chairman  
Dr S Boyse - BATCo  
Dr G Smith - BATUKE  
Herr E Koehn - BATCF  
Dr F Seehofer - BATCF  
Dr C J P de Siqueira - Souza Cruz  
Dr S Massey - Imperial, Canada

Also Present: Mr R Bexon - Imperial, Canada  
(part-time) Mr R P Ferris - BATUKE  
Mr Hulemann - BATCF  
Dr D Pangritz - BATCF  
Dr F Knabjohann - BATCF

External

Participation: Dr G Gori - ) Consultants  
Prof Pavlik - )  
  
Prof J A Gray - )  
Prof J von Troschke - ) Speakers  
Dr T Yanagita - )

1/2 Professor J von Troschke: Psychosocial conditions of smoking behaviour and of other consumer products

Professor von Troschke has carried out attitude surveys amongst smokers for the Forschungsrat. This had been done by questionnaire.

In view of the increasing pressures on smoking Professor von Troschke had investigated the various aspects of: 'why do smokers smoke?' He believed that motivation was multi-factorial, and that there was a trade-off between immediate advantages and perceived "risks" which were on a much longer time scale. "Advantages" were said to include social recognition and coping with daily behaviour.

Social pressure arose from a vocal minority of the medical profession, the ecological movement and the stance of governments, particularly on taxation. Passive smoking had become a major issue of social acceptability even though the arguments were equivocal. Public perception of the risks of nuclear energy (Chernobyl) and AIDS were likely to alter their perception of the claimed "risks" of smoking. The tobacco industry had largely kept out of the smoking debate and was perceived as having abandoned the market.

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3/4 Dr T Yanagita: Psychopharmacological and Toxicological Studies on Nicotine and Smoking in Rhesus Monkeys

Dr Yanagita presented data from a variety of studies designed to assess the "abuse potential" of nicotine in comparison with drugs presumed to produce dependence. Monkeys could be trained to press a lever in a cage to self-administer intravenous nicotine. However, they were prepared to work considerably less for nicotine (ie they would press the lever a smaller number of times before receiving a nicotine injection) than for cocaine. Monkeys that had been trained to discriminate nicotine from saline (ie to press one lever when injected with saline) also pressed the nicotine lever when injected with cocaine, amphetamine, morphine, diazepam (valium), lobeline (a nicotine-like drug) and ethanol. However, although such studies might normally be interpreted as showing similar subjective effects of these drugs, Dr Yanagita, had not included the appropriate controls to allow such an assumption to be made. After withdrawal from chronic treatment with nicotine, no observable "withdrawal symptoms" were noted.

Dr Yanagita had managed to persuade 2 out of 14 monkeys to voluntarily "smoke cigarettes" for several years. Smoking resulted in elevation of heart rate and blood pressure and suppressed motility in the intestine. No observable toxicological effects of chronic nicotine or smoking were described. For more details, see Appendix I.

5/6 Professor J. A Gray: The role of brain cholinergic systems in memory

Prof. Gray gave a general overview of the concept of a neurotransmitter, and discussed the neuroanatomy of the brain pathways using acetylcholine and dopamine as their neurotransmitters - these two being the neurotransmitters implicated in neuro-degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's Disease and Senile Dementia of the Alzheimer's Type (SDAT). In a series of animal studies, Prof. Gray has studied the role of brain cholinergic systems in learning and memory, and has found that widespread destruction of cholinergic pathways is necessary to produce a memory deficit comparable to that observed in SDAT. Cholinergic pathways are also implicated in animal models of memory loss induced by excess alcohol consumption. Cholinergic replacement therapy in SDAT was discussed and Prof Gray reported that several SDAT patients (in a project funded by BAT) had considerably improved information processing abilities as a result of a single nicotine injection. Prof. Gray then briefly discussed some work on nicotine and dopamine levels, with relevance to Parkinson's Disease, funded by R J Reynolds Co.

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7/8 Dr Gio Gori: Positive aspects of smoking

While some epidemiologists claimed that 90% of lung cancer deaths could be attributed to smoking, other factors were associated with the disease and smoking was negatively associated with other diseases.

It was therefore worth re-evaluating the statistical associations. Positive associations had been claimed for neuro-degenerative diseases (as discussed by Prof Gray), ulcerative colitis, colon cancer, and endometrial cancer and breast cancer in women.

In addition, some recent epidemiological studies had not found an association between smoking and heart disease. Smokers generally had been claimed to have lower baseline blood pressure than non-smokers and weight differences had been noted.

Subject to substantive papers being identified an attempt is being made to quantify these associations.

9. Bob Bexon: Consumer Perception of Smoking Issues

Canada has often been considered to be second to Norway in its militancy on smoking issues. The market has been declining since 1982 at the rate of about 5% a year. Through the use of questionnaires a survey had been carried out to establish what Canadians think about smoking issues. The survey showed that they believe that smoking is associated with a wide range of diseases. However, even if the association of smoking and disease were eventually shown not to be causal, the problem of social unacceptability would remain.

In many other respects smokers were disadvantaged in comparison to nonsmokers eg they were seen as child like. Quitters were seen in a very favourable light, being perceived as having some additional strengths compared even to nonsmokers. 21% of smokers would accept even higher taxation. By and large smokers saw themselves living in a climate of disapproval. In discussion there was a consensus of opinion that the issue of social acceptability derived almost entirely from smoking and health issues, and in particular the issue of passive smoking.

Conceptually, while social acceptability and smoking and health could be separated. social acceptability was only likely to be affected by changing attitudes ultimately deriving from changes in the perceived relationship between smoking and health.

The group accepted that the introduction of a strategy to address these issues would be required, and views from BATCF were discussed will be circulated shortly.

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10. After the discussion of the position in the countries represented, four areas of possible scientific research related to social acceptability were identified:

1. Primary smoking and health issues
2. "Passive" smoking or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)
3. Effects of smoking (with especial reference to nicotine)
4. "Other noxae"

The group identified work related to passive smoking as having the highest priority and recommend the following feasibility projects which should help determine whether further work is required in addition to the substantial amount being funded worldwide.

- a) P N Lee to be asked to comment on the possibility of carrying out studies to look at the correlation between specific illnesses and exposure to ETS in normal situations
- b) Survey of the role of ETS in general air contamination (worker to be decided)
- c) Literature survey to be carried out on state of knowledge of nicotine in relation to other compounds in ETS (to be carried out by BATUKE).

(Existing work within BATCo. eg activities in relation to low risk epidemiology were noted and taken into account in consideration of the above work programme).

Additional work areas relating to "mainstream" smoking were not identified.

Work relating to the other topics is discussed under the next two headings.

12. A variety of preliminary proposals regarding scientific projects that BAT might be prepared to fund were discussed. Strong priority was given to the proposal put forward by Dr Ian Hindmarch on potential beneficial aspects of nicotine and of smoking on performance, learning and memory and other physiological measures. Dr Hindmarch would be asked to produce a more detailed research proposal which would be circulated to SRG members for their comments. It was decided that the work of Professors Costall and Naylor, Dr Strange and Dr Elithorn were of relatively low priority and would not be supported. A report on the work currently supported by BATUKE with Prof Gale was circulated; in the future Prof Gale might be a suitable person to carry out work funded by the SRG.

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13. Documents were circulated relating to epidemiological studies on the possible association between smoking and neuro-degenerative disorders.

The evidence for an association between smoking and Parkinson's Disease was quite sound; this was not the case for smoking and Alzheimer's Disease, but further epidemiological research was being carried out by Prof Levy at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, and by Dr N Barclay in New York (funded by the CTR).

A discussion document on smoking, nicotine, and theories of addiction was circulated. This would be discussed at the next meeting of the SRG.

14. The possibility that the problem of monitoring the scientific literature could be facilitated by inter-group collaboration was raised.

It was decided that the available facilities would be made known to members at the next meeting of the SRG, and the extent to which existing resources are adequate to meet the current demand could be discussed.

15. Other Noxae

The paper "Prioritization of the Noxae on the Basis of TLV's" was discussed. After consideration of the background to this paper it was decided that a final revised version of the above document be prepared within the next four weeks. Any final comments would be required by July 15. This would include all compounds that had been identified by regulatory authorities, in the scientific literature and by consultants. The paper would indicate any assumptions made in considering these compounds and, of course, compounds that were below any threshold would need to be re-evaluated from time to time. There were a wide variety of opinions on the strategy associated with this work. Members were asked to discuss this with their colleagues on the Research Policy Group.

16. Some work on passive smoking carried out by the Verband der Cigarettenindustrie was briefly reported. Epidemiology, animal experiments, and analysis of mainstream and sidestream smoke were subjects under investigation. Some of this work has been published; further information on work still in progress would be provided to SRG members. The proposed paper on "Other Noxae" would form a recommendation to the Research Policy Group.

The budget was discussed; it was suggested that each company (BATCo, Australia, Canada, USA and Germany) should contribute £50,000 to the current budget (1 Jan 1987 - 31 Dec 1987). For subsequent years additional funding would be required and a budgetary figure of £100,000 was suggested to cover the possibilities of new projects, particularly in the area of environmental tobacco smoke.

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18. The proposed locations for the next meetings of the SRG were suggested as follows:

November 2-4 1987:	Canada
March 1988:	England
June 1988:	Brazil

The next meeting would concentrate on the following areas: a review of work being funded by the industry world-wide; a discussion of BAT's research strategy and a further discussion on projects associated with passive smoking. Suggestion for speakers: someone from the CTR to discuss the research projects which they are funding; Dr Verner Knott from the Royal Ottawa Hospital, and a speaker on indoor air quality from Canada.

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