

BASIS FOR RESEARCH IN SMOKING

Smoking has become an important social question. Smoking is enjoyed by large numbers of people and in varying degrees is of importance to them. But smoking is associated with a number of diseases and evidence from epidemiological studies suggests that smoking may well be causally related to lung cancer. This is particularly true if a probabilistic concept of causality is accepted. It is true that the epidemiological evidence might support the hypothesis that there are substantial minorities of people pre-disposed to cancer and other diseases. If such people could be clearly identified, it might be possible and would surely be desirable to persuade most of them not to smoke or to reduce their smoking or to modify the way in which they smoke. However, even if it were acceptable as social policy, attempts by enforcement or persuasion to end the smoking habit for all do not appear to provide a practical answer to the social question. Insofar as they are successful such attempts, if pushed too far, may well create new social dangers. Therefore, so far as can be foreseen smoking will remain an important social habit bringing to large numbers of people enjoyment and satisfaction in varying degrees. Hence, while recognising social responsibilities, those in the industry recognise also their duty to do their best for consumers consistent with the duties and responsibilities all Companies have to the State, the employees, the shareholders and others.

These views are reflected in our research objectives which, in addition to making our products as pleasing, satisfying and competitive as we can, include the investigation not only of all evidence that smoking may be harmful but also all such allegations and all serious suggestions for the improvement of our products in these respects. Significant developments in this latter field are not being achieved quickly or easily. There are several large areas where we are still quite ignorant and where progress is slow. For example, we have insufficient knowledge of smoking behaviour either with reference to the way individual cigarettes are smoked by different people or to the way changes in cigarettes affect the overall smoking patterns of people. Further, although conscientious empirical development over many years has led to products which appear to match consumer needs, we have only a little knowledge of the factors which lead smokers to prefer different cigarettes or indeed to smoke at all.

We know that the pharmacological effects of nicotine and/or other agents are likely to be very important for some smokers at some times but we are also aware that psychological factors are also important. These psychological factors are related to the package presentation, colour, aroma, etc. as well as to the act of smoking itself. It is a question of judgment at present whether to regard these effects and factors as separable and whether to regard one or another as more important. If nicotine is the main factor, we may regard it as important to measure other smoke constituents in relation to the amount of nicotine made available to the

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smoker and to provide the smoker with a choice of nicotine contents. But other factors such as packaging, appearance, tobacco quality, firmness of the cigarettes, weight of tobacco are more important to some smokers. None of these factors alone can be considered as an objective measure of value or subjective smoking and pre-smoking experience. Thus only the consumer can evaluate smoking products in terms of the money he pays and in the end it is competitive presentation of choice that ensures that the smoker gets value for his money.

Our research and development aims can thus broadly be resolved into producing at minimum cost different smoking and pre-smoking experiences aimed to match the needs of different smokers and associated with minimum undesirable side-effects.

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