

Why Strawberry Jam is More Regulated than Cigarettes

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(PhysOrg.com) -- While jams and other consumer products are strictly regulated and are required to pass stringent tests before they can be sold, tobacco has no restrictions and manufacturers can, and do, add anything they want into the product.

Published in *Respirology* by Wiley-Blackwell, the invited editorial “Regulation of Consumer Products: The Bizarre Case of Strawberry Jam and Cigarettes” discusses the issues surrounding tobacco regulations and how the industry could be more effectively governed.

“The establishment of regulation is a political process and occurs slowly. However, with the gradual but prolonged and massive epidemic of tobacco-related diseases, regulation of the industry’s products – specifically the constituents of tobacco smoke – has to begin now”, says author Dr. Nigel Gray, member of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Tobacco Regulation Study Group.

Despite the complexities of regulating cigarette manufacturing, the Tobacco Regulation Study Group, or TobReg, has proposed practical means to begin the progressive process of tobacco regulation. As a first step, it has suggested setting mandatory levels for some of the major carcinogens and toxicants in cigarettes. In addition, regular reviews must also be conducted as initial toxin levels are considered generous by industry standards for many countries.

“There is no need for an expensive bureaucracy to oversee this

regulation. Countries can simply mandate TobReg's recommendations and publicize them as advice from the world's central public health board. Countries without cigarette manufacturing facilities can simply refuse to import cigarette that do not meet these standards", says Dr. Gray.

He adds, "International standards are highly desirable as large amounts of cigarettes are traded between countries with differing national standards. It is timely for WHO to set standards and offer world leadership – particularly as their Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is now in its implementation process, albeit much slower than most public health advocates would desire. Singapore, Australia and New Zealand are ideally placed to pioneer the introduction of these measures."

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Provided by Wiley

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