LETTERS

Studying the Hungarian anti-smoking movement

Carter describes how tobacco companies infiltrate into tobacco control movements in order to damage their efforts. Industry documents on Hungary suggest similar intentions. The transnational tobacco corporations (TTCs) jumped into the new market and privatised the factories of the formerly state owned Hungarian tobacco monopoly in the very first years of the transition from communism (1991-92). Using their sophisticated lobbying practices, the TTCs succeeded in transforming the regulatory framework of tobacco and exising marketing and trade restrictions on their products. As Philip Morris put it, they sought to protect “the legitimate interests of the company...against discriminatory or unfair legislation and practices”. The Hungarian anti-smoking movement was relatively inexperienced in neutralising the political and economical power of a very well funded and influential industry. Nontheless, documents show the TTCs intended to monitor closely and counteract its efforts.

In February 1993, Gabor Garamszegi, CA Manager of Philip Morris Hungary, received a request from the TTCs assessing “the social context of smoking in Hungary”. The submission came from the formerly state owned Tobacco Institute (Doñanaúgyógyászati és Mérnöktudományi Intézet Kutasíj-fejlesztő Rt.), which had no previous experience in assessing the social and health issues in tobacco use. The plan states that “tobacco and smokers have become ostracised among the health community” and its authors considered smoking nothing more than “a scapegoat for the deteriorating health condition of the population”.

The authors acknowledged that the tobacco control effort “so far had succeeded in putting tobacco control higher on the political agenda and gained power from the increasing involvement of its members into the international tobacco control efforts. This challenge requires appropriate reactions from the tobacco industry”, with the document proposing that a panel of smoking volunteers be formed who could be “regularly questioned to learn the public opinion on social issues”. Members of these panels should be sent to collect information with the aim of learning more about the programmes of anti-tobacco organisations: “As a possible method it could be envisaged that members of the panels...also take part in these programs and pass on their experiences to the leaders of the panels.”

Another document also mentions the “tight monitoring of activities and plans of government and anti-smoking groups” as an important strategy to “maintain the social acceptability of smoking”, since the “growing anti-smoking sentiments would damage the ability of the company in all business area to represent and defend company interests”.

More recently, British American Tobacco has engaged in launching a “social dialogue” with tobacco control advocates and government based agencies. This is another effort of TTCs to portray themselves as if they are changed, contrite, and reformed.

Hungary today faces an increasing epidemic of smoking related diseases, with 28,000 deaths (5.3 million people of 10 million population are smokers) attributable to smoking every year. The country ranks first in the world regarding mortality from lung and oral cancers.

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References

Events of 11 September 2001 significantly reduced calls to the New Zealand Quitline

New Zealand has a national (free) telephone Quitline service that is promoted through regular mass media campaigns. Data are routinely collected on the over 100 callers per day. We used this data source to investigate the impact of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA on calls to this service.

On Wednesday 12 September (11 September in New York was 12 September in New Zealand) there was a sudden decline in the number of new callers to the Quitline (only 137 callers relative to 237 in the previous day—a 42% reduction). Similarly, relative to the preceding Wednesday, the number of new callers was down by 41%.

The effect was felt for at least several weeks. There was an overall 35% drop in the total number of new callers per week, when comparing the five weeks before 11 September with the five weeks afterwards. Using a generalised linear model we found an interaction between a “September 11” effect and time (week) (p = 0.002). Details of the model and the graphed results are available on a website.

It appears that quitting “dropped off the personal agenda” for some New Zealand smokers in September 2001. It seems likely that at this time of increased media publicity of global security threats, the quitting plans of smokers were eclipsed by other issues—perhaps, for example, the psychological impact of these events appears to have been significant—at least for Americans). This was despite the fact that New Zealand is an island nation that was very far removed from international trouble spots. It was also despite the fact that international terrorism has historically posed only a tiny risk of death to the general public relative to that from smoking (which kills half of New Zealanders).

This reduction in calls is of concern considering that the Quitline (especially in the context of providing subsidised nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)) appears to be very successful in supporting quitting. Preliminary data from one survey suggests a point prevalence quit rate at three months of 44%. Other explanations for this sudden and sustained reduction in calls to the Quitline from 12 September seem unlikely. Nevertheless, this decline in new callers did occur in the context of a longer term decline in calls to the Quitline which had been occurring since a peak in November 2000. That peak was a result of callers becoming eligible to obtain vouchers for heavily subsidised NRT through the Quitline service.

One implication of this relation between global security issues and Quitline calls is that publicity for Quitline services may be less cost effective at times of perceived international crisis. However, the continuance of at least 120 calls per day to the Quitline, during September and October 2001, indicates the strength of the desire to quit in the population of smokers that the Quitline has tapped into.

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1 Quit Group. Website: http://www.quit.org.nz/resources/Quitline%20Analysis.doc

Big Mac index of cigarette affordability

As for any other commodity, demand for tobacco responds to price changes; when prices rise, demand for tobacco falls. Higher prices increase encourage cessation, reduce average cigarette consumption among continuing smokers, and deter initiation. Tax increases are thus widely accepted as a key component of tobacco control policy.

Downloaded from http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/ on April 13, 2017 - Published by group.bmj.com
In calling for increases in tobacco tax, tobacco control advocates often find it useful to compare cigarette prices internationally with those in their own country. To do this, they must somehow convert prices in other countries using a standard measure, most commonly the price in $US. Exchange rates, however, may be influenced by many factors including inflation differentials, monetary policy, balance of payments, and market expectations. Guindon et al proposes “purchasing power parity” (PPP) as a more appropriate measure for comparison. This theory argues that exchange rates are only at their “correct” levels when they are equal to the ratio of the two countries’ price level of a fixed basket of goods and services. Developing indices of PPP is a fairly time consuming exercise. The Economist’s Big Mac index, by contrast, provides a “quick and dirty” estimate of the extent to which various currencies may be under or over valued. McDonald’s Big Mac hamburgers are produced to more or less the same recipe in 120 countries and can be regarded as identical for currency translation. The “Big Mac PPP” is defined as the exchange rate that would result in hamburgers costing the same in the USA as elsewhere.

While Big Mac prices may not perfectly reflect a total basket of goods and services—meat prices for instance might vary in different markets—the Big Mac PPP does appear to compare favourably with other more rigorous estimates of purchasing power.

To produce an update of Scollo’s Big Mac index of cigarette affordability we obtained Big Mac and cigarette prices in 30 countries. Big Mac prices were obtained from The Economist magazine and through phone calls to a further 11 McDonalds restaurants worldwide (Dublin, Brugge, Amsterdam, Rome, Barcelona, Lisbon, Vienna, Stockholm, Helsinki, Athens, and Luxembourg, 28–31 May 2002). We used cigarette price and tax levels compiled by the Canadian NSRA and ASH UK and exchange rates as at 31 May 2002. We then divided the (local currency) price of a Big Mac in each country with the (local currency) price of a single cigarette (fig 1). Cigarette prices in SUS and tax levels in 30 countries have been tabulated (table 1). The number of cigarettes per Big Mac provides a slightly different picture of relative affordability of cigarettes than that provided by a simple conversion to SUS.

While by no means a perfect measure, the Big Mac index of cigarette affordability provides a reasonable estimation of relative affordability of cigarettes in the countries listed.

**Table 1** Cigarette prices in $US and tax levels compared to Big Mac index of cigarette affordability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Price of 20 cigarettes ($US)</th>
<th>Total tax (%)</th>
<th>Cigarettes per Big Mac</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britain*</td>
<td>$6.33</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland*</td>
<td>$4.46</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA†</td>
<td>$4.30</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia*</td>
<td>$4.02</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore**</td>
<td>$3.99</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong*</td>
<td>$3.97</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand*</td>
<td>$3.88</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark*</td>
<td>$3.77</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden*</td>
<td>$3.64</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada†</td>
<td>$3.80</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland*</td>
<td>$3.53</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France*</td>
<td>$2.76</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany*</td>
<td>$2.76</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium*</td>
<td>$2.63</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands*</td>
<td>$2.56</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria*</td>
<td>$2.37</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan**</td>
<td>$2.18</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg*</td>
<td>$1.94</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy*</td>
<td>$1.93</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece*</td>
<td>$1.79</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain*</td>
<td>$1.66</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal*</td>
<td>$1.63</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia**</td>
<td>$1.21</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea*</td>
<td>$1.02</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland**</td>
<td>$0.92</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan**</td>
<td>$0.91</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand**</td>
<td>$0.80</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil**</td>
<td>$0.57</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines**</td>
<td>$0.44</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia**</td>
<td>$0.43</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the most popular price category. Sources: *Smoking and Health Action Foundation; **Ash UK. †Sales weighted average (reflects 17 June 2002 increase); ‡average of highest (New York) and lowest (Kentucky).

**Figure 1** Big Mac ranking of world cigarette prices. Sources: *Smoking and Health Action Foundation; **Ash UK. †Sales weighted average (reflects 17 June 2002 increase); ‡average of highest (New York) and lowest (Kentucky).
In their editorial “It is time to abandon youth access tobacco programmes”, Ling et al. present an argument for the need to abandon efforts to reduce youth access to tobacco. The editorial is a response to a recent study that found that the majority of secondary school students would be of legal age to purchase tobacco and that a high percentage of smokers among the younger age groups have succeeded in obtaining tobacco despite the legal age of 16 years.

The authors argue that the conclusions of the study are scientifically invalid due to methodological flaws. They point out that the inspection method was so flawed that the results are not representative of the real situation. The authors also highlight that the analysis includes 10 methodological assumptions that are not appropriate for the research question.

The meta-analysis of the study's conclusions is based on a straw man argument, and the authors claim that the results are not scientifically valid. They argue that the conclusions rendered the study's results scientifically invalid. The authors also express concern that the study's results may be used to discourage other intervention programmes.

The authors conclude that the study's conclusions are not appropriate for the research question, and they urge for a more rigorous methodological approach to future research on youth access to tobacco.

References

1. Ling PM, Landman A, Glantz SA. It is time to abandon youth access to tobacco programmes. Tobacco Control 2002;11:35–43.


7. Is it time to abandon youth access programmes?

In their editorial “It is time to abandon youth access tobacco programmes”, Ling et al. base their argument on an in press meta-analysis of youth access interventions by Fichtenberg and Glantz.2 These authors conclude that there is no proof that youth access interventions work to reduce youth smoking rates. Sadly, this analysis includes 10 methodological assumptions work to reduce youth smoking rates. The authors argue that the conclusions of the study are scientifically invalid due to methodological flaws. They point out that the inspection method was so flawed that the results are not representative of the real situation. The authors also highlight that the analysis includes 10 methodological assumptions that are not appropriate for the research question.

The meta-analysis of the study's conclusions is based on a straw man argument, and the authors claim that the results are not scientifically valid. The authors also express concern that the study's results may be used to discourage other intervention programmes.

The authors conclude that the study's conclusions are not appropriate for the research question, and they urge for a more rigorous methodological approach to future research on youth access to tobacco.

References

1. Ling PM, Landman A, Glantz SA. It is time to abandon youth access to tobacco programmes. Tobacco Control 2002;11:35–43.


References

1. Ling PM, Landman A, Glantz SA. It is time to abandon youth access to tobacco programmes. Tobacco Control 2002;11:35–43.


They conclude that this decrease was not mediated by decreased access because youths reported no decrease in perceived access. In the first part of our analysis (fig 1A), we compared compliance and smoking in all communities for which both variables were measured. Since we were not trying to model the effects of potential confounders but rather to see if there is a relationship between compliance and smoking, we did not make a distinction between control and intervention communities, or between baseline and follow up data. As DiFranza points out, this type of analysis does not take into account temporal trends or other potential confounders. In order to take these into account we performed a quantitative meta-analysis including but not limited to controlled studies (n = 5). This analysis yielded a pooled effect of a 1.5% decrease in youth prevalence (95% confidence interval 6% decrease to 3% increase).

Tutt cited a paper by his group[7] that was not included in our meta-analysis because it was not listed in Medline or cited in any of the other papers we located. Adding his results to those we report, however, does not affect the conclusions of our analysis. The correlation between merchant compliance and 30 day teen smoking prevalence including this data is 0.042 (p = 0.799) compared with 0.116 (p = 0.486) reported in fig 1A of our paper. We take the correlation between merchant compliance and change in youth smoking to be -0.163 (p = 0.504) compared with 0.294 (p = 0.237) without it. Thus, including the data from Tutt et al[7] actually strengthens the conclusions in our paper.

It is time for enthusiasts of youth access interventions to recognise that while these interventions may have seemed like a good idea, they do not achieve their primary goal of reducing youth smoking. All that happens is that youth obtain their cigarettes from other sources.[2]
Both Tutt and DiFranza are missing the larger point of our editorial. Unlike public health forces, the tobacco industry has unlimited resources to push their agenda. We made the point that in a real world of limited public health resources, those resources are better concentrated where they have been shown to be most effective. Youth access is clearly not that area. Tobacco industry documents show that the industry has run rings around public health forces when it comes to youth access, successfully co-opting it to the point that it now serves the industry’s purposes.

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Health messages on smoking and breastfeeding in maternity hospitals of Eastern Europe

Smoking, particularly antenatal smoking by the mother, has been consistently shown in many studies to be associated with increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). After the prone sleep position, smoking is the next most important modifiable risk factor for SIDS. Smoking not only under-mines the health, development, and survival of the child, but of the mother and other family members, too. A survey of maternity hospitals in Eastern European countries was undertaken in 1999 to collect information on practices associated with increased risk of SIDS. We report here a comparison of smoking and breastfeeding practices of these hospitals.

The collaborative network of the World Health Organization in Eastern Europe (CCEE-NIS) identified country coordinators in 22 Eastern European countries and data were received from 489 hospitals in 20 countries. The study instrument, in either English or Russian, sought information on whether hospitals gave written information to parents about smoking and breastfeeding (72%) than about smoking effects (20%). Likewise, there were more hospitals with a written policy on breastfeeding (61%) than on smoking (12%). This difference was consistent across countries.

In contrast to the success of SIDS prevention campaigns advising babies that should not sleep prone, it has been much more difficult to motivate parents not to smoke. UNICEF and WHO have launched the “The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative” where hospitals are encouraged to adopt 10 evidenced based steps to promote breastfeeding. One of these steps is to have a written hospital breastfeeding policy. Our data may reflect the success of this initiative, in that 72% of maternity units had written information on breastfeeding available for parents and 61% had a written policy. In contrast, our data suggest that only 20% of units had written information available on smoking and only 12% of hospitals had a written policy (table 1). Given that maternal smoking undermines breastfeeding through increased risk of early weaning, reduced milk supply, reduced prolactin concentrations, and low fat concentrations in milk from smoking mothers, a tobacco strategy is likely to enhance breastfeeding outcomes as well as many other health benefits to babies. The “Tobacco Free Initiative” is one of WHO’s current priority programmes. Furthermore, the birth of a child are important intervention points to encourage parents to stop or reduce smoking. The well established and strong association between smoking and SIDS and the evidence of a dose effect of reduced risk with reduced smoking provide encouraging messages to help motivate parents to address their smoking before and after the birth of their infant.

Within maternity hospitals in Eastern Europe breastfeeding promotion messages appear to be more widely available than anti-smoking messages. Smoking prevention strategies should ensure that parents receive written information on the health risks of smoking and hospitals should have written policies. Consideration should be given to including evidences based strategies to prevent and reduce smoking into an expanded Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.

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References

Table 1 Written information given to parents and written hospital policy on smoking and breastfeeding for 489 hospitals in 20 countries in Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Information given</th>
<th>Written Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH Sarajevo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH Republic Srpska</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia, FYR</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Fed (Barens)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BH, Bosnia Herzegovina; FYR, Former Yugoslav Republic.
Tobacco industry documents: comparing the Minnesota Depository and internet access

I applaud the efforts of Balbach and colleagues to determine systematically what differences, if any, there are likely to be between searches conducted on tobacco industry documents websites and searches conducted at the Minnesota Depository of tobacco documents. However, I think one additional observation is quite important for documents researchers: the fact that at the Minnesota Depository, it is possible to peruse visually through scroll-down menus the actual list of words or terms by which documents are indexed (using an interface, to the best of my knowledge, is to date available only at the depository. This enables identification of interesting search terms that might not otherwise occur to a researcher. Both the 4A index terms and the 4B index terms are included. While the indexes themselves may be available for searching elsewhere, the interfaces available do not permit this type of direct visual examination—searching is dependent upon having a search term in mind. Given the industry’s well-known use of code names, acronyms, etc. for various projects, I believe that this remains an additional reason why visits to the depository can still be helpful for researchers.

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Reference

Filter vent blocking
In their recent article Kozlowski and O’Connor criticise a 1997 review on cigarette filter ventilation blocking and claim it is in error because it (1) relies on saliva based estimates, (2) does not consider degree of ventilation, (3) does not address brand-to-brand variation, and (4) omits certain tobacco industry studies. We disagree and stand by our conclusions.

In their criticisms Kozlowski and O’Connor refer only to the 1997 review presented at a conference and not a peer reviewed article published in early 2001. In the latter review, Dr Baker and I considered measurement techniques, effects of vent blocking on machine smoke yields, effects of vent blocking on human smoke yields, and simultaneous determination of vent blocking and smoke yields. We concluded that vent blocking among smokers has only a relatively minor effect on human smoke yields compared to other smoking behaviour factors. The large effects observed with smoking machines are misleading because people do not smoke like machines.

Concerning the allegation that we erred because of our reliance on saliva based estimates, the facts are that we discussed the potential problems and limitations of all techniques used to estimate the extent of vent blocking. We reported that four studies by Kozlowski and colleagues, using the “tar” stain technique, indicate that 50–59% of the 14 to 158 filters examined in each study showed some degree of vent blocking. Two other studies, using the same technique but each based on over 3000 filters, indicate that 21–30% of the filter vents examined were blocked, and most were only partially blocked. These latter studies are in reasonable agreement with large studies conducted by industry scientists and using the saliva stain technique, which indicate that up to 24% of filters examined were blocked by lips, and again, most only partially. Direct video observation indicates finger blocking is negligible since most smokers release their fingers from the cigarette as they take a puff, but it would be virtually impossible to determine from the video whether smokers’ lips had covered the vents.

We devoted our 2001 review to considering the degree of filter ventilation across a number of cigarette brands (cf. allegations 2 and 3). Reassuringly, some of the latest results from Kozlowski et al and industry scientists are in reasonable agreement, despite the very different experimental techniques used.

Kozlowski and O’Connor state that “one notable omission” for our 1997 review is a 1982 study of a 1 mg “tar” cigarette smoked under various puffing conditions (allocation 4). In fact, data from that study are plotted in fig 8 of the 1997 review. We attribute the results to RP Ferris, the project leader, rather than T Hirji, the author of the memo, but it is the same study. They quote the smoke yields from the study but fail to notice that the data are the same as those in our review.

Likewise, Kozlowski and O’Connor say that we ignored pertinent Swiss1 and Canadian2 studies, but data summaries are included in our 1997 review. Our 2001 review quotes both studies and includes a dependence of insertion depth on “tar” yield (that is, degree of ventilation). Kozlowski and O’Connor concentrate on the less detailed unpublished Swiss data but virtually ignore similar trends pointed out in the more comprehensive data published by Baker et al.1 (Kozlowski and O’Connor even re-plot some of the Swiss data to emphasise their point, ignoring the fact that these data were obtained using the saliva stain technique that they criticise elsewhere).

Kozlowski and O’Connor correctly state that we did not mention a 1977 study by Creighton.3 They quote from this report that “[o]ne subject was seen to cover the ventilation holes with clear adhesive tape”. They fail to mention, however, the “subjects” in this study were R&D scientists evaluating two competitors’ filter ventilated cigarettes. Such ad libitum experimentation with the innovative (for 1977) filter design is exactly what one would expect of industry scientists. This experimentation is irrelevant to the behaviour of consumers, and there is nothing more in the report about vent blocking. We considered this report of no relevance to our reviews.

Kozlowski and O’Connor state that we have “ignored the extensive machine smoking studies by British American Tobacco on Canadian cigarettes.”4 We cite this study and discuss smoking machine data at length. Rickert et al used only one ventilation blocking condition (50%) and the studies we chose to consider used multiple vent blocking conditions.

Finally, Kozlowski and O’Connor also refer to Philip Morris reports not covered in our reviews. In fact, we did not know of their existence until recently. The topics of these memos are comprehensively covered by similar studies in our reviews, and adding nothing new.

Kozlowski and O’Connor lament the fact that they cannot find on the internet some industry studies used in our reviews. Not all tobacco companies are obligated to post their internal documents on the internet. Also, as they mention, the internet databases are constantly updated and some documents may not be posted at the time of a given search.

Kozlowski and O’Connor criticise our 1997 review because we did not refer to certain unpublished industry studies. Yet when we sent our updated review for publication in Psychopharmacology the manuscript was rejected on the advice of a reviewer who said it was too dependent on unpublished industry studies (and whose comments read, coincidentally, very much like the Kozlowski and O’Connor article). It is therefore interesting that over 60% of Kozlowski’s and O’Connor’s references are unpublished industry documents. Many of these are short memos written for internal use, not complete research papers by those not involved can lead to misleading conclusions, such as the discrepancy in attribution noted with Ferris and Hirji. It is very difficult to place these documents in proper context, and, in some cases, to try to do so nearly 50 years after they were written.

L S Lewis
RI Reynolds Tobacco Company, Research & Development, Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1487, USA; lewiss@rnt.com

References
1 Kozlowski LT, O’Connor RJ. Filter ventilation is a cost-effective design because of misleading taste, bigger puffs, blocked vents. Tobacco Control 2002;11(suppl I):40–50.
2 Baker RR, Lewis LS. Filter ventilation — has there been a “cover-up”? Recent Advances in Tobacco Science 1997;23:152–96.

Authors’ reply
Lewis takes us to task for criticising an article published in 1997 by noting that we ignore new points they made in a paper published, www.tobaccocontrol.com
unknown to us, in an industry sponsored journal. We learned of this publication a year after our paper was accepted for publication.

Lewis implies that we had reviewed an earlier submission of their paper to Psychopharmacology. We did review this draft, but were not privy to its fate. Journal rules and professional ethics require that the information in their submitted paper be treated as confidential, and we did not mention or make use of any of this confidential draft in our articles. That Lewis and Baker publish a revised paper that was informed by our thinking and suggestions on the topic should hardly be an occasion for criticising our discussion of a work that had not been informed by our advice.

Our paper appeared in a special journal issue dealing with available industry documents. Ideally, review articles should derive from published, peer reviewed research. Failing that, public availability (as on the internet) of the primary reports should be expected. But when industry scientists (here from RJ Reynolds and British American Tobacco) characterise internal reports—that may not be or ever become available on the web—the opportunity for independent evaluation or findings may be lacking. Presumably, industry scientists have the ability to bring primary source internal research to peer reviewed publication. For non-industry scientists, in contrast, industry documents on the web are likely all that is available. In other words, we are limited to discuss those findings that are open to public view, while they are in a position to characterise studies to which independent scientists have no access. It would be best if all studies used to support or refute findings were available to all interested parties, preferably through peer reviewed publication.

Figure 8 in their 1997 paper, which they attribute to Ferris, is related to data that we attribute to Hirji. Compared to the Hirji version, their fig 8 contains both more data (another blocking condition) and at the same time significantly less data (for example, no mention of results from a 75 ml puff in 1 second every 25 seconds, that produces from a nominal 1 mg total particulate matter (TPM) cigarette a TPM yield of 15 mg with no blocking and 23 mg TPM with a 50% block.) The Hirji report mentions by name the individuals who did the work, and Ferris is not mentioned.

Lewis writes that Creighton used industry scientists (as was noted in the version we have) who could be expected to conduct “ad lib experimentation” with the then innovative filter design. One of these scientists/ad hoc experimenters dropped out of the study after a day because of “an unpleasant taste in the mouth, persistent irritation and lack of satisfaction” (page 5). Why Creighton did not report that he received testimony from his colleague that abuses were happening, rather than having to “observe” or write that “one subject was seen to cover up the ventilation holes” with tape, is interesting.

Lewis engages us particularly on the issue of filter ventilation—a theme we think is less important overall than taste and puff volume, and probably only important for less common heavily ventilated cigarettes. (We never say the saliva based measures of blocking are worthless, just much less sensitive.) In their recent paper, they go into some puff volume data, but for them, interestingly, the blocked vent results (smaller puffs, fewer puffs) are caused by under-puffing on blocked cigarettes rather than over-puffing on unblocked cigarettes. Their rhetoric encourages us to see a self protecting smoker, rather a compensating smoker. Nice try!

The data in their more recent paper also support the position that filter ventilation is a defective and dangerous design that contributes to the misleading nature of standardised testing of cigarettes.

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References
1 Baker RR, Lewis LS. Filter ventilation – has there been a ‘cover-up’? Recent Advances in Tobacco Science 1997;23.152–96.

SOLUTION to the crossword on page 279

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N Wilson, E Hodgen, J Mills and G Thomson

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