

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
EDUCATION AND WELFARE  
Public Health Service  
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The Public Health Service said today there is increasing evidence that excessive cigarette smoking is one of the factors which can cause lung cancer.

The statement by Surgeon General LeRoy E. Burney modified somewhat the previous official position taken by the Public Health Service in 1954 on the question of cigarette smoking and lung cancer.

At that time, the Service noted there was further evidence of a statistical association between cigarette smoking and lung cancer but left wide open the question of whether there was a cause and effect relationship.

In today's statement, Dr. Burney said many independent studies have now confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that there is a high degree of association between cigarette smoking and lung cancer.

Although this evidence is <sup>still</sup> largely statistical in nature, Dr. Burney said, some laboratory studies also support the concept of a cause and effect relationship.

Dr. Burney noted that many important public health advances have been developed on the basis of statistical or epidemiological information.

Copies of the Surgeon General's statement together with supplementary data will be made available to State health officers and others in the health professions as a further step in bringing

the matter of smoking and lung cancer to public attention.

Dr. Burney said it is clear that cigarette smoking is not the only causative factor in lung cancer. Further, he said, the precise factors in cigarette smoking which can cause lung cancer are not known.

He said more research is needed to identify and try to eliminate these factors. He also called for more research into other probable causes of lung cancer, including air pollution.

The United States now has more than 25,000 deaths each year from lung cancer. How many of these persons were heavy cigarette smokers is not known. Altogether, deaths from cancer make up about 250,000 of the 1.6 million total deaths in the United States each year.

The Public Health Service issued the statement after completing its review of the report of a Study Group on Smoking and Health. The Study Group was established one year ago to appraise available scientific evidence and recommend further needed research.

Dr. F. M. Strong, of the University of Wisconsin Medical School, was chairman of the seven-man Study Group, which was organized jointly by the Public Health Service, National Cancer Institute and National Heart Institute, and the voluntary private organizations, The American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. The report of the Study Group was made public

in New York on March 23 and was published in full in the June 7 issue of Science.

Dr. Burney said the Public Health Service, in making its first formal public statement on smoking and health since 1954, also took into account other recent data, including the report last month by Dr. E. C. Hammond and Dr. Daniel Horn of the American Cancer Society to the American Medical Association in New York.

Although there are naturally some differences of opinion in interpreting the data on lung cancer and cigarette smoking, Dr. Burney said, the Public Health Service feels the weight of evidence is increasingly pointing in one direction: That there is an association between excessive smoking and lung cancer.

Dr. Burney said the Public Health Service statement has been discussed with the Executive Committee of the State and Territorial Health Officers' Association.

The text of today's Public Health Service statement follows:

**STATEMENT BY SURGEON GENERAL LEROY E. BURNAY OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE ON EXCESSIVE CIGARETTE SMOKING AND HEALTH** July 12, 1957

"The Public Health Service is, of course, concerned with broad factors which substantially effect the health of the American people. The Service also has a responsibility to bring health facts to the attention of the health professions and the public.

"In June 1956, units of the Public Health Service joined with two private voluntary health organizations to establish a scientific study group to appraise the available data on smoking and health. We now have reviewed the reports of this Study Group and other recent data, including the reports of Dr. E. C. Hammond and Dr. Daniel Horn on June 5 to the American Medical Association in New York.

"In light of these studies, it is clear that there is an increasing and consistent body of evidence that excessive cigarette smoking is one of the causative factors in lung cancer.

"The Study Group, appraising 18 independent studies, reported that lung cancer occurs much more frequently among cigarette smokers than among non-smokers, and there is a direct relationship between the incidence of lung cancer and the amount smoked. This finding was reinforced by the more recent report to the American Medical Association by Drs. Hammond and Horn.

"Many independent studies thus have confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that there is a high degree of statistical association between lung cancer and heavy and prolonged cigarette smoking.

"Such evidence, of course, is largely epidemiological in nature. It should be noted, however, that many important public health advances in the past have been developed on the basis of statistical and epidemiological information.

"The Study Group also reported that in laboratory studies on animals at least five independent investigators have produced malignancies by tobacco smoke condensates. It also reported that biological changes similar to those which take place in the genesis of cancer have been observed in the lungs of heavy smokers. Thus some laboratory and biological data provide contributory evidence to support the concept that excessive smoking is one of the causative factors in the increasing incidence of lung cancer.

"At the same time, it is clear that heavy and prolonged cigarette smoking is not the only cause of lung cancer. Lung cancer occurs among non-smokers and the incidence of lung cancer among various population groups does not always coincide with the amount of cigarette smoking.

"The precise nature of the factors in heavy and prolonged cigarette smoking which can cause lung cancer is not known.

"The Public Health Service supports the recommendation of the Study Group that more research is needed to identify, isolate and try to eliminate the factors in excess cigarette smoking which can cause cancer.

"The Service also supports the recommendation that more research is needed into the role of air pollution and other factors which may also be causes of lung cancer in man.

"To help disseminate the facts, the Public Health Service is sending copies of this statement, the Study Group report and

the report of Drs. Hammond and Horn to State health officers and to the American Medical Association with the request that they consider distributing copies to local health officers, medical societies and other health groups.

"While there are naturally differences of opinion in interpreting the data on lung cancer and cigarette smoking, the Public Health Service feels the weight of the evidence is increasingly pointing in one direction: That excessive smoking is one of the causative factors in lung cancer.

"The Service notes that the Study Group found that more study is needed to determine the meaning and significance of any statistical association between cigarette smoking and heart disease. The Study Group reported there is no convincing biological and clinical evidence to date to indicate that smoking, per se, is one of the causative factors in heart disease. Although the report by Drs. Hammond and Horn has since provided additional data on this subject, the Service feels that more statistical and biological data is needed to establish a definite position on this matter."