

AD WATCH

Smoking, advertisements for drugs, and double standards?

In previous issues of *Tobacco Control*, Ad Watch has concentrated on the tobacco industry's attempts to promote its products either by direct or indirect advertising. I wish to bring to readers' attention another form of indirect promotion of tobacco, which involves the pharmaceutical industry and which has the apparent support of some sections of the medical press.

Three examples of this practice are shown. The advertisements for Suprax and Selectol appeared in the October 22nd edition of the *Irish Medical Times*, and the advertisement for Zestril has appeared in the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* on several occasions. In each of these advertisements an individual is shown smoking a pipe in a way that does not portray smoking in a negative manner.

Further, the slogans in the advertisements, when coupled with the images, are a cause for concern. In the Selectol advertisement doctors are encouraged to "Select the good life for your patients". By playing golf, fishing and smoking? Likewise the advertisement for Suprax talks about nipping chest infections in the bud. Perhaps if the man depicted in the advertisement had thrown away his pipe he might never have required Suprax in the first place. It is well accepted that cigarette smoking has a major role in the causation of car-

diovascular and respiratory diseases, and pipe smoking in cancers of the lip, tongue and oral cavity. Hence the portrayal of this positive image of pipe smoking, of the relaxed, happy and apparently healthy individual, is surely counter-productive. As these advertisements are primarily addressed to doctors, they may affect doctors' views of some forms of smoking as being acceptable, rather than reinforcing the view that all forms of smoking are dangerous practice. Unless doctors themselves are clear about the dangers of all forms of tobacco use, how can we expect the doctor-patient consultation to be a vehicle for positive health promotion?

What is equally interesting is the attitude of the editors of the *Irish Medical Times* and the *BMJ* when these advertisements were brought to their attention. The *Irish Medical Times* have promised to address the matter in a reply to my correspondence in which they stated, "We recognise it is most inappropriate to feature smokers in such advertisements and we are taking the necessary steps to bring this matter to the attention of the companies concerned".¹

Contrast this with the approach from the *BMJ*. The *BMJ* published my criticism of the advertisement in the journal² along with a reply from the company that makes Zestril.³ In

THE EXPANDING WORLD OF 'ZESTRIL'



More Clinicians are prescribing 'Zestril' for more patients than ever before

CONTRA-INDICATIONS: Patients with a history of angioedema, severe renal impairment, or hypersensitivity to the drug or its components should not receive Zestril.

CAUTION: Patients with a history of hypotension, severe liver impairment, or concurrent use of other antihypertensive drugs should be monitored closely.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: Common side effects include dizziness, headache, and fatigue. Serious side effects are rare but may include severe allergic reactions.

HOW TO TAKE ZESTRIL: Take one tablet once daily with food. Do not crush or chew the tablets.

ZENECA

its reply the company "defended" its position by stating that nobody else had complained. However, in my letter to the editor of the *BMJ*, I also questioned whether the *BMJ* itself should look at its own role in this matter, in accepting such advertisements for publication in the first place. Unfortunately their reply was somewhat different to that of the *Irish Medical Times*. Whilst they did not address the question I posed directly they certainly did so indirectly by publishing the advertisement again in the same issue which carried my letter and the advertiser's reply!

The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry is carrying out an investigation as to whether this advertisement is in breach of their Code of Practice.

Of greatest concern in this whole issue is the apparent double standards being applied. The *BMJ* is published by BMJ Publishing Group, the same body that publishes *Tobacco Control*. Should Zeneca, or for that matter any company, wish to advertise in *Tobacco Control*, and in their advertisement portray smoking as anything other than a negative practice, I am sure (I hope) that the editor would reject it out of hand.

David Simpson, in a previous issue of *Tobacco Control*, stated that health campaigners should be encouraged to keep up the pressure

Nips chest infection in the bud



Suprax
ONCE DAILY

Full prescribing information available on request from the distributors T.P. Whelehan, Son & Co. Ltd, Finglas, Dublin 11. Tel: (01) 342233

Suprax P.A. HOSPI: Lederle Laboratories UK, Farnham Road, Gosport, Hants, PO13 0AS. Licensed by P.A. 3761/1-2

*Suprax is a registered trademark. Date of preparation: January 1993. Fujisawa Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., Osaka, Japan.

on magazine editors and their colleagues in the fashion industry to persuade them not to acquiesce to the linking of smoking and fashion.⁴ Perhaps we should first concentrate our efforts in putting our own house in order by applying pressure to both the pharmaceutical industry and to the editors of medical journals and newspapers in order to encourage them not to accept advertisements which portray smoking in anything other than a negative manner.

FENTON HOWELL
European Medical Association on Smoking or Health
1 Victoria Terrace, Laytown, County Meath,
Republic of Ireland

- 1 Editor's Reply. Dangers of linking smoking to advertisements for drugs. *Irish Medical Times* 1993; 27 (44): 4.
- 2 Howell F. Tobacco advertising. *BMJ* 1993; 307: 1068-9.
- 3 Jones MS. Tobacco advertising. *BMJ* 1993; 307: 1069.
- 4 Simpson D. Smoking and fashion. *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 244-5.

Tobacco Control will not accept advertising that depicts tobacco use in a positive manner.

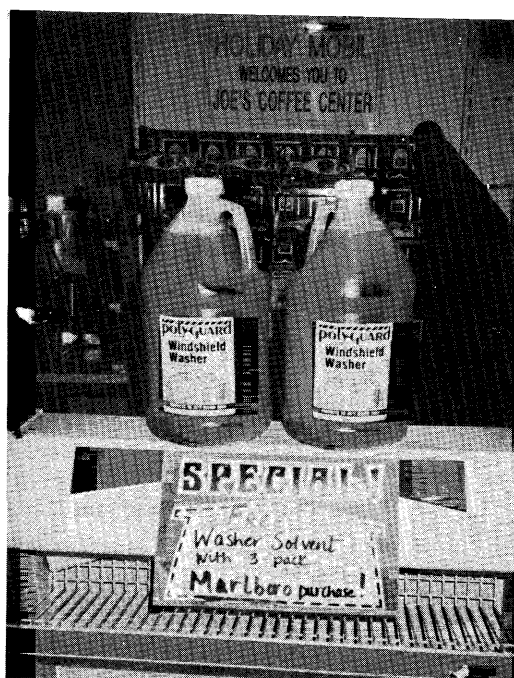
— ED

Why unbranded promos?

Recently, discounts on turkeys and milk have been used as promotions for Marlboro and



Figure 1 Discount on soft drinks with Marlboro purchase. From a convenience store in central New Jersey, US, autumn 1993.



Ronald M Davis

Figure 2 Free windscreen washer with Marlboro purchase. From a gas station in Howell, Michigan, US, December 1993.

other Philip Morris brands.^{1,2} These items are a marked departure from the caps, t-shirts, lighters, and other promotional items which have become increasingly common vehicles for cigarette brand promotion in the US. About \$600 million was spent in 1993 on these conventional tobacco promotions.³ One of the main concerns about these forms of advertising is their appeal to young people. Thirty per cent of those aged 12–17 years, both smokers and non-smokers, reported owning at least one of these items in 1992.⁴ In addition, although warning labels are not presently required on these objects, they carry the brand names, logos, colours, and slogans of tobacco products. Recognising this, Congressman Henry Waxman has introduced legislation which would require warning labels on these items.

Turkey and milk are promotional items which do not carry a cigarette brand name. A number of other such promotions have appeared sporadically in the last two years. Apart from one notable exception (see next story), each known instance has been sponsored by Philip Morris (see table and figures 1 & 2).

It appears that Philip Morris is test-marketing these and perhaps other unconventional forms of promotion. The company may be doing this in anticipation of the day when conventional advertising and promotions (such as the Marlboro Adventure Team) will either be forbidden or required to carry appropriate warning labels. The offer of discounts for completely unrelated groceries, cosmetics, accessories, electronic goods and sundries is a novel form of tobacco marketing. Public health workers should be alert to these practices and report any they observe. I know of no data on whether these promotions work – that is, on whether unbranded promotions generate important goodwill from the customer or from the retailer and/or spur tobacco product sales, or even on the extent to which consumers avail themselves of these offers.

If Philip Morris thinks the results of its tests are promising, and if Mr Waxman's bill passes, there will doubtless be more discounts on turkeys, milk, and soft drinks.

JOHN SLADE
St Peter's Medical Center,
New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA

Table Cigarette promotions not bearing brand name, 1992–93 Nebraska, Michigan, and New Jersey

Brand	Promotion
Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Benson & Hedges, or Merit	Discount on turkey
Marlboro	Discount on milk
Marlboro	Discount on soft drinks
Marlboro	Discount on sunglasses
Marlboro	Free windscreen washer
Marlboro	Ads and coupons for discounts in 1994 Book of Days*
Virginia Slims	Telephone (mail in purchase proofs)
Merit, Virginia Slims, Benson & Hedges	

* The Book of Days is a weekly planner published each year for Virginia Slims. The 1994 edition contains, for the first time, coupons and advertisements for products and services unrelated to cigarettes. Advertised items include cosmetics, audio tapes, spectacles, magazines, specialty foods, books, towels, shaving products, film, and travel offers.

- 1 Bassett T. Who are the turkeys? *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 161.
- 2 Davis RM. Does the Marlboro man drink milk? *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 246–7.
- 3 Shapiro, E. Cigarette makers outfit smokers in icons, eluding warning and enraging activists. *Wall Street Journal* September 27, 1993, B1.
- 4 Bezilla, R. Teen-age attitudes and behavior concerning tobacco. Princeton, NJ: The George H Gallup International Institute, 1992.

Spit tobacco makers evade US warning label requirement

Moist snuff sales continue to rise in the US, and adolescents are the major category of new users.^{1,2} Since 1991, this industry segment has been subject to federal regulations that require warning labels on "utilitarian objects" such as caps and t-shirts promoting spit tobacco brands.³ An executive vice-president at UST, the dominant moist snuff manufacturer in the US, told the *Wall Street Journal* last autumn that "it would be silly" for UST to put warning labels on clothing items.⁴ True to this sentiment, snuff and chewing tobacco makers have evaded the requirements in several ways.

UST, Conwood, and Pinkerton produce clothing items, without warnings, that nonetheless promote spit tobacco brands under such skimpily veiled guises as "Skoal bandit racing", "Kodiak racing", and "Redman tournament trails" (figure 1). Such items are available at car races and through mail order. A protest about these practices has been registered with the Federal Trade Commission, and I have filed a shareholder resolution with UST for consideration at its annual meeting in 1994 about these apparent violations of federal regulations.

UST offers a number of branded items which the Federal Trade Commission has exempted from carrying a warning because of their small size. These include items that are intrinsically appealing to adolescent boys: playing cards, pocket knives, a money clip, and a stop watch (figure 2). The Skoal pocket knife was sold by mail order for only US\$3. The remittance could be sent in as cash, cheque, or money order. This is the only example I have seen of a tobacco brand promotion in which cash was accepted through the mail.

Finally, UST has devised a way to promote Skoal through unbranded product promotions. UST distributes the *Outdoor Sportsman Gear Catalog* in cooperation with Bass Pro Shops, a large mail order sporting goods company (figure 3). This catalogue features a wide variety of premium sporting goods, none of which carry a tobacco product brand name. The catalogue offers a single tobacco branded item, a Skoal money clip (figure 2), which, because of its small size, is not required to carry a warning. The catalogue promotes the Skoal brand on every open pair of pages of fishing, hunting, camping and golfing gear as well as on the order form. The only warning label in 32 pages is buried in a corner of the back cover.

Embedding the Skoal name in a sporting goods catalogue associates the brand with a wide variety of recreational settings. A catalogue reader mentally tries on the clothing and tries out the gear, becoming involved in a series of sporting fantasies intimately con-



Figure 1 Warningless clothing from UST

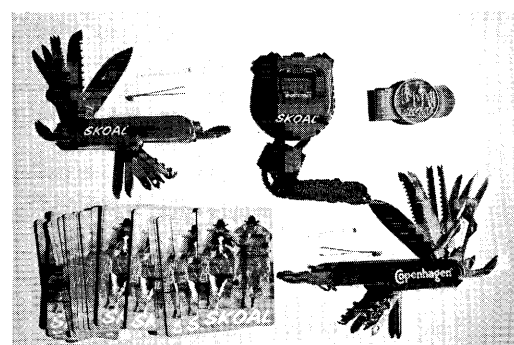


Figure 2 Items from UST which are too small, according to regulation, to carry a warning label



Figure 3 Outdoor Sportsman Gear catalogue, UST

nected to Skoal. A catalogue such as this would seem a more efficient way of making connections with potential customers, and of obtaining their active involvement in the sporting imagery in which UST dresses Skoal, than either conventional advertising or the distribution of branded utilitarian objects.

UST seems to believe that unbranded promotions in the setting of this catalogue are a worthwhile alternative to such "silly" things as warning label-laden Skoal t-shirts or Copenhagen caps.

The abuses and avoidances of federal regulation by the three spit tobacco makers reported here underscore the need for constant vigilance by public health workers and the continued closing of loopholes in countries which have not yet banned tobacco product advertising.

JOHN SLADE
St Peter's Medical Center,
New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA

- 1 US Department of Agriculture. *Tobacco situation and outlook yearbook*. Washington, DC: USDA, Economic Research Service, December 1992.
- 2 Fiore MC, Newcomb P, McBride P. Natural history and epidemiology of tobacco use and addiction. In: Orleans CT, Slade J, eds. *Nicotine addiction: principles and management*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- 3 Federal Trade Commission. Regulations under the comprehensive smokeless tobacco health education act of 1986. CFR 307 (*Federal Register*, 56: 11662, March 20, 1991).
- 4 Shapiro, E. Cigarette makers outfit smokers in icons, eluding warning and enraging activists. *Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 1993, B1.

How astute a tobacco marketer are you?

Here's a quick exercise to test how well you can think like a tobacco marketer. Consider this: starting 1 October 1993 all tobacco retailers in the state of New South Wales, Australia, were required to remove all tobacco advertisements from the outside of their premises, other than existing billboards (which will be progressively phased out by the end of 1995). The only permissible advertising left to retailers is a maximum of 2000 cm² (about three sheets of A4 paper), not visible from the street, and of which 25% must be a prescribed health warning. Regulations introduced under the Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act (1991) state that:

"Tobacco advertisement" means writing, still or moving pictures, sign, symbol or other visual image or message or audible message, or a combination of two or more of them, that gives publicity to, or otherwise promotes or is intended to promote: (a) the purchase or use of a tobacco product; or (b) the trademark or brand name, or part of a trademark or brand name, of a tobacco product."

Now, if you were a no-nonsense tobacco marketer, what would you do to slip past this fairly comprehensive definition? Three answers are shown in the photographs. About a month before the deadline, Rothmans (makers of *Winfield*, Australia's best-selling brand) began redecorating the front of thousands of shops with yellow lettering saying "cigarettes sold here" against a red background (figure 1). There are no prizes for guessing that the two colours are identical to those used in the *Winfield* shopfront advertising that was replaced.

Figure 2 shows a second strategy the industry has adopted. The Act specifies that only actual packs of cigarettes can be displayed in shops, and that "dummy stock", jumbo-sized packs are considered advertising. In response, the industry is providing retailers with expensive perspex display cabinets in which to house "live stock", reasoning that to display actual cigarettes, even outside shops, does not breach the Act.

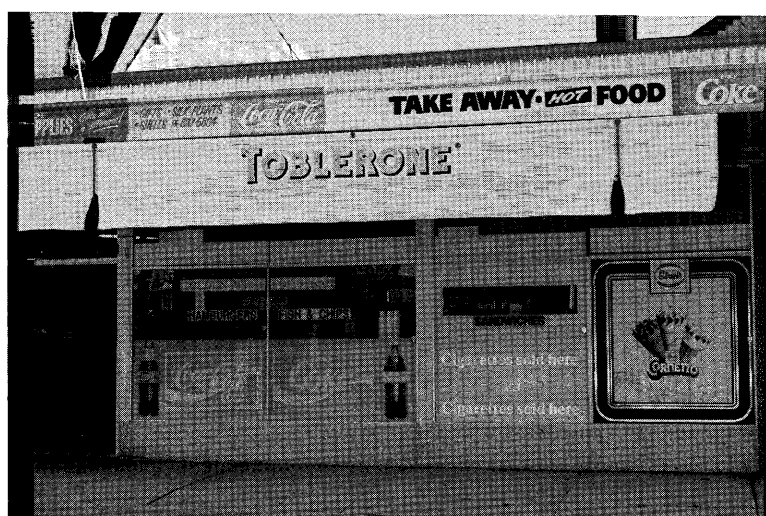


Figure 1

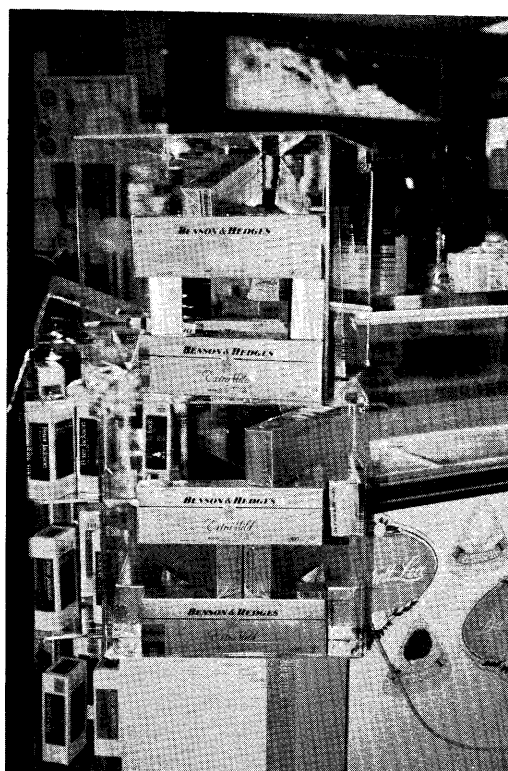


Figure 2

Figure 3 shows this reasoning taken a step further. The aptly named "tombstone" advertising (pack-shot advertising) is prohibited under the Act, unless it is within the 2000 cm² limits. The industry has countered by a strategy they are referring to as "implanted live stock": actual packs containing cigarettes implanted into display advertising.

The Health Department's legal branch is of the opinion that the new signs still promote "a tobacco product" and are therefore in breach of the Act. Rothmans have been formally advised of this but have denied that the signs advertise cigarettes in the way specified by the Act. The Health Department is now gearing up for what inevitably will be drawn-out series of pedantic court cases, with the only certain result being that the public will continue to be exposed for as long as possible to Rothman's statewide efforts at beautifying shops (with the thought of selling more cigarettes of course never having crossed their mind!). Other countries take note!

SIMON CHAPMAN
Deputy editor

Louisa form



Figure 3

Each issue of *Tobacco Control* features a special section reporting new developments in tobacco advertising and promotion. Ad Watch will publish examples of advertising, sponsorship, and promotion from around the world that show:

- Double standards in advertising practice (themes or scenes voluntarily restricted by tobacco companies in some countries but flagrantly used in others)
- Appeals to new markets such as children and women
- New examples of brand stretching
- Misleading claims
- Industry gaffes and examples of foot-in-mouth disease (see the example from India in the first issue of *Tobacco Control*)
- Pernicious examples of casting tobacco

images of unsurpassed affluence in contexts of dire poverty.

Please send original examples (not photocopies) of such material to Simon Chapman, deputy editor, at the address given on the inside front cover. When possible the originals should be accompanied by information on the source or location of the advertisement, the name and address of the tobacco company concerned, and the company's relationship (if any) to tobacco transnationals. Any interesting industry inhouse memoranda or material about cigarette marketing plans, developmental research, and focus-group results that have fallen off the back of a fax in your direction are also of interest to *Tobacco Control*.