

Underwriting

Nicotine



by Donald Victorson, CLU

UNDERWRITER:

Defined as someone sitting
in an ivory tower 900 miles
from here, trained to say,
"NO."

YOUR JOB:

To convince that
underwriter, with truthful
information, presented in
as favorable a light as
possible that it is desirable,
even possible to say
"YES."

The National Cancer Institute reports that: "Cigarette Smoking causes 87% of lung cancer deaths, and is responsible for most cancers of the larynx, oral cavity, esophagus, and bladder."

The American Heart Association tells us that: "cigarette smoking is the most important preventable cause of premature death in the United States. It accounts for more than 440,000 of the more than 2.4 million annual deaths. Cigarette smokers have a higher risk of developing a number of chronic disorders. These include fatty buildups in arteries, several types of cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (lung problems). Atherosclerosis (clogged arteries) is the chief contributor to the high number of deaths from smoking. Many studies detail the evidence that cigarette smoking is a major cause of coronary heart disease, which leads to

heart attack."

The National Center for Disease Control says that: "Between 1960 and 1990, deaths from lung cancer among women have increased by more than 400%- exceeding breast cancer deaths in the 1980s. In 1994, 64,300 women died from lung cancer and 44,300 died from breast cancer.

Men who smoke increase their risk of death from lung cancer by more than 22 times, and from bronchitis and emphysema by nearly 10 times."

The Heart Association of Australia tells us that: "Almost 50 Australians die each day from smoking and smoking related diseases." (and remember that Australia is a very large country with a very small population)

Philip Morris Company admits on its website: "Cigarette Smoking and Disease in Smokers – Philip Morris USA agrees with the overwhelming medical and scientific consensus that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other serious diseases in smokers. Smokers are far more likely to develop serious diseases, like lung cancer, than non-smokers. There is no safe cigarette.

Addiction: Philip Morris USA agrees with the overwhelming medical and scientific consensus that cigarette smoking is addictive. It can be very difficult to quit smoking, but this should not deter smokers who want to quit from trying to do so.

Smoking and Pregnancy... Women who smoke have increased risks for delay in conceiving, infertility, pregnancy complications, premature birth, spontaneous abortion and stillbirth. Infants born to women who smoke during pregnancy have a lower average birth weight than infants born to women who do not smoke. The risks for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) are increased among the infants of women who smoke during pregnancy. Women who quit smoking before or during pregnancy reduce the risk of such adverse reproductive outcomes. For pregnant women, smoking is also likely to put their babies at risk for poor lung development, asthma and respiratory infections."

CONCLUSION: Cigarettes Can Kill You!

Result: If you smoke cigarettes, insurance companies will gladly sell you insurance until the day they kill you. They will also charge you at least twice as much as non-smokers pay.

What About Cigar Smokers?

Regular cigar consumption is convincingly linked to cancer of the larynx, oral cavity, and esophagus. Risks increase with the number of cigars smoked and the degree of inhalation.

75% of cigar smokers do not inhale because

cigar smoke contains nicotine in a form readily absorbable in the mouth. Cigarette smokers, on the other hand, must inhale to get at the nicotine.

All cause mortality in primary cigar smokers (primary = never smoked cigarettes) who are non-inhalers is basically the same as in non-smokers. Moderate to deep cigar inhalers have mortality equivalent to moderate inhalers of cigarettes.

It is sound underwriting practice to allow carefully defined cigar smokers to qualify as non-smokers, and more and more underwriters are willing to consider doing so, with a limit of one or two cigars smoked per week or month, and no trace of nicotine found.

Daily cigar use is clearly incompatible with non-smoker status.

Former cigarette smokers who switch to cigars are referred to as secondary cigar smokers. They are likely to go right on inhaling. Few underwriters are likely to grant them non-smoker status until cigarette free for 36 to 60 months.

What About Smokeless Tobacco?

Smokeless Tobacco is highly addictive, just like cigarettes, and if you hold the average size "chew" in your mouth for 30 minutes you absorb as much nicotine as you do from three cigarettes.

A few of the health problems with Smokeless Tobacco include: *Gum Recession:* The constant irritation can result in permanent damage to the gums and bone structure, and leads to loosened teeth; *Increased Cancer Risk:* Smokeless tobacco contains high concentrations of cancer causing agents, subjecting users to increased risk of oral cancer, as well as cancer of the pharynx, larynx, and esophagus; *Bad Breath, Spitting and Drooling, Tobacco Stained Teeth.*

UNDERWRITING CONCLUSIONS

- Most companies will issue Standard Non-Tobacco after 12 months of no tobacco use.
- Most companies will consider issuing Preferred Non-Tobacco after 24 to 36 months.
- Many companies will consider issuing Non-Tobacco to Cigar or Pipe smokers, a few will even consider for Preferred.
- No companies will consider issuing Non-Tobacco if your client is still using "Nicorette." They are much too aware of the high relapse rate among those who have not really kicked the habit.

If the company you were planning to use is only willing to issue at smoker rates, perhaps you should consider suggesting a more enlightened company to your client. We will be happy to try to obtain the best possible offer for you.