TOBACCO USE AND IMPOTENCE

If you smoke, you’re playing Russian roulette with your sexual function.
Dr. John Mulhall, Director, Center for Sexual Health, Loyola University Medical Center

There’s absolutely no question about it. It causes it very commonly.
Dr. Culley Carson, Urology Department Chairman, University of North Carolina

If you smoke, you’re about twice as likely to have erectile dysfunction.
Dr. John McKinlay, New England Research Institute

Smoking is clearly hazardous to your erection.
Dr. Lawrence Levine, Rush Medical Center, Director of Male Sexual Function Program

I feel confident that smoking does and can cause impotence.
Dr. Randolph Smoak, Chair, Board of Trustees, American Medical Association

[All quotes from the “60 Minutes” program on smoking and impotence (CBS: November 8, 1998)]

Is It More Than Just An Embarrassing Problem?

What you have to understand is that the penile arteries are tiny arteries--about a third that of a coronary artery--so it’s not unusual for people to have erection problems preceding any other vascular problem, whether it be heart attacks or strokes.
Dr. John Mulhall, Director, Center for Sexual Health, Loyola University Medical Center (60Minutes)

We are finding that erectile dysfunctional or impotence may be a precursor or an indicator of oncoming cardiovascular disease, so rather than dismissing it as just simply normal aging and nothing to get alarmed about, we’re beginning to take this very, very seriously.
Dr. John McKinlay, New England Research Institute (60 Minutes, November 8, 1998)

Is It A Problem That Young Smokers Need To Worry About?

60 MINUTES: Teen-agers who smoke two packs a day could have these problems before they're 30. If you have teen-age boys, what would you tell them about smoking, truly?

Dr. Alan Greenfield, Boston Radiologist: Well, I have told them that I believe that the greatest risk they run from smoking is the risk of impotence. While cancer and heart disease are risks in the longer term...

Other Reports in the Media

Are you ready for the cigarette health warning that could turn millions of men into non-smokers overnight? Smoking will reduce the size of your penis.

A potent new weapon is surfacing in the battle against smoking: impotence . . . Scientists have known about links between smoking and sexual problems for several years. But doctors and health-advocacy groups – in some cases emboldened by the global publicity for the drug Viagra – are just now beginning to trumpet the warnings.

Starting from 5 November 1998 . . . Thailand will be the first nation to have sex warnings printed on the cigarette packets. There is evidence to show that smoking affects men’s reproductive, urinal and sexual functions. It deforms sperm and thus cuts down blood flow to the penis and might be related to higher incidence of miscarriage in cases where the father is a smoker.
“Sex Warning To Be Printed On Cigarettes,” Information Access Company (October 28, 1998)
Despite attempts by tobacco advertisers to make smoking appear sexy, scientists say its effect can be just the opposite — impotence . . . And smokers should not look to Viagra, the anti-impotence drug, as a panacea. Viagra “will not be as effective in smokers because the smoking . . . will decrease the responsiveness of blood vessels,” [Chairman of the Urology Department at the University of North Carolina Dr. Cully] Carson said. “And Viagra depends on the responsiveness of blood vessels to function.”


A doctor spearheading Thailand’s anti-smoking drive said cigarette packs labeled “smoking causes impotence” . . . had prompted a torrent of queries, mostly from worried women married to smokers. Dr. Prakit Vateesatogkit . . . said his office had been inundated with calls from women seeking suggestions as to how they can get their husbands to quit. . . . A heavy smoker, Sombat Poliyem, 31, agreed that the latest warning would be effective. “My wife has repeatedly urged me to stop smoking since the news about the impotence warning appeared in the papers,” said Sombat, a motorcycle taxi driver. “I’m afraid of becoming impotent.”


What Do the Tobacco Companies Have To Say About All This?

60 MINUTES: We wanted to ask the tobacco companies about their sexy ads and about the link between smoking and impotence, but every one of them declined to talk to us about it.

Cigarette makers, who have devoted huge sums to strengthen smoking’s macho, sexy image, are mum on the subject. “We don’t have anybody who has done any work in that area,” a spokesman for RJR Nabisco Holdings Corp.’s Reynolds tobacco unit says. “That’s about all we’ve got to say about it.” A spokesman for Philip Morris Cos. declined to comment.


Scientific Research on Tobacco Use and Impotence

In vitro and animal studies, and some epidemiological evidence based on volunteers and patients, have supported a link between smoking and ED [erectile dysfunction]. . . These studies indicate that smoking is an independent risk factor for vasculogenic impotence and underline the possibility that smoking may act in a synergistic/additive manner with other risk factors.


A 2007 study’s findings done using results from the Boston Area Community Health (BACH) survey supports the association between smoking and erectile dysfunction. The study assessed over 2000 men between the ages of 30 and 79 and found that cumulative pack-years of smoking increased the risk of erectile dysfunction.


A study examining the link between cigarette smoking and impotence in over 7000 Chinese men found a statistically significant dose-response relationship between the two. The study found that the more cigarettes smoked per day, the higher the odds of erectile dysfunction, compared to non-smokers. The study also suggests that smoking prevention should be an important approach for reducing the risk of impotence.


Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, January 2008

Other Studies on Tobacco Use and Impotence


Studies on Tobacco Use and Penile Cancer


Abstracts of many of the listed studies can be found at the PubMed website: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/