

Researches link tobacco industry's marketing to youth smoking

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The National Cancer Institute (NCI) released a report, co-edited by University of Minnesota professor Barbara Loken, that reaches the government's strongest conclusion to date that tobacco marketing and depictions of smoking in movies promote youth smoking. "There is now incontrovertible evidence that marketing of tobacco, and the depiction of smoking in the movies, promote youth smoking and can cause young people to begin smoking," said Loken, professor of marketing at the Carlson School of Management and one of the report's five scientific editors.

The 684-page monograph, "The Role of the Media in Promoting and Reducing Tobacco Use," presents definitive conclusions that a) tobacco advertising and promotion are causally related to increased tobacco use, and b) exposure to depictions of smoking in movies causes youth smoking initiation. The report also concludes that while mass media campaigns can reduce tobacco use, youth smoking prevention campaigns sponsored by the tobacco industry are generally ineffective and may even increase youth smoking.

"The role of marketing in the success of the tobacco companies is conclusive," according to Loken. "The report's recommendations offer the best approach to employ marketing techniques and the media to help prevent a further increase in youth smoking."

The NCI report reaches six major conclusions:

"This direct link between marketing and tobacco use is very powerful." Loken said, "Anti-tobacco ads before films and a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising are two effective strategies found to curb effects of tobacco images on youth. Now we need to use marketing to steer youth and others away from tobacco."

The report provides the most current and comprehensive analysis of more than 1,000 scientific studies on the role of the media in encouraging and discouraging tobacco use. The report is Monograph 19 in the NCI's Tobacco Control Monograph series examining critical issues in tobacco prevention and control. Research included in the review comes from the disciplines of marketing, psychology, communications, statistics, epidemiology and public health.

Source: University of Minnesota

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