

FROM: Michel Descôteaux

TO: R.M. Gibb

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Millbank Public Affairs Smoking and Health Handbook to employees

Bonjour Bob,

Thank you for sending me the eighth draft of this proposed handbook. I find it most interesting that BAT would undertake such a project and, should they be successful, perhaps could we consider adopting it for our own employees in one way or another.

The following are my comments as they propped up during my reading of the text:

1. Page 2, second paragraph: My criticism rests here essentially on the wording. Instead of saying that "the great majority of smokers do not die from lung cancer" I would suggest that they give some indication of what the great majority is, like "more than 99% of smokers do not contract (or die from) lung cancer".
2. Page 2, last paragraph: I find the comment about some scientists believing that it is "purely coincidental" pretty audacious. I wonder if there are enough scientists of high repute who have this opinion to justify including it in the text but this is not for me to judge.

The last sentence of the paragraph should, in my opinion, clearly include smoking as one of the factors that may contribute to the incidence of the diseases which are associated with smoking.

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3. Page 5, last paragraph: "It follows that the reductions currently observed must be largely associated with the early post-1960 move to filter cigarettes". This whole section creates a major problem in my view, one of inconsistency. If, in the first part of the handbook, BAT expresses the opinion that smoking does not cause certain diseases or is not a contributing factor, how can they point out that a reduction in the incidence of the same diseases is probably a reflection of the newly developed filtered or lower "tar" delivery cigarettes. It seems to me that it is a case of having your cake and eating it too. In my opinion, the lower disease incidence forecast, if it is to be pointed out by the industry, is a validation of the accusations against tobacco as a contributing factor to these diseases.
4. Page 7, first paragraph: I believe that BAT, having explained what "tar" is (in fact, saying that "tar" and tar are not the same thing at all), should always use ^{brackets}brackets when referring to "tar" so as to limit possibilities of confusion.
5. Page 7, last paragraph: They say that nicotine can be a stimulant or a tranquilizer depending on the needs of the smoker. I think they should really say that this depends on the dose absorbed by the smoker rather than on ^{his}its needs. BOTH?
6. Page 8: I think reference should be made to the fact that carbon monoxide is naturally present in the human body, whether one smokes or not. I also think that, to be unmistakably clear, it should be mentioned that it is produced by humans, animals and plants.

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Finally, I am somewhat concerned with the last sentence not only for the implications for smokers but for also for the implications in the passive smoking debate. This is not the only place where BAT has a statement about doctors' advice and I think they should word their statement somewhat differently, perhaps along the following lines: "Nevertheless, some doctors advise patients suffering from an illness which could be aggravated by an increased carbon monoxide level in their blood to abstain from smoking".

7. Page 10, first paragraph: I am very surprised to find BAT mentioning that there indeed exist some people who are allergic to tobacco smoke. My impression was that no allergy to tobacco smoke had ever been identified, only an allergy to leaf extracts. I would suggest that they crosscheck this information very closely as allergy is one of the many arguments that anti-smokers use in the passive smoking debate.
8. Page 10, last paragraph: I am amazed that BAT would agree with the advice of doctors concerning pregnant women. I would suggest here that they word their paragraph somewhat differently along the following lines: "Nevertheless, in the absence of definitive answers to this question, many doctors advise their pregnant patients to modify their smoking habits during pregnancy as a sensible part of prenatal behavior not unlike the advised reduction in alcohol consumption or in the use of non prescribed medicine." BAT's agreement could open the door to claims for warnings on cigarette packages, for example, and has very important implications in the passive smoking debate.
9. Page 13, last two paragraphs: Frankly, the oft-quoted calculation of how many minutes you take off your life by smoking one cigarette is full of baloney and I would recommend to BAT that they express themselves much more strongly than the very tame comment they now have.

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10. Pages 16 and 17: I will not comment on any detail on this subject except to say that it appears rather incomplete to me.

In concluding, I would like to mention that I get a feeling of confusion from reading the material. This brochure covers, in my opinion, far too many subjects of too different a nature to make a cohesive unit. I would rather suggest to BAT that they split up the contents into smaller independent pamphlets.

Michiel

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