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://cnc.f.org/sitearticle.php?aid = 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 national organisations across Europe, which are either in the process of being set up or already established as in Norway and Ireland. The authority would work in direct contact with the government, the territorial administrations and other local public services. It would be responsible for formulating a vision 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, we knew, and we knew, 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 simply unethical. We have to assume our responsibilities and work together for an effective and cohesive tobacco control policy.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**Cancer: my story**


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 30, 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.