

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters intended for publication should be a maximum of 400 words and 10 references and should be sent to Simon Chapman, deputy editor, at the address given on the inside front cover. Those corresponding to articles or correspondence published in the journal should be received within six weeks of publication.

### Relation between alcohol and tobacco use among Israeli adolescents

*To the editor* - The relation between smoking and drinking has been investigated in many countries.<sup>1</sup> In Israel alcohol and tobacco use were surveyed among 520 junior and senior high school students in 1984, and among 2786 students in 1990 in the north of the country.

In 1984 the number of cigarettes smoked was significantly related to drinking, with the number of different types (beers, wines, distilled spirits) of alcoholic beverages drunk (0-3, 0 = non-drinking) serving as the indicator of alcohol use.<sup>2</sup> The proportions of non-smokers decreased and of smokers increased with the increase in the number of types of alcoholic beverages consumed. For example, there were 93.6% of non-smokers among abstainers (n = 219) in the previous month, 81.6% of non-smokers among those who reported drinking one type of alcoholic beverage (n = 158), 69.8% of non-smokers among those who reported drinking two types (n = 83), and 61.0% of non-smokers among those who drank three types (n = 59).

The 1990 study showed relatively high rates of excessive drinking and tobacco use among special groups.<sup>3-6</sup> In spite of emerging social norms in Israel that disapprove of smoking, the prevalence of smoking among

### Relations between alcohol and tobacco use, all respondents, 1990

Contact with alcoholic beverages	Smoking cigarettes						Total respondents
	Non-smoking		Smoking a pack or less a month		Smoking more than a pack a month		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
3	1661	96.7	37	2.2	19	1.1	1717
4	487	88.1	31	5.6	35	6.3	553
5	198	76.2	26	10.0	36	13.8	260
6	79	65.3	14	11.6	28	23.1	121
7	52	61.2	9	10.6	24	28.2	85
8	18	60.0	4	13.3	8	26.7	30
9	9	45.0	4	20.0	7	35.0	20
Total	2504	89.9	125	4.5	157	5.6	2786

$\chi^2 = 405.60$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $C = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

adolescents in kibbutzim was pronounced in comparison with other groups of students. For example, tobacco use among females born in kibbutzim (n = 178) was significantly higher than among females who were living in a large city (n = 187) or in a developing town (n = 75) or among females who were raised in the kibbutzim but not born there (n = 54) (28% v 13%, 3%, and 15%, respectively,  $\chi^2 = 20.55$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

An index of contact with alcohol was created. Non-drinking was weighted 1, drinking one type once to three times was weighted 2, and drinking one type four times or more was weighted 3. Thus, the minimum value was 3 (non-drinking any type) and the maximum value was 9 (drinking three types four times or more). The table shows that those who drank more, smoked more.

Among non-drinkers, 1.1% smoked more than a pack (20 cigarettes) a month, and 2.2% smoked a pack or less a month, whereas among those with highest contact with alcohol, 35.0% smoked more than a pack a month and 20.0% smoked a pack or less a month. Males and females showed the same patterns when analysed separately. For example, among male non-drinkers (n = 732), 1.8% smoked more than a pack a month and 4.0% smoked a pack or less a

month, whereas among those with the highest contact with alcohol (n = 17), 35.3% smoked more than a pack a month and 23.5% smoked less than a pack a month.

The results have implications for prevention. Therapists will need to better understand the interplay between tobacco and alcohol use to reduce the use and abuse of both drugs.

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- 2 Weiss S, Moore M. Various characteristics of alcohol use by Israeli high school students. *J Alc Drug Educ* 1988; 33: 59-66.
- 3 Weiss S, Moore M. Alcohol drinking habits of Israeli Jewish, Moslem and Druze adolescents in the north of Israel in 1990. *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci* 1991; 28: 20-8.
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- 5 Moore M, Weiss S. Alcohol drinking among Moslem and Druze adolescents in Israel in 1990. *Drug Alcohol Depend* 1991; 28: 189-93.
- 6 Moore M, Weiss S. Alcohol drinking among urban Jewish youth in Israel in 1990. *Psych Addict Behav* 1992; 6: 196-9.

### Cigars, sports, and Michael Jordan

*To the editor*—I read with interest the recent letter to the editor that criticised *Sports Illustrated* for accepting tobacco advertising and promoting smoking as a glamorous activity.<sup>1</sup> A photograph of the cover of *Sports Illustrated* showing Michael Jordan smoking a cigar accompanied the letter.

It certainly does not surprise me to see Jordan promoting a tobacco product. Last year I purchased an official NBA (National Basketball Association)—*Sports Illustrated* poster of Michael Jordan and Winston cigarettes (detail shown in figure). I expressed my concern to the Michael Jordan Foundation and to his agent, ProServe. I mentioned that given the strategic placement of the Winston sign, my image of a dramatic moment is Jordan dunking the basketball with a big Winston sign in the background. I urged them to ask Jordan to request that the Winston advertisement be removed from the Chicago Bulls' stadium and to have the poster removed from the market. A week or so later I received a rather lame response: Michael Jordan does not smoke or promote smoking and he does not want his fans to smoke, but since he is just an employee, he has no

