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# Smoking, drinking attacked

## Chicago doctor against advertising harmful products

By DIANE BLISS

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*"Warning: This talk may be hazardous to your preconceptions."*

Dr. Alan Blum, a Chicago family physician, gave this caution to his 50-member Yuma audience and it's one that should be well-heeded, especially by Madison Avenue executives and members of the media.

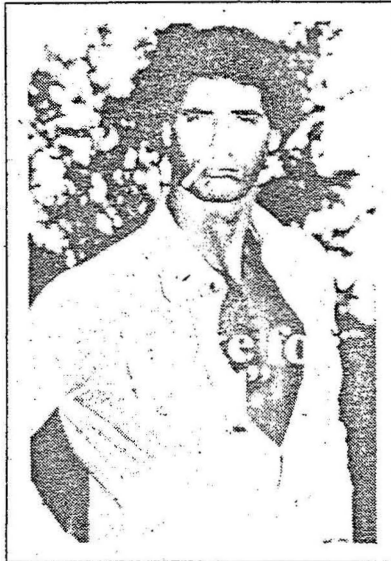
Blum is opposed to advertising, specifically cigarette and alcohol advertising in newspapers, magazines, televisions, radios and store fronts. He claims advertising has taken over our lives.

"We need to regain control of the media," Blum told the audience of mostly local health educators and teachers. He is the president of Doctors Ought to Care, an anti-smoking group, and was brought to Yuma by Western Arizona Health Concepts, Inc., a federally funded alcohol and smoking intervention and prevention project.

The tall, wirey-haired doctor held up a recent issue of Rolling Stone magazine which he says is most popular among junior high school students. On the front cover is a photo of Yoko and John Lennon. Lennon was naked.

"Inside there's a letter from a parent who is disgusted by the front cover ... she says the photograph is porno," he said. "But this, (he pointed to the cigarette ad on the back page) this is worse porno than the naked picture on the front."

Cigarettes, Blum contends, are the No. 1 cause of death. Alcohol is



**Doctor's suggested ad**

No. 2. "If we can't deal with that then forget about dealing with nuclear war..."

The doctor told the audience that about ten times more 12-year-old girls are smoking than ten years ago. He said the \$375,000 currently being spent to have a wise old owl say he doesn't smoke is competing with \$1 billion in cigarette promotion.

"The ad is the origin of peer pressure and parent model," Blum said. To fight the pressure from advertising and promote health, Blum said the teachers should bring the street savvy of kids into the classroom. "You can't promote

health with films and finger-wagging."

He showed advertisements with superstars like Cheryl Tiegs, Mohammed Ali and Telly Savalas selling products, doctors selling vitamins and companies like Coke Cola associating its drink with "nice" things. "A Coke and a smile. What's nicer than that?" Blum asks. "Coke doesn't add life. It adds weight."

Blum said kids respond to the ads because they figure if they pay \$1.50 for a Cosmopolitan, for instance, a magazine which he said promotes money and acceptance, "nobody is going to get ripped off if they paid money."

Cigarette smoking is less than 100 years old, Blum said. Before that time people would either chew tobacco or smoke it in a pipe, but all that ended when it was discovered that tuberculous was being spread by those spit tobacco, he said, and cigarettes were born.

Blum told the audience that they cannot depend on anyone, including athlete Walt Garrison and President Ronald Reagan, both of whom he showed in ads promoting tobacco and cigarettes, to get kids to learn how dangerous smoking really is.

He suggested that teachers get their students to learn what advertising is and how it has taken them over by learning how to undermine. He said teachers should make the media work for them by producing spoofs on ads and getting them on the radio and in the newspapers.