

As early as 1966, the prototype for a safer cigarette was patented for marketing. However, the prototype went "up in smoke" as the cigarette maker feared that smokers would not accept the less hazardous but less satisfying product. Fear that the public would think the company's other products more hazardous if a safer cigarette were available also prevented the prototype from being marketed. Litigation fears also played a prominent role in the company's decision to shelve the safer cigarette.

These charges were made in an internal report at Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp, a subsidiary of the London-based British-American Tobacco PLC, and makers of the experimental cigarette. The document was obtained by *The New York Times*.

The idea behind the safer cigarette, which was named Ariel, was that the tobacco was heated—not burned. The burning process creates most of the hazardous substances in tobacco smoke. The prototype cigarette would have also reduced the amount of secondhand smoke that it emitted as well as reduce the fire hazard.

Other safe cigarettes had been considered, including one researchers at Liggett & Myers developed as early as 1955. Although ready in 1979, the cigarette never made it to market as company lawyers, fearing lawsuits, advised against such a move.

Smoking would be banned in most areas of public buildings if legislation approved by a House of Representatives subcommittee becomes law.

The measure would require that all buildings open to 10 persons

or more would permit smoking only in rooms with their own separate exhaust systems. Private homes, private clubs, tobacco shops, bars and restaurants, and prisons are the only exceptions.

"There is no other legislation before Congress that could do so much good at so little cost," espouses Rep Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif), panel chairman.

Despite winning approval by the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, the measure is not expected to be brought to the full House this year for a vote as it must first clear the full panel of the Energy and Commerce Committee, reports the May 13 issue of *The New York Times*.

Pleasant experiences bolster the immune system, with the effects lasting days after the initial experience, according to researchers at the medical school of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Negative, stressful events were found to have a detrimental effect on the study participants' immune systems, but for a shorter period.

"Positive events of the day seem to have a stronger helpful impact on immune function than upsetting events do a negative one," comments Dr Stone. "Having a good time on Monday still had a positive effect on the immune system by Wednesday. But, the negative immune effect from undesirable events on Monday lasts just for that day," he explains.

A total of 100 healthy male volunteers participated in this 3-month-long study. The participants took a rabbit protein daily in capsule form. Researchers, led by psychologist Arthur Stone, then mea-

sured antibody levels to the protein found in the volunteers' saliva samples. The men were asked to complete questionnaires each evening, recording the day's events.

Criticism at work from one's employer and friction among co-workers produced the most stress in these volunteers. On the homefront, performing irksome chores did the same.

An upcoming issue of *Health Psychology* will feature this study.

The latest food warning is out: Trans fatty acids could be just as bad or worse for cholesterol levels than fats found in butter and lard, according to findings published in the May issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Harvard investigators estimated that 30,000 deaths related to heart disease could occur annually due to the consumption of trans fatty acids. These man-made acids are commonly found in margarine, snacks, and many fast-food items.

The scientists retrospectively analyzed results of studies that involved 90,000 nurses, as well as analyzing other research data. To obtain the foregoing estimate, researchers calculated the ratio of high-density lipoprotein to total cholesterol and heart disease with the amount of trans fatty acids estimated to be present in certain foods.

Yet, these findings have not convinced all scientists in the field to drop margarine from their menus.

Says William Castelli, MD, director of the Framingham Heart study, "There was a big fall in butter-fat [consumption] and an increase in the use of polyunsaturated fats, but also an increase in trans fatty acids [among our study population]. But the heart attack rate also has fallen by 20%."

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