

The scant funding that has been directed to smoking-related research in the US has dealt almost entirely with smoking cessation techniques. Indeed, as Ron points out, pharmaceutical industry interest in smoking (ie, potential advertising revenue in a proposed journal) is confined to the development and promotion of new medications to treat smoking and not toward primary prevention efforts.

It seems to me that the seed money for a new journal would need to come from medical societies around the world (in return for which copies could be sent in bulk) and from private foundations. Even in the anti-smoking world there are plenty of vested interests, and these two sources would seem to offer the most potential for an independent journal. If the journal could not become self-sufficient from subscriptions and grants in three to five years, then it would either be discontinued or absorbed into another journal, where it might appear on an annual or semi-annual basis.

In my opinion, the mission of the journal would be to inform the broad range of individuals already involved in tobacco-related public policy, research, and activism around the world, as well as to attract new interest on the part of health professionals, students, legislators, journalists, and others. Initially, while building a network of contributors, the journal could consist of solicited and unsolicited, peer-reviewed monographs on major (but perhaps less well known) aspects of tobacco use and promotion. A few that come to mind include agricultural economics; emerging world patterns of lung cancer and heart disease; the targeting of ethnic minority groups by pro- and anti-tobacco campaigns; case studies of tobacco industry expansion into Eastern Europe, Central America, and Southeast Asia; tobacco industry sponsorship of sports; adolescent access to tobacco products; and trends in tobacco product litigation. Such subjects are poorly covered by existing journals. I also feel the journal should summarize and analyze (orthographic differences notwithstanding) legislation, governmental initiatives, and counter-tobacco activities around the world. Photographs and commentary on cigarette advertising (with a focus on strategies to undermine it) would be an essential feature of the journal. The format I would like to see would be a cross between Michael O'Donnell's World Medicine and the New York State Journal theme issues, with a dash of The Economist and the usual BMJ gang.

Needless to add, I would very much like to be involved in the launch of such a journal. I would consider requesting a leave to work more closely with you on this project, with the hope that some modest stipend might become available. (My only other editorial interest would be at the New Zealand Journal of Medicine!)