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Medicine: Coffin Nails

Cigaretts used to be thought sissy. Zion City, Ill., where their use is frowned upon, still clings to the older belief that every cigaret a man smokes is a nail in his coffin. Last week Johns Hopkins Biologist Raymond Pearl gave encouragement to every loyal Zion Citizen when he declared: "Smoking is associated with a definite impairment of longevity. This impairment is proportional to the habitual amount of tobacco usage by smoking, being great for heavy smokers and less for moderate smokers."

Professor Pearl chose the New York Academy of Medicine, where he was invited to talk on "The Search for Longevity," to scare the life out of tobacco manufacturers and make tobacco users' flesh creep. He based his statement on what he sternly declared were the "first life [statistical] tables ever constructed to show the relation between tobacco smoking and longevity."

To distillers, saloonkeepers and toppers, Professor Pearl gave this crumb of comfort: "No measurable effect of the moderate use of alcoholic beverages on longevity can be demonstrated, although heavy indulgence definitely and considerably impairs life expectation."

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