

Canadian tobacco firm destroyed evidence: researchers

October 16 2009

Researchers said Thursday they uncovered evidence that a Canadian tobacco company destroyed scientific data it had decades ago showing that cigarettes were addictive and caused cancer.

The three Canadian researchers published copies of 60 internal documents, shredded by Imperial [Tobacco](#) Canada in 1992 to avoid embarrassment or liability, in the [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#).

The copies were uncovered in the files of parent firm British American Tobacco subsidiary.

The documents detail evidence from scientific reviews prepared by British American Tobacco's researchers, as well as dozens of original research studies between 1967 and 1984, such as the examination of the biological activity and carcinogenicity of tobacco smoke.

They describe research on cigarette modifications and toxic emissions, including how consumers adapted their smoking behavior to these modifications, and depict a comprehensive research program on the pharmacology of nicotine and its central role in smoking behaviour.

Some studies found [second-hand smoke](#) on rats was dangerous. Other research cast doubt on the comparative benefits of low-tar cigarettes, as smokers simply compensated by inhaling more intensely.

All the while, Imperial Tobacco Canada executives had denied that

[smoking](#) was addictive or a health hazard, even testifying such at a parliamentary committee hearing in 1987.

The records are now likely to be used in lawsuits by three Canadian provinces seeking billions of dollars from tobacco firms for smoking-related health care costs.

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Citation: Canadian tobacco firm destroyed evidence: researchers (2009, October 16) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-10-canadian-tobacco-firm-evidence.html>

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