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Philip Morris Blocked '83 Paper Showing Tobacco Is Addictive, Panel Finds

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WASHINGTON, March 31 — In 1983, five years before the Surgeon General declared that nicotine was an addictive substance, researchers for a tobacco company drew the same conclusion. Their paper was accepted for publication in a scientific journal, but the company forced the author to withdraw it, the journal's editor said today.

The study, which tested addiction in rats, was done by Dr. Victor J. DeNoble, who was working at the Philip Morris Companies, and his colleagues, and was to be published in the journal *Psychopharmacology*. Experts on nicotine and addiction said the paper would have been the first and best of its kind at the time, an important addition to research on the addictive properties of nicotine.

Dr. Jack E. Henningfield, chief of clinical pharmacology research at the National Institute on Drug Addiction, a Federal agency, said the withdrawal of the paper from publication "set the field back six years at least before work like it could be accomplished by Canadian researchers."

Panel Discloses Report

The research paper was released today at a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment by its chairman, Representative Henry A. Waxman, Democrat of California. It resulted from research

How do you show rats are addicted? An industry study solved the problem.

at the Philip Morris Research Center in Richmond. Not long after Dr. DeNoble wrote the paper, and the company forced him to withdraw it, he left the company and, Mr. Waxman said, the research group that produced it was closed down.

Philip Morris executives issued a written statement saying that Dr.

DeNoble's research in general had not been censored, and some studies of nicotine by him were published, but they would not comment on the specific paper released by Mr. Waxman. They said they believed that Dr. DeNoble had concluded that cigarettes were not addictive, but they offered no evidence for that assertion. Efforts to reach Dr. DeNoble were unsuccessful.

Mr. Waxman said that because Philip Morris owned the laboratory and the researchers were its employees, all the research was owned by the company. He said there was probably no legal requirement that the company publish the study, but there

was a moral requirement to do so.

The editor of the journal at the time, Dr. Herbert Barry of the University of Pittsburgh, said it was highly unusual for a paper to be accepted and then withdrawn. He said he had not come forward before now because he considered it a confidential matter, but he agreed to confirm the facts once approached by the Food and Drug Administration and Mr. Waxman.

Tobacco companies still maintain that nicotine is not addictive, although leading groups, including the Surgeon General's office, the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association, have said that it meets all the scientific tests for an addicting substance. Other substances that meet the tests include heroin, cocaine and alcohol.

The standard test methods include determining that people and animals will seek out the substance and imbibe it almost exclusively and periodically, even though they are given other favored substances to ingest. Another test is whether preventing an animal or human from getting the substance causes withdrawal. Another is whether it produces some positive mental effect like intoxication.

Dr. Henningfield said that nicotine met all the tests to be called an addicting substance, and met them as strongly as any drug. "There is frank-

CIGARETTE BAN UPHELD

The New Jersey Supreme Court upheld the right of municipalities to ban cigarette vending machines. Page B5.

ly no scientific basis for saying nicotine is not addictive," he said. "In fact, in three studies of people addicted to other drugs, such as heroin, the addicts were equally motivated to get nicotine as to get heroin. Their ability to quit, the strength of the habit and their own rating of their need for nicotine were as strong as for their addicting drug."

In 1983, when the study would have been published, Dr. Henningfield said, there was no study that had done a good job of establishing a "rat model" for addiction to nicotine; that is, none showed that rats would work hard to seek the substance after being exposed to it. A major reason for the problem was that the method of giving nicotine to rats in previous studies was unlike the ways humans receive doses of nicotine in cigarettes — in short, powerful bursts.

This study worked out a way for rats to get their dosage in similar manner. "Liver-pressing by rats was established and maintained by intravenous nicotine infusions," the paper said.

"The results," it said, "show that nicotine can be a positive reinforcer for rats in the absence of other inducement."

Representatives of the tobacco companies have testified in Congress that they believe nicotine is not addicting because more than 40 million American adults have quit smoking.

Dr. Henningfield said that even using the figures of tobacco companies, the rate of quitting is only 2.5 percent per year, which is less than the rate of quitting by heroin addicts. For example, he said, soldiers returning from Vietnam addicted to heroin were able to quit on their own at a rate of about 30 percent per year.

Dr. David A. Kessler, the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, uncovered the DeNoble study and supplied it on request to Mr. Waxman. Dr. Kessler has indicated that the Food and Drug Administration might for the first time be willing to regulate the nicotine in cigarettes as an addicting drug if it could be shown that nicotine was addictive.