Smoking in movies: when will the saga end?

Jonathan M Samet

In the 1930s, Edward Bernays, the originator of cigarette marketing strategies still in use today, recognised the marketing power of encouraging the use of cigarettes in film, and cigarettes were made an important prop in movies.1,2 This strategy stuck. Standardised assessments of movies’ content over a time period extending from the 1930s to the present day document that cigarettes and cigarette smoking have been commonly portrayed in movies, possibly at a frequency that exceeds actual use patterns.2 Concern about smoking in movies is not new but only recently, however, has research been carried out to assess if seeing smoking in movies increases risk for initiation of smoking.3

The most de...
of smoking in movies, documenting its earlier rise and recent fall, the scope of exposure in the UK, possible countering measures, and public support for intervention. Most importantly, the evidence from these and other studies continues to support the case that exposure to smoking in movies is one specifically remediable determinant of initiation, and a determinant with global reach.

Competing interests None.

Provenance and peer review Commissioned; externally peer reviewed.


REFERENCES