

reinforce and finance a national coordinating mechanism or focal points for tobacco control". In France, such a "national mechanism" is sadly lacking as the document prepared by the Comité National Contre le Tabagisme (National Committee Against Tobacco Smoking) and the Ligue Nationale Contre le Cancer (French Cancer League), testifies (the document is available in French and English at: [http://cnct.org/site/article.php?id\\_article=395](http://cnct.org/site/article.php?id_article=395)). Analyses by the LNCC and the CNCT reflect those of the United Kingdom's Royal College of Physicians, which has recommended adding a renewed and firm impetus to the national tobacco policy with the creation of a Tobacco and Nicotine Regulatory Authority for the UK.

This new coordinated, comprehensive, resolved and goal oriented policy implies the mobilisation of the necessary resources and the coherent and responsive organisation of public health measures to be adopted or strengthened. The CNCT and the LNCC agree that France needs real coordination of its organisations and resources, which can be achieved by setting up a body dedicated to that purpose, an Autorité Nationale de Régulation du Tabac et de la Nicotine (National Tobacco and Nicotine Regulatory Authority). This regulatory body would work with other national organisations across Europe, which are either in the process of being set up or already established as in Ireland and Norway. The authority would work in direct contact with the government, the territorial administrations and other local public services. It would be responsible for formulating decisions about how tobacco and nicotine products will be regulated and overall responsibility for tobacco control. In this endeavour, it would also be expected to rely heavily on the work of NGOs and scientific bodies that come under the umbrella of the Alliance Contre le Tabac (Alliance Against Tobacco) to which it could delegate some of its competencies. The authority would have full and direct control in areas not covered by these bodies.

Lung and cancer specialists have been able to do relatively little to mitigate the devastating effects caused by asbestos. This is a product that for more than 50 years we knew, and taught, was a hazard to health (cancer and other diseases) when inhaled and yet not enough was done in time to prevent its effects. We know even more about the damage to health caused by smoking and we know there are effective ways to prevent them. In such a context, doing nothing is not an option, it is simply unethical. We have to assume our responsibilities and work together for an effective and cohesive tobacco control policy.

**Jacques Le Houezec**

Consultant in Public Health, Rennes, France;  
Comité National Contre le Tabagisme

**Albert Hirsch**

Ligue Nationale Contre le Cancer, Paris, France

**Yves Martinet**

Service de Pneumologie, CHU de Nancy, France;  
Comité National Contre le Tabagisme

Correspondence to: Dr Jacques Le Houezec, Amzer  
Glas, 176 rue de Brest, 35000 Rennes, France;  
[jacques.lehouezec@amzer-glas.com](mailto:jacques.lehouezec@amzer-glas.com)

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## BOOK REVIEW

### Cancer: my story

Edited by Daniel Feist with Stan Shatenstein.  
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of CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc),  
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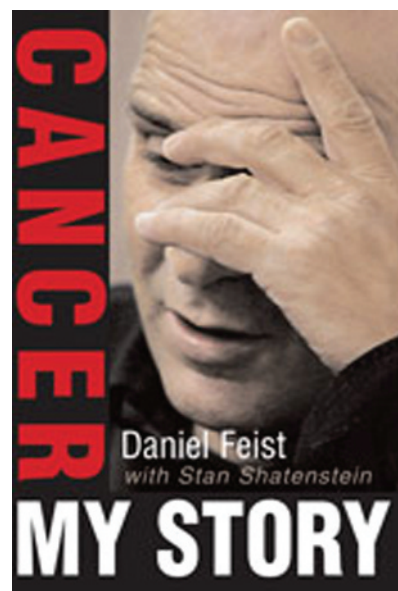
#### A personal account of a smoker's life with, and death from, cancer

You probably never knew Daniel Feist. Now he's just another statistic, one of five million-plus who die each year from smoking. No, let's say that plainly: who are *killed* each year by tobacco, dead as anyone in the World Trade Center towers. Who was he? "Daniel had an eclectic career as a writer, producer, radio broadcaster and teacher," bringing world music to listeners in Canada, Africa and Poland; happily married, father of two—so relates Stan Shatenstein, Daniel's friend since boyhood.

"Cancer: my story" is the posthumously published account by Daniel Feist (with Stan Shatenstein) of his ordeal when, at age 50, he learned he had lung cancer that had spread to the brain. The book reproduces the series of articles in *The Gazette*, a Montreal daily paper, where Feist told in plain speak what he went through, physically and emotionally: the first symptoms just three months earlier, his treatment, hopes and dismaying setbacks. Accompanying each article were sidebars by Shatenstein that informed the readers: about cancer in general; lung cancer and smoking; and the treatments available known as "slash, poison and burn"—surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

The weeklong series began 4 September 2004, and ended three months later. By then Feist had had his brain tumour removed, his right lung taken out, and started on chemotherapy. He could still write, "Perhaps I'll update you on my cancer story in five years.... In the meantime, I wish you and everyone you love good health for the holiday season. It's the greatest blessing of all." Daniel Feist died two months later.

The tobacco companies say, "It was his adult choice to smoke." Many judges and juries in lawsuits against the industry say, "He could have quit anytime. He knew the risk." Really? Feist started smoking when he was 10 years old, what did he know about choice then? He was seriously "wedded to the weed", still sneaking smokes after the diagnosis. Oh sure, he had that kind of profile: risk-taker, going for the high experience that seems to go along with substance abuse in some persons. But it was the tobacco companies that sold him the "substance" in cigarettes deliberately designed to create and maintain addiction—Daniel Feist's addiction.



The book enriches the series with an obituary; Shatenstein's affecting eulogy; and a selection of letters from the hundreds of people—smokers and non-smokers, young and old—who responded, testifying to the impact and influence Feist's candour and bravery had on them.

"A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic." So said Joseph Stalin, who should know: he was responsible for 15 million deaths in his 30 year reign. The tobacco industry manages that in just three. Perhaps it is the tragedy and the testimony of the single brave person that finally galvanises outrage, and leads to direct action. Canada now has some of the most stringent regulations in the world against the use of tobacco.

One of Feist's last communications was to his editor: "As for me, not great news. The cancer has spread quickly to other parts of my body.... Good thing we got those articles written, because there won't be another I am sure."

To order this book go to: <http://www.canada.com/cwb/cancer.html> or <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/books/item/books-978189722908/1897229089/Cancer+My+Story>

**N Hirschhorn**  
[bertzpoet@yahoo.com](mailto:bertzpoet@yahoo.com)

## CORRECTION

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There was an error in the letter by Moreuo San-Pedro E, Roales-Nieto JG, Blanco-Coronado JL. Tobacco use among Spanish physicians and medical students. *Tob Control* 2006;**15**:272. The name of the first author was incorrectly spelled. The correct name is E Moreno San-Pedro.