SESSION III IMPLICATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT GOALS

Introduction

John R Hughes

Our next presenters will be discussing several of the implications of the different kinds of harm reduction. Then we shall have the reactions of our panelists. Let me introduce our presenters and panelists.

Our first presenter is Neal L Benowitz who is going to talk about medical implications of harm reduction. Dr Benowitz is professor of medicine, psychiatry, and pharmacology and chief of the division of clinical pharmacology and experimental therapeutics at the University of California–San Francisco. His research has focused primarily on human pharmacology and toxicology of nicotine.

Our next speaker is Judith K Ockene who is going to review the public health implications. Dr Ockene is a professor and director of the division of preventive and behavioral medicine in the department of medicine, University of Massachusetts Medical School. Her major research has been in the area of physician education and developing counselling skills for interventions.

Our third speaker is Kenneth E Warner. He will address the financial implications of harm reduction. Dr Warner is the Richard D Remington Collegiate Professor of Public Health and chair of the department of public health policy and administration at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. His research has focused on the economic and policy aspects of disease prevention and health promotion, with a special emphasis on smoking and health.

Medical implications

Neal L Benowitz

In relation to the medical aspects of harm reduction, two medical issues are of concern: (1) Do harm reduction strategies reduce the medical complications of tobacco use? (2) Are the treatments used to promote harm reduction in themselves harmful; which is analogous to the question – does the harm reduction policy cause harm?

I shall deal with these two general issues in the context of four treatment scenarios: (1) nicotine replacement or any other treatment with the goal of reducing cigarette consumption; (2) nicotine maintenance to support tobacco abstinence; (3) over-the-counter nicotine availability; and (4) physical modification of cigarettes to reduce the adverse health consequences of smoking. I shall discuss efficacy and safety for each strategy.

Cigarette consumption and disease risk

The first general area is nicotine replacement, with a goal of smoking fewer cigarettes. The first question is, does smoking fewer cigarettes...