



# NEW YORK STATE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

JULY 1985 • Volume 85, Number 7

Table of Contents, page 279

## THE WORLD CIGARETTE PANDEMIC Part II

Don't remove the moisture-proof wrapping from your package of Camels after you open it. The Humidor Pack is protection against dust and germs. In offices and homes, even in the dry atmosphere of artificial heat, the Humidor Pack delivers fresh Camels and keeps them right until the last one has been smoked

*PRIMUM NON NOCERE?*

## Mixed messages for women

### A social history of cigarette smoking and advertising

VIRGINIA L. ERNSTER, PHD

*They want to make you think that cigarettes will make you beautiful but really they just want to make money. Those ads are dumb because cigarettes make you die.*

—7-year-old girl looking at mother's magazine

Messages promoting cigarette smoking are everywhere—in advertisements in the printed media, on billboards, on public transit, and in routine encounters with individuals who smoke. These appeals are countered by warnings of public health officials, health charities, school programs, and no-smoking signs. As the young girl's observation reveals, cigarette smoking has been fraught with mixed messages.

Over the years, the content and magnitude of the enticements and the warnings have changed, as has the social symbolism of cigarette smoking. American women began to smoke in large numbers two to three decades after American men, juxtaposing the sexes in different historical relation to emerging medical data on the health hazards of smoking. Cigarette smoking was initially a symbol of emancipation for women, and it has since become associated with self-destruction.

#### THE EARLY 1900s: SMOKING IS AVANT GARDE

At the turn of the century, cigarette smoking was socially unacceptable for women, but was gaining a foothold with American men, who still showed a preference for cigars. The cigarette had long been deemed a feminine object compared to the cigar. In the mid-19th century, it was considered poor taste for gentlemen to smoke in public during hours when women might be encountered, and at the end of the century, women could not join their male companions in the smoking room after dinner, even in private gatherings.<sup>1</sup> It was written of the period, "Between the lips of a woman [the cigarette] was generally regarded as no less than the badge of questionable character."<sup>2</sup>

Lucy Page Gaston, founder of the Chicago Anti-Cigarette League at the turn of the century, claimed that young boys who smoked developed "cigarette face," a condition that eventually led to "drink, crime and dreadful death."<sup>3</sup> She also decried smoking by women on the grounds that it undermined family values and the moral fabric of society. Gaston's efforts resulted in the enactment of local and regional laws prohibiting smoking.

Smoking by women in public places met considerable opposition. In 1904, a policeman in New York City arrested a woman for smoking a cigarette in an automobile, with the admonition, "You can't do that on Fifth Avenue."<sup>4</sup> Smoking by female schoolteachers was considered grounds for dismissal.<sup>3</sup> In 1906, in *Cigarettes in Fact and Fancy*, Bain observed that "American girl stenographers clandestinely smoked Egyptian cigarettes."<sup>5</sup> A headline in the New York *Herald* in 1908 read, "Women smoke on way to opera: are discovered puffing cigarettes when electric light beams into their carriage." In 1910, Alice Longworth, President Roosevelt's daughter, was scolded for smoking in the White House and retorted she would smoke on the roof.<sup>6\*</sup> The potential for widespread adoption of cigarette smoking by women occasioned public alarm. New York's Sullivan Ordinance of 1908 made it unlawful for women to smoke in public, but the ban was largely ignored.<sup>7</sup>

Given the social climate of opposition to smoking by women, advertisers refrained from copy that suggested an appeal to women. Not until 1919 did a tobacco company (Lorillard) sponsor a series of advertisements for brands such as Murad and Helman in magazines and newspapers showing images of women.<sup>3</sup>

There are no reliable estimates of the breakdown of cigarette consumption figures by sex during the first two decades of the century. It is believed that the majority of cigarette smokers were men, and that women who smoked did so much less than men. World War I is credited with changing the social climate for cigarette smoking. American tobacco companies (often aided by charities) supplied cartons of cigarettes to soldiers abroad, converting many young men to the smoking habit, while at home women began venturing to smoke in public.

#### THE 1920s: "EMANCIPATION"

In 1929, Barnard commented on smoking prevalence:

Women war workers took up the habit abroad and women at home in their men's jobs and new-found independence did likewise. Within the next three or four years cigarette smoking became the universal fashion, at least in cities, and children born since the war take smoking mothers for granted.<sup>2</sup>

In 1923, 5% of all cigarettes were consumed by women,

Address correspondence to Dr Ernster, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and International Health, School of Medicine, University of California at San Francisco, San Francisco, CA 94143.

\* She would later appear in an advertisement for Lucky Strikes. —Editor

increasing to 12% by 1929. (These figures may underestimate the proportion of women who smoked. Women on average smoked fewer cigarettes per capita than men; Moody reports daily consumption of 2.4 cigarettes by women compared to 7.2 by men who smoked in 1929.<sup>8</sup>)

Once associated with indecent women or the ultrarich, cigarette smoking made inroads among social trendsetters in the 1920s. Fass<sup>9</sup> documents the symbolic importance of cigarette smoking to the crumbling of the double standard and emerging equality of female college students. In the early 1920s, smoking by women was banned on most campuses. Most college newspapers, reflecting the view of students but not of administrators, took positions in favor of smoking by women students. The issue became a cause célèbre in 1925, when the president of Bryn Mawr permitted smoking rooms on campus. But smoking by women students was still grounds for dismissal at many institutions. The University of Southern California refused registration to women students who smoked. In 1927, women at Stanford were permitted to smoke and the *Chronicle* of Duke University carried an advertisement for Old Gold, featuring two young female smokers. Fass states, "Smoking was perhaps the one most potent symbol of young woman's testing of the elbow room provided by her new sense of freedom and equality."<sup>9</sup>

Female students were the vanguard, and their behavior did not necessarily reflect smoking attitudes and patterns among the general population. Schudson<sup>10</sup> examined media reports of smoking-related activities in colleges and in public facilities such as railroads, restaurants, and art galleries. Views of female smoking ranged from condemnation to acceptance. In New York City, cigarette accessories could now be bought at jewelry stores, and one tobacco shop catered exclusively to women customers.

Despite the growing number of women smokers, cigarette manufacturers were concerned about a prohibitionist backlash, and they refrained from promoting their product directly to women. In a 1926 article, "Why cigarette makers don't advertise to women," Bonner stated, "The cigarette people are frankly afraid of stirring up the reformers and bringing down upon themselves a lot of nuisance legislation."<sup>11</sup> The article cited evidence of "indirect" appeals to women, including the slogan "Mild as May" for the recently introduced Marlboro brand, and the billboard advertising Chesterfield cigarettes that featured a young woman and her smoking male companion on a moonlit night. The woman in the Chesterfield advertisement appeared to be enjoying her escort's smoke; the caption said, "Blow some my way." The article predicted that public opinion would soon be on the side of the tobacco industry, and that within a year or two direct advertising appeals to women would be appearing on billboards, and in magazines and newspapers.

In 1927, Williamson discussed with obvious disdain "the firm-rooted belief in the reactionary mind that women—decent, respectable women—do not smoke." The author stated, "There can be but little doubt of the way the wind is beginning to blow, and with such a market awaiting the manufacturer we may expect almost any day to see him right after it."<sup>12</sup>

Two months later, an article titled "Marlboro makes a direct appeal" describes Marlboro's advertising campaign

portraying a woman smoking on the back cover of *Le Bon Ton*, a women's fashion and travel magazine with a sophisticated readership. Shortly thereafter, a series of single column advertisements appeared in magazines and newspapers, showing a feminine hand in silhouette holding a lit cigarette with the "Mild as May" theme. By April of 1927, direct appeal insertions appeared in leading general and women's magazines. The copy suggested the social desirability of Marlboro: "Women—when they smoke at all—quickly develop discriminating taste. . . . That is why Marlboros now ride in so many limosines, attend so many bridge parties, repose in so many hand bags." In what may be the first promotional activity for cigarettes directed at women, these advertisements included an offer to receive free, upon request, the new Marlboro bridge score. A related development was the decision of *Pictorial Review* (which, like other mass circulation women's magazines of the day, had refused tobacco advertising) to accept such advertisements beginning with the May 1927 issue.<sup>13</sup>

Other signs of the changing times included opera star Ernestine Schumann-Heink's endorsement of cigarettes—although ultimately she came out against smoking after antitobacco crusaders succeeded in convincing some recital halls to cancel her appearances. Testimonials from film actresses and other female public personalities, including Amelia Earhart, appeared in cigarette advertisements. In the late 1920s, models, and later prominent debutantes, were hired by Edward Bernays, public relations manager for Lucky Strikes, to appear smoking in public in an effort to attract media attention. Bernays managed to commandeer the fashion industry to make green—the color of the Lucky Strike package—the color of fashion one year, hoping that coordinating Lucky Strikes with women's clothing would increase sales.<sup>3</sup>

The most renowned advertising campaign of the period directed at women was the association of cigarette smoking with staying slim, launched in 1928 with advertisements carrying the slogan "Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet." The campaign brought on much hue and cry, especially from the candy industry, but to this day is considered one of the great successes in advertising history.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the many indications of a transition in cultural values, traditional views linking female smoking with immorality persisted in large segments of the population. Senator Reed Smoot, on June 10, 1929, introduced an unsuccessful bill in Congress to extend to tobacco the provisions of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906. His remarks on the Senate floor reveal that the initial reluctance of the tobacco manufacturers to promote their product to women showed an awareness of the still prevalent sentiment:

Not since the days when public opinion rose up in its might and smote the dangerous drug traffic, not since the days when the vendor of harmful nostrums was swept from our streets, has the country witnessed such an orgy of buncombe, quackery, and downright falsehood and fraud as now marks the current campaign promoted by certain cigaret [sic] manufacturers to create a vast woman and child market for the use of their product.<sup>14</sup>

### THE 1930s: SMOKING IS IN VOGUE

Rudy Vallee composed his song "My Cigarette Lady" in 1931.<sup>15</sup> Within a few years, First Lady Eleanor Roose-

Side-by-side comparisons of old and new advertisements for cigarettes show how little has changed, except for Marlboro which overnight in 1954 went from being portrayed as the essence of femininity to the height of masculinity when a new advertising agency took over. (DOC Archive)

**Lucky Cigarettes:** To keep a slender figure No one can deny... Reach for a LUCKY instead of a sweet. "It's toasted"

**Sweet Girls:** Sweet Girls... CHESTERFIELD

**Chesterfield:** They Satisfy in small, medium and large.

**Old Golds:** Straight from the shoulder. If you want a TREAT instead of a TREATMENT... smoke Old Golds.

**Satin:** SPOIL YOURSELF WITH SATIN. FREE! Free Pack of New Low Tar Soft... \$1.25

**Camels:** Not one single case of throat irritation... CAMELS!

**More Lights 100:** TRY NEW MORE LIGHTS 100. FREE PACK NEW! MORE LIGHTS 100.

**Marlboro (Feminine):** Marlboro American's Luxury Cigarette. TO THE SMART FROM THE SMART with my hot taste!

**Marlboro (Masculine):** Marlboro. Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health. 17 mg "tar," 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette. FTC Report Mar '84.

velt was smoking in public.<sup>16</sup> An analysis of 40 motion pictures published in 1935 found that 30% of heroines smoked in the films studied compared to only 2.5% of villainesses.<sup>17</sup> (The comparable figures were 65% for heroes and 22.5% for villains.) That male and female "good guys" were portrayed as smokers suggests that cigarette smoking, by the 1930s, had achieved a high level of social acceptability. But the percentage of women in the general population who smoked was still less than that of the motion picture heroines. The Fortune Survey of 1935, quoted in the absence of national data, found that 52.5% of men and 18.1% of women reported themselves to be cigarette smokers; these figures varied with the respondent's age and place of residence.<sup>18</sup> Women under 40 years of age were more likely to say they smoked cigarettes than women over 40 (26.2% versus 9.3%). Women's smoking was most common in cities with populations between 100,000 and one million people (40.2%) and least common in rural areas (8.6%). An estimated minimum of 14% of all cigarettes was consumed by women in 1931.<sup>8</sup> An economic analysis of trends in tobacco production published in 1936 credited World War I and adoption of smoking by women with the "virtual doubling of the demand since 1920."<sup>19</sup> One article hinted that pipe manufacturers might try luring the female market, given the success of the cigarette in attracting female customers.<sup>20</sup>

Cigarette advertisements began to appear in major middle-class women's magazines such as *McCall's*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*. These advertisements were now directly pitched toward women. In general, advertisements of the period featured testimonials from American women socialites (a series for Chesterfields), celebrities (including opera star Helen Jepson for Lucky Strikes), elegant settings (during the Great Depression), athletic-looking women, and women whose smoking made them sexually attractive, judging from the number of male admirers depicted in the advertisements.

Observing that handbags and compacts were now designed for holding cigarettes and women were no longer concerned about smoke and ashes on their furnishings, Gottsegen commented in 1940 on the cultural context of unisex behavior:

Cigarettes have become an item of consumption by women and men during the same era when women's dress is approximating that of men in type of cloth, color, design, and silhouette, and when many items, formerly restricted to men's use, are now being purchased for women's consumption.<sup>21</sup>

Cigarette brand preferences of male and female smokers who responded to the 1938 Fortune Survey were remarkably similar.<sup>22</sup> An attempt by Winston Cigarette Company to market a cigarette called Fems, unique for its red mouthpiece that would not show lipstick, was unsuccessful.<sup>3</sup> But a survey of 500 persons in four cities found that 81% of the women interviewed still did not approve of women smoking in public.<sup>23</sup>

#### 1940s-1960s: SMOKING IS THE MIDDLE CLASS

By World War II, one third of American women smoked cigarettes.<sup>24</sup> During the war, the advertising campaigns of cigarette companies managed to link smoking with patriotism. Free packs were delivered to the armed

forces, and in magazines women who smoked were depicted as role models hard at work in the national effort.<sup>25-27</sup>

The image of the female smoker as responsible and independent ended with the war. In advertisements during the second half of the 1940s, women were portrayed as wives and lovers, expecting or enjoying reunions with returning husbands and beaux. In an early morning scene from an advertisement of the period, an elegantly attired couple, arm-in-arm, look out the window. The text read, "It's spring again. It's two again. Just the way it used to be. Two to grab for the morning paper. Two places to set at the table. And two Chesterfields over two cups of coffee."<sup>28</sup> Another advertisement features a bride slipping a carton of cigarettes into her honeymoon suitcase.<sup>29</sup>

According to representative national surveys,<sup>24</sup> the prevalence of smoking among American women continued at relatively high levels through the mid-1960s (by then 33%), in contrast to American men, among whom the proportion of smokers began to decline in the 1950s. During this time, evidence of the serious disease risks associated with cigarette smoking—particularly the risk of lung cancer—was emerging from epidemiologic studies and was being broadcast to the public. Although most of the early health statistics were based on studies of men, it is probably fair to conclude that women who chose to smoke during this period did so with at least a suspicion that the incriminating medical data applied to them also.

Because of the availability of television for cigarette commercials, cigarette advertisements were not as prominent in the printed media during the 1950s and 1960s. Women's magazines of the period are therefore not a reliable index of the extent to which women were targeted in cigarette promotions. A review of three such publications (*Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*) for the years 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, and 1965 revealed that the number of cigarette advertisements per issue ranged from zero to three.

#### 1970s-1980s: WOMEN SMOKERS ARE EXPLOITED

The tobacco industry publicly acknowledges that it is directing much of its contemporary advertising to the female market. A front-page article in *Advertising Age*, in 1981, headlined "Women top cig target" quotes the president and chief executive officer of RJ Reynolds describing the women's market as "probably the largest opportunity" for the company.<sup>30</sup> The article cites industry sources who viewed the working woman, under stress, as the ideal candidate for their product. In 1983, a major article in *Advertising Age* appeared under the headline "Marketers clamor to offer lady a cigarette."<sup>31</sup> Referring to the European market, a recent editorial in a tobacco trade publication entitled "Targeting women" noted the following:

Women are adopting more dominant roles in society; they have increased spending power; they live longer than men. . . . All in all, that makes women a prime target as far as any alert European marketing man is concerned.<sup>32</sup>

In recent years, a number of cigarette brands marketed specifically to women have been introduced, the most successful of which has been Virginia Slims (Philip Morris). Other brands that are marketed primarily to women include Eve (Grand Metropolitan), Satin (Loews), More (RJ Reynolds), and Ritz (RJ Reynolds).

Following the ban on cigarette advertising on radio and

television, the number of cigarette advertisements in women's magazines increased dramatically (Fig 1). By 1979, cigarettes were the most advertised product in some magazines, with as many as 20 advertisements in a single issue.<sup>33</sup> Women's magazines are an important outlet for

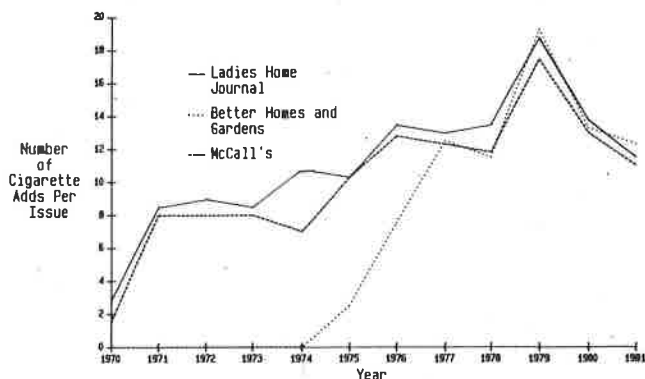


FIGURE 1. Average number of cigarette advertisements per issue in three women's magazines, 1971-1984.

advertisers, since many of them rank among the best selling publications in the country. Of the 20 top-circulating magazines in the United States in 1980, eight were directed primarily at women, including six of the top 10 publications. Some of these magazines have estimated female readerships of more than 20 million. Except for *Good Housekeeping*, which has long refused to accept cigarette advertisements, the major women's magazines have become heavily dependent on such income. (*Seventeen* magazine, although not among the top sellers, also does not accept cigarette advertising, a significant stance given its target audience of young women.) Table I shows the aver-

TABLE 1. Cigarette Advertising in Major American Women's Magazines, 1984<sup>1</sup>

Magazine	Cigarette Advertising Revenues	Cigarette Advertising % of Total Revenues	Average Number of Cigarette Advertising Pages Per Issue
<i>Better Homes &amp; Gardens</i>	14,970,751	11.9	14.8
<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	7,545,290	7.9	14.6
<i>Essence</i>	1,541,100	11.5	9.0
<i>Family Circle</i>	16,274,466	12.5	12.5
<i>Glamour</i>	5,753,343	8.2	12.2
<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	0	0.0	0.0
<i>Harper's Bazaar</i>	2,751,285	8.8	10.1
<i>Ladies Home Journal</i>	9,316,713	14.0	14.0
<i>Mademoiselle</i>	2,450,081	6.8	8.6
<i>McCall's</i>	10,706,748	14.0	13.3
<i>Ms.</i>	503,370	7.9	3.9
<i>New Woman</i>	1,404,935	20.1	9.6
<i>Redbook</i>	8,004,851	15.1	13.8
<i>Vogue</i>	3,622,795	5.4	12.2
<i>Woman's Day</i>	13,826,055	12.5	12.8
<i>Working Mother</i>	981,200	8.9	6.3
<i>Working Woman</i>	1,831,850	9.7	9.6

<sup>1</sup> Source: ref. 35

age number of cigarette advertising pages per issue and the percentage cigarette advertisements represent of all advertising revenues for the major women's magazines in 1984.<sup>34</sup>

Work by Whelan and colleagues<sup>35</sup> suggests that the editorial policy of women's magazines that accept cigarette advertising is restrained in reporting the health hazards of smoking. Her group counted the number of articles about smoking that appeared in such major women's magazines during the period from 1967 to 1979; the number ranged from zero in some magazines to a maximum of two in others.

Cigarette promotions are not limited to suggestive copy. Many coupon offers for discounts or free packs appear in magazines and newspapers. In May 1983, an offer appeared in newspapers around the country for women to call a toll-free number and receive two free packs of Satin cigarettes and a pouch in which to hold them. The offer elicited an estimated 1.3 million calls within a 10-day period (Joanne Luoto, MD, director of the federal Office on Smoking and Health, personal communication). The More brand of cigarettes (RJ Reynolds) was promoted by sponsorship of fashion shows in 18 shopping centers throughout the United States. The publicity included a four-page advertisement in the March 1982 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. Reynolds also sponsored a sweepstakes contest; the entry blank was included in an advertisement in *Woman's Day* magazine (April 6, 1982), and was accompanied by a discount coupon for More cigarettes. Philip Morris has offered clothing (including a rugby outfit and a T-shirt that reads "You've come a long way, baby") and calendars (The Virginia Slims Book of Days) in exchange for money and proof of cigarette purchase. Philip Morris sponsors the Virginia Slims professional women's tennis tour. Cigarette samples are given away at the entrance to the tennis matches. Leading professional women's tennis players have not taken public positions opposing cigarette promotions.

The industry has succeeded in being associated as a financial benefactor of the women's movement. *Ms.* magazine accepts a sizeable share of its advertising budget from cigarette companies and has yet to print a story on smoking, despite its inclusion of many health-related articles.<sup>36</sup> The National Organization for Women has had its meeting program partly underwritten by Philip Morris and recently refused to print in its national newsletter an adver-



tisement taking *Ms.* to task on the cigarette advertising issue (Polly Strand, personal communication). By their silence on the issue of tobacco company exploitation of women, even when challenged, these representatives of the women's movement, as well as the publishers of women's magazines, must be viewed as accomplices in what has come to be called an "equal opportunity tragedy." The magnitude of current efforts to target women in cigarette advertisements and other promotions lends an aura of social legitimacy to a product whose users are often victims. British journalist and physician Bobbie Jacobson discusses social forces, including cigarette promotions, that contribute to smoking among women in her book *The Ladykillers: Why Smoking is a Feminist Issue*.<sup>37</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The negative moral connotations of smoking by women at the turn of the century gave way to the cigarette as a positive symbol of emancipation. Today, cigarettes once again have a negative image, but for health rather than moral reasons. What is the social meaning of cigarette smoking for the contemporary woman—or girl, since the decision to smoke is usually made before adulthood? The evidence suggests that women who are most "emancipated," if attained education is the measure, are no longer the most likely to smoke. Women with college educations and teenage girls who are college-bound are less likely to smoke than women with less education and girls who are not college-bound.<sup>24,38,39</sup> However, cigarette smoking continues at relatively high levels among women in the general population (25–30%). The symbolism of emancipation seems to persist and is deliberately fostered by the tobacco industry. Advertisements for cigarettes have always portrayed women favorably—as athletes, fun-loving, glamorous, sexually attractive, and as "in" socialites or flaunters of old-fashioned ways; they are rarely depicted in passive or traditional roles. For many young women, smoking still signifies defiance and independence. To this day, the messages about smoking for women continue to be mixed.

### REFERENCES

1. Schlesinger AM, Fox DR: *The Rise of the City, 1878–1898*, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1933.
2. Barnard EF: "The cigarette has made its way up in society." *The New*

*York Times* June 9, 1929, p 6.

3. Sobel R: *They Satisfy: The Cigarette in American Life*, New York, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978.
4. Sullivan M: *Our Times: The United States 1900–1925*, vol 2. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927.
5. Bain J Jr: *Cigarettes in Fact and Fancy*. Boston, HM Caldwell Company, 1906.
6. Sullivan M: *Our Times: The United States 1900–1925*, vol 4. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.
7. Sullivan M: *Our Times: The United States 1900–1925*, vol 3. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930.
8. Women and cigarettes. *Printers' Ink* 1932; 158:25–27.
9. Fass PS: *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1977.
10. Schudson M: Women, cigarettes, and advertising in the 1920s: A study in the sociology of consumption, in Covert C (ed): *Mass Media and the Unexpected*. Syracuse University Press, 1983.
11. Bonner L: Why cigarette makers don't advertise to women. *Advertising and Selling* 1926; 7:46.
12. Williamson O: An inhibition versus a market. *Advertising and Selling* January 26, 1927, p 56.
13. Marlboro makes a direct appeal. *Advertising and Selling* 1927; 8:25.
14. Fillmore CM: *Tobacco Taboo*. Indianapolis, Meigs Publishing Company, 1930.
15. Doyle NC: Smoking among women—an equal-opportunity tragedy. *American Lung Association Bulletin*. July–August 1980.
16. Hoover IH: Hail to the chief. *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 5, 1934.
17. Dalc E: *The Content of Motion Pictures*. New York, The MacMillan Company, 1935.
18. The *Fortune* survey. III. Cigarettes. *Fortune Magazine* 1935; 12:111–116.
19. Cigarettes hit new high. *Printers' Ink*. July 9, 1936, pp 80–84.
20. "Blow some my way." *Printers' Ink*. 1932; 159:20.
21. Gottsegen JJ: *Tobacco: A Study of Its Consumption in the United States*. New York, Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1940.
22. The *Fortune* survey. VIII. Cigarette preferences. *Fortune Magazine* August 1938.
23. *Sales Management* 1937; 41:30.
24. *The Health Consequences of Smoking for Women—A Report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC, US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office on Smoking and Health, 1980.
25. *Better Homes and Gardens*. October 1942.
26. *Better Homes and Gardens*. October 1943.
27. *Better Homes and Gardens*. March 1943.
28. *Better Homes and Gardens*. May 1945.
29. *Ladies Home Journal*. June 1945.
30. O'Connor JJ: Women top cig target. *Advertising Age* 1981; 52:9,93.
31. Sobczynski A: Marketers clamor to offer lady a cigaret. *Advertising Age* January 31, 1983, pp M 14–16.
32. Rogers D: Targeting women. *Tobacco Reporter* 1982; 109:6.
33. Gardner F: Brand report 58: cigarettes. *Marketing and Media Decisions* October 1980, pp 175–190.
34. Publishers Advertising Reports, PIB Magazine Advertising Analysis: Magazine and Class Totals, December 1984. Publishers Information Bureau, 1985.
35. Whelan EM, Sheridan MJ, Meister KA, Mosher BA: Analysis of coverage of tobacco hazards in women's magazines. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 1981; 2:28–35.
36. Cromer MA: 'Precious baby.' *NY State J Med* 1983; 83:1292–1293.
37. Jacobson B: *The Ladykillers: Why Smoking is a Feminist Issue*. New York, Continuum, 1982.
38. *Smoking and Health—A Report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC, US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, Office on Smoking and Health, 1979.
39. Johnston LD, Bachman JG, O'Malley PM: *Student Drug Use, Attitudes, and Beliefs: National Trends, 1975–1982*. Rockville, MD, US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1982.



1933

Bride's readers  
18-24 smoke cigarettes  
136% above the average woman.

Do you still think they only  
buy for weddings?

**BRIDE'S**  
Think about it, your competition does.

A CORK NECK PACKAGE MANUFACTURER © 1983 The CORK NECK PACKAGE, INC. SCORE: 1897148 MHI

1983

## Getting women hooked: defending the indefensible

The following dialogue was written by Bobbi Jacobson, MB, BS, author of *The Ladykillers—Why Smoking is a Feminist Issue* (New York, Continuum, 1982). It is based on statements made by tobacco industry (TI) representatives in the mass media, in tobacco trade publications, and in interviews with the author.

**Dr Jacobson:** *The World Health Organization, the Royal College of Physicians, the British Medical Association, the Surgeon General's office of the United States, and countless other national and international medical bodies have all stated that smoking is the largest single avoidable cause of premature death in developed countries. These organizations also point to the high smoking rates among women and girls, who seem destined to be the next century's victims of lung cancer and heart disease. Is there any justification for the increase in cigarette promotion directed at young women?*

**TI:** First of all, we sell a product that is legal and for which there is enormous demand. We cater to the needs of tens of millions of smokers. Our advertising is directed only at current smokers and informs them of the choices available. As to the smoking and health controversy, we are not competent to make medical judgements, but we are aware that there is considerable disagreement within the medical profession itself concerning the smoking and health issue. Further research—to which we ourselves contribute heavily—will, we hope, lead to a fuller understanding of the complexities involved. Until then, we are happy—and are, indeed, obliged—to inform smokers and provide for their smoking needs.

**BJ:** *In March 1983, in an article entitled "Look to the ladies," Tobacco magazine asked the question "Is there a manufacturer not setting out to win or consolidate a share of the woman smoker's habit?" And Tobacco Reporter noted in February 1982, "Women [are] a prime target as far as any alert European marketing man is concerned. So despite previous hesitancy, might we expect to see a more defined attack on the important segment represented by women smokers?" How much responsibility is the tobacco industry willing to accept for creating and reinforcing the women's market?*

**TI:** We simply cater to the demands of existing smokers, be they men or women. Obviously, we are aware of changing roles in society, and it is quite natural for us to market cigarette brands to women who are independent, self-confident, and who are looking for a cigarette that reflects their lifestyle.

**BJ:** *Are these brands aimed at girls?*

**TI:** No cigarette advertisement is ever specifically aimed at persons under 18 years of age. Our products are aimed

advertising, a fact that was accepted by the ruling tennis body, broadcasting authorities, and the Minister for Sport.

**BJ:** *In an article mentioned earlier it was reported that marketing to women involves the three 'L's': low tar, longer length, and lower price. Indeed, sales figures show that women are two to three times more likely than men to smoke low tar cigarettes—or "Lights" as you prefer to call them. These brands are favored by women over men in all age groups—including the*



FIGURE 1. Cigarette brand heavily advertised to women in several countries.



FIGURE 2. Cigarette brand logo worn by tennis player at Wimbledon, televised worldwide.

at women smokers between 20 and 40 years who are looking for a distinctly female cigarette (Fig 1). The tobacco industry adheres to the letter of the stringent criteria of the voluntary self-enforcement agreements.

**BJ:** *Why do you think in England in recent years women tennis players at Wimbledon have worn dresses imprinted with cigarette brand name logos and designs (Fig 2)? Does not the exposure of these championship matches to 350 million viewers around the world suggest that tobacco companies are eager to associate smoking with athletes and to circumvent the ban on the advertising of cigarettes on television?*

**TI:** Tobacco companies had nothing whatsoever to do with the promotion of what was a line of leisurewear. Clothing does not constitute cigarette

*young. Would you say that your lower tar promotions make it easier to get women and girls to smoke?*

**TI:** I reiterate that our advertising is designed to appeal to both men and women smokers. If more women prefer a light cigarette, we are happy to help them make an informed choice of milder brands. This is in keeping with government policy to reduce the tar content of cigarettes. Furthermore, our promotion is strictly not directed at the young.

**BJ:** *If tobacco companies do not direct promotions at young people, why do they advertise cigarettes in magazines like Mademoiselle, a sizeable proportion of whose readership is teenage girls?*

**TI:** If it is legal to sell cigarettes, it is legal to advertise them.