

Doctor suggests tabloids publish daily smoking death toll

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While smoking remains legal, the number of smokers is never going to fall significantly, argues public health doctor in a letter to this week's *BMJ*.

Dr Paul Jepson suggests the [tabloid press](#) publish a list of the names of the more than 250 people killed by smoking related disease each day, as part of a "fundamental re-think" on smoking. "Any other drug causing a fraction of the morbidity and mortality of tobacco would have been outlawed long ago," he says.

He explains that in 2010, mephedrone became a class B drug following widespread media coverage and reports of some deaths in the preceding months, although the evidence surrounding the dangers of mephedrone does not exist. This is in stark contrast to tobacco, he argues, which is responsible for around 100,000 deaths each year in the UK. Why should smoking get special treatment?

"People's attitude towards drugs should be evidence based, and not informed by politics or popular opinion. How must smokers feel when they are encouraged to quit their habit by the same government that welcomes [tobacco taxes](#) so gladly?"

He concludes: "While smoking remains legal, the number of smokers is never going to fall significantly - no matter how much taxes rise, how plain [cigarette packets](#) become, or how many millions of pounds is spent on cessation."

Provided by British Medical Journal

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