

# "Precious baby"

MARY ANN CROMER, MD

You've become accustomed to seeing magazine and newspaper articles that say that smoking can harm your unborn child. Studies do show that smoking mothers, on the average, have slightly lighter weight babies. Yet with more women reportedly smoking, infant mortality rates keep reaching historic lows. Some studies have shown that the lighter babies of smoking mothers actually have better survival rates than similar weight babies of nonsmokers.

—from *The Cigarette Controversy*, a pamphlet distributed by The Tobacco Institute, 1776 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006

"PRECIOUS BABY," read the T-shirt of the very pregnant young woman in the Newark, New Jersey, airport. Yet there she sat dragging luxuriously on a Virginia Slims, supplying herself and her desired child-to-be with a dose of nicotine, carbon monoxide, hydrogen cyanide, DDT, and benzopyrene. No one screamed, "Stop!" or "Please don't!" No one murmured, "Disgusting!" or "How Sad." No one was discussing the contradiction between her chosen wearing apparel and her cigarette. In fact, I appeared to be the only one shaking my head in dismay at this remarkably ironic behavior. Could I have been the only one who noticed or wondered, "Does this woman have a doctor?"

It is naive to suggest that smoking by a pregnant woman in 1983 is a choice made by an informed adult, when every effort is being made by cigarette companies to undermine knowledge about the adverse effects of smoking on the fetus and on the mother herself. Indeed, surveys<sup>1-5</sup> have repeatedly demonstrated that when compared with those who have never smoked or who formerly smoked, persons who smoke are ignorant of the probability and severity of cigarette-caused damage. The media, especially magazines directed to women, have done little to educate. While purporting to promote the status of women, these publications contribute to their ignorance by censoring articles that would inform readers about the disproportionate health problems caused by smoking. Perhaps the most striking example is *Ms.* magazine, published by Gloria Steinem. Its May 1983 issue was devoted entirely to the topic of women's health—but without a clear emphasis on the leading cause of preventable disease and death in women: cigarettes. In its 13-year existence, *Ms.* has never published an article on smoking, but has carried hundreds of pages of cigarette

advertising.

In a similar vein, athletes like Billy Jean King, Martina Navratilova, and Renee Richards, MD—who could be doing so much to encourage healthier lifestyles among teenage girls—may be assisting Philip Morris' efforts to "liberate" women by promoting cigarette dependence. They participate in tennis matches promoted with the demeaning slogan, "Virginia Slims. You've come a long way, baby."

For too long, the tobacco industry has gone unchallenged by women with its exploitation of the misconception that slimness allegedly due to smoking is preferable to a non-smoking lifestyle. Alton Ochsner, MD, used to comment, "Who wants to be a svelte corpse?" but his quote never made the billboards at the tennis matches.

It is small wonder why cigarette companies fear the growing number of nonsmokers' rights groups led by GASP (Group Against Smoking Pollution) and ASH (Action on Smoking and Health). In the long run, the social unacceptability of smoking, which is implicit in these groups' objectives, will succeed in cutting cigarette sales. (A memorandum distributed to tobacco executives during a clean indoor-air referendum in California in 1978 made note of the fact that if every individual who smokes were to smoke just one less cigarette per day, R.J. Reynolds alone would lose \$92 million in sales each year.<sup>6</sup>) In addition, the high visibility and increasing involvement of women in nonsmokers' rights groups provide hope that magazine publishers who unite with cigarette companies to exploit women will see fewer and fewer women buying their publications.

To this end, organizations such as the American Medical Women's Association, NOW (National Organization of Women), the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, national and local PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations), and women's religious and civic organizations must do more—far more—than they have done to stop the assault on girls and women by cigarette advertisers.

## REFERENCES

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**McGILL'S**

## WORKING MOTHER

What to do when he says: "I didn't ask you to go to work."  
Another baby?  
Women face their mixed feelings  
What pre-teens do after school  
Start the dinner cookbook for kids

**The Vantage Point**  
Where great taste and low tar meet.

A woman's rights to get out of a rut  
Twenty years of good-looking health (What, try?)  
For single parents: A technology revolution

## Anacin Claims Trimmed

WASHINGTON—A Federal Trade Commission order issued last week requiring American Home Products to have rigorous scientific support behind claims for Anacin and its other analgesics is FTC's first major tactical move in the proprietary drug area since withdrawing from plans for industrywide regulation.

The same order also requires that ads for Anacin, Arthritis Pain Formula or any other AHP analgesic containing aspirin disclose that aspirin is the pain-reliever whenever performance claims are made. That would end blind references to "the pain reliever" most recommended by doctors.

The FTC commissioners, however, rejected an administrative law judge's recommendation—made in 1978—that AHP include a corrective disclaimer in more than \$20,000,000 of future Anacin ads stating that the product is not a "tension reliever." FTC noted that the claim had been dropped in 1973 and was not likely to endure.

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## rate

New York—slash extra cash  
"Our ranking dubious and (agency) stocks  
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## Luckies tries as low tar

# Women top cig target

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

New product frenzy in the cigarette market shows no sign of abating, and there is compelling evidence to suggest that the nation's major cigarette marketers will be stepping up development of brands directed exclusively toward women in 1982.

In an interview, Gerald H. Long, recently named president-chief executive officer of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco, noted that in the first eight months of this year, the industry produced some two dozen new brands or line extensions to make 1981, in his opinion, "the most competitive year in the history of the business."

Mr. Long, promoted from exec vp of the nation's largest cigarette company, also listed three trends to which R.J.R. and its five rivals are responding in their new product development: Continued growth of low tar; the booming success of 100mm cigars; and women as a percentage of the total smoking population.

Even American Tobacco is about to succumb to new product fever. Having doted mainly on its successful ultra-low tar Carlton line for the last five years, American will attempt to revive its long-neglected and declining Lucky Strike brand. According to sources, American will move into two markets Nov. 9 with a reformulated and repackaged Lucky

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## highlights

line. See Page 4.

INTERNATIONAL

his hand at the new al Warner Amex

# VIRGINIA SLIMS

The largest selling cigarette made especially for women.

You've come a long way, baby.

Year after year, Philip Morris outgrows the rest of the industry combined.

PHILIP MORRIS

## RUN IN IT. BICYCLE IN IT. PLAY TENNIS IN IT OR JUST SIT AROUND LOOKING SMASHING IN IT.

### THE GINNY JOGGER FROM VIRGINIA SLIMS

The Ginny Jogger is a new line of ultra-low tar Virginia Slims cigarettes. Designed especially for women, it's a new way to enjoy a low tar cigarette. The Ginny Jogger is a 100mm cigarette with a soft, smooth taste and a long, satisfying burn. It's the perfect choice for women who want to enjoy a low tar cigarette without sacrificing taste or satisfaction.

You've come a long way, baby.

PHILIP MORRIS

Come see the smash hit of the year!

## THE \$350,000 VIRGINIA SLIMS CHAMPIONSHIPS OF NEW YORK.

MARCH 23-27 1983

at Madison Square Garden

PHILIP MORRIS

## The REAL Va. Slim

TRIPLE FAULT

"Women top cig target" reads the headline in *Advertising Age*, September 28, 1981 (top R) and the message is clear: cigarette makers will go to great lengths to create imagery that glorifies the woman who smokes. An advertisement in the *United States Tobacco Journal* (middle L) lacks the health warning, as do many advertisements in store displays. The advertisement for the Virginia Slims Ginny Jogger suit (middle R) may be the only fitness ad ever with a health warning at the bottom. While Philip Morris touts its Virginia Slims tennis tournament at \$20 a ticket (bottom L) a group of medical students at the University of Miami protested the tournament in 1978 and created a poster (bottom R) of the *real* Va. Slim. Yes, Virginia, there is a lung cancer.