undertaken to determine the associations of requestors with the tobacco industry.

There were 129 requests in total. Charges totalled over $NZ13,000. They were in accordance with official guidelines. They included staff time for searching for information, and photocopying. Figure 1 shows that most (84%) of the requests were from tobacco industry related sources. They were a public relations company whose managing director was previously director of public relations, Communications and Corporate Relations, and Regulatory Affairs for British American Tobacco (BAT) New Zealand; law firms who have represented tobacco companies; and tobacco companies.

Topic areas included the 2006 review of the tobacco packaging, labelling and display provisions of the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act (59% of requests); a review of point-of-sale tobacco product displays (11%); provisions of the existing act (10%); tobacco control spending (10%); tobacco control research (5%); the industry (4%); reduced harm products (2%); and personal rights (2%).

Two requests solicited information about more than one topic. Tobacco industry related sources asked for copies of presentations, tobacco control service purchase agreements, contracts and information ‘including, but not limited to papers, minutes, reports, briefings, memoranda and correspondence (including emails) caught by the wording’. They included the legal obligation to provide information within 20 working days (n=107). Requests increased from three in 2005 to 79 in 2006 when the review of the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act was under way. During this time, the lawyers, Philips Fox, sent one person 67 letters which differed only in the name of the organisation they sought information about. They also sent identical requests to six different people. With regard to tobacco control spending, 10 of 13 requests were from industry-related sources. Two asked for details about government funded delegates to international tobacco control conferences.

The majority of public requests for information about tobacco control and tobacco control expenditure were from the industry. The work of public health officials was disrupted at a critical juncture in tobacco control action by an influx of repetitive and time consuming OIA requests from the tobacco industry. Each required assessment to determine if the information existed; if the request was frivolous or vexatious; if the information could be released; and to provide quotes for services since only a limited amount of photocopying and time for searching is free.

Tobacco companies portray themselves as socially responsible corporate citizens. Yet they abuse legal avenues designed to protect the public’s right to access to official information. This should be included in a campaign exposing the activities of the tobacco industry to support achieving the New Zealand tobacco control workforce’s vision of a tobacco free society by 2020.

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Third-hand smoking: indoor measurements of concentration and sizes of cigarette smoke particles after resuspension

In a previous study of ‘secondhand’ cigarette smoke, we showed that 75% of the particles added to indoor air were of ultrafine sizes and had a half-life in air of 18 minutes at 25°C. These particles after their deposition on household surfaces could be later put back in suspension and constitute a toxic ‘thirdhand’ smoke’ which has not, as yet, been documented through quantitative data. Consequently, we undertook direct measurements of the concentration and sizes of smoke particles after their deposition and resuspension in a closed room. A smoking device burned 10 cigarettes in 50 minutes in a non-ventilated furnished room that was then kept closed. On the next
day, for particle resuspension, we mobilised
the dust on furniture, clothes and surfaces by
wiping and shaking and created even more
turbulence with a ventilator.
An impactor (ELPI) measured the particle
sizes (between 0.28 μm and 10 μm) and
concentration in the air, 60 cm above the floor:
► on the first day before and after the
cigarettes were smoked (secondhand
smoke) then 4 hours later.
► 24 hours later, before and after resuspen-
sion manoeuvres (thirdhand smoke).
Median diameter, concentration in number and mass of particles were respec-
tively:
► 0.18 μm, 1.31.10⁶.ml⁻¹ and 15.4 mg.m⁻³
after smoking
► 0.30 μm, 9.8.10⁴.ml⁻¹ and 0.62 mg.
m⁻³ 4 hours later.
► 0.07 μm, 1.66.10⁶.ml⁻¹ and 0.05 mg.
m⁻³ 1 day later.
► 0.15 μm, 0.92.10⁴.ml⁻¹ and 0.50 mg.
m⁻³ 1 day later after resuspension
manoeuvres.
This showed that after cigarette smoking:
► the airborne particles were of ultraline
sizes.
► their concentration was divided by 100 in
the first 4 hours and again by 100 in the
following 24 hours. After resuspension,
the concentration was multiplied by 100,
going back to that observed 4 hours after
smoking. This rise can only be attributed
to particles smaller than 0.3 μm since
other measurements made after resus-
pension manoeuvres without previous
smoking only increased the concentra-
tion of particles over 0.3 μm of size.
These quantitative data support the
hypothesis of a resuspension from the ciga-
rette smoke surface contamination. However,
this airborne contamination through resus-
pension remains much lower (100 times)
than that of secondhand smoke. The rest of
the aerosol mass initially produced by ciga-
rettes could be firmly attached either to
surfaces, leading to ingestion hazards and
dermal transfer or to household dust and be
inhaled with it.² ³

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