

# RESTRICTED

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## COMPENDIUM OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES

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### NOTES

- 1) Style, level of Scholarship, etc., to be similar to RCP Report (Accuracy and Consistency hopefully better). This document appears to be acceptable reading to a wide audience, even if one cannot accept the conclusions!
- 2) The compendium will concentrate on anomalies and will not go over well-trodden ground.
- 3) A snappier title might be needed. What about 'Health and Smoking?'

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years many studies have been described in the medical and scientific literature which claim an association between the incidence of a particular disease and the habit of smoking. While there are reasonable doubts on the validity of some of these claims, the large number of them and the sheer size of the populations studied make it most unlikely that they are all unsoundly based.

However, as has been pointed out endlessly, it is quite another matter to proceed from acknowledging the statistical association to saying that there is a causal relationship between a particular disease and the habit of smoking.

The original judgements that smoking was causally related to various diseases were made by members of the medical profession and were based solely on the interpretation of the statistically derived association. The validity of such judgements have been repeatedly criticised by a few independently minded scientists. The criticisms have been based on various arguments but basically relate to the fundamental lack of knowledge of disease mechanisms and to anomalies in the statistical evidence. Nevertheless, over the last 20-30 years the judgements on the causal relationship between smoking and disease have become incorporated into medical dogma and are now widely accepted by governments and the general public, such that legislation and ordinances affecting smoking are widespread.

However, in the 20-30 years that have passed since the original judgements were made there have been numerous

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developments in related fields of science that have some bearing on the matter. With the use of powerful computers, the statistical analysis of possible associations between diseases and various factors has advanced considerably. Substantial progress has been made in unravelling the complexities of the progress of cells to the cancerous state and some knowledge had accumulated on the development of other diseases, e.g. for emphysema. Indeed a book describing a complete model for the development of many diseases has been published.

Many of the conclusions from recent research do not agree with the simple causal model and they have been conveniently ignored. Consequently, it is the purpose of this report to concentrate on these "so-called" anomalies, especially as the conventional approach to the problem has achieved such wide publicity.

"Anomalies" should, of course, be considered as facts which sit uncomfortably with existing theories and, while it is theoretically possible to develop a comprehensive model accommodating all known facts, the complexity of the problem and its intellectual challenge are formidable obstacles to rapid progress. The scope of this report is therefore restricted to a consideration of the anomalies themselves: regrettably the full interpretation cannot yet be carried out.

[References, as per RCP Report, will be needed in definitive version.]

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