

The Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down!

2004 Semi-Annual Report on

Tobacco In Current Movies



Reducing Tobacco Use in Movies Is Critical to Reducing Tobacco Use Among Young People

A longitudinal study carried out by a team of scientists at Dartmouth over the past 5 years suggests that up to 52% of the initiation of tobacco use among adolescents is directly attributable to tobacco use in movies.¹ These findings are supported by a review of over 1500 internal tobacco industry documents researched by the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails that trace the history of tobacco industry efforts to influence Hollywood.² These documents clearly demonstrate that the tobacco industry considers smoking in films to be one of the most powerful influences there is in encouraging tobacco use.

By utilizing the Dartmouth findings, Dr. Stanton Glantz of the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine has calculated that 1070 kids start smoking every day in the U.S. as a result of smoking in the movies.³ 535 of these kids will die prematurely of a smoking related disease. These numbers climb to 390,550 beginning to smoke each year leading to an eventual 195,275 premature deaths. The popularity of American movies in other countries will likely multiply these figures several times.

Given this data, one of the most important steps that can be taken today to reduce the initiation of tobacco use among young people and the overall death and disease that results is to reduce tobacco use in movies.

Hollywood Education Efforts Yield Minimal Results

Beginning in 1994, the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails instituted the Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down project to analyze tobacco content in movies. Since then numerous state and national organizations have joined TUTD in urging the entertainment industry to reduce tobacco in movies. Efforts have included extensive educational and media campaigns and several conferences held in conjunction with the entertainment industry. Recent TUTD data shows that tobacco use continues to remain high despite these efforts. 80% of the PG 13 movies reviewed by the Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Project between June of 2002 and May of 2004 contained tobacco.

80%
Of 147 PG 13 Movies Reviewed by TUTD in 2002-04 Contained Tobacco.

Major Findings

- Educational efforts aimed at reducing tobacco content in movies seem to have minimal impact.
- PG 13 movies provide greatest tobacco exposure to young people.
- Stars and featured actors light up in 82% of the top box office movies with tobacco.
- Youth reviewers report pro tobacco messages are included in 78% of movies that depict tobacco

Key Recommendations

- Eliminate tobacco from kid oriented G, PG and PG13 films.
- Encourage entertainment industry to reduce tobacco use in R rated films.
- Promote media literacy activities that inculcate young people against pro-smoking messages in movies and other entertainment productions.
- Eliminate tobacco industry influence on entertainment industry productions

The Who's Who of Lighting Up on Screen

Star power sells movies. Casting popular actors in a movie almost guarantees increased movie attendance and higher box office returns. *Star power can also sell tobacco.* When leading actors light up on screen it sends a powerful message to young people that smoking is a highly desirable activity. As early as 1989 Philip Morris noted in a marketing plan “We believe that most of the strong, positive images for cigarettes and smoking are created by cinema and television. We have seen the heroes smoking in “Wall Street,” “Crocodile Dundee,” and “Roger Rabbit.” Mickey Rourke, Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn are forever seen, both on and off the screen, with a lighted cigarette.”⁴ According to the scientific research being carried out at Dartmouth, “*Non smoking teens whose favorite stars frequently smoke on screen are sixteen times more likely to have a positive attitude toward smoking in the future.*”⁵

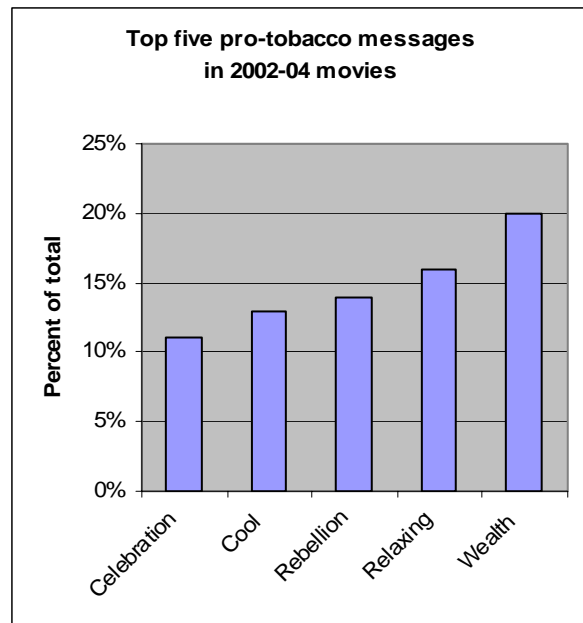
On the right is a partial list of stars who have lit up in movies over the past two years. In the 2003-04 year stars and featured actors lit up in 58% of the top 286 top domestic box office movies and 80% of the movies with tobacco. A 2003 review of TUTD data by UCLA noted that there was more tobacco use in movies where stars light up as opposed to minor characters smoking. This creates a double impact on young viewers where use by stars is reinforced by the impression that tobacco use is more prevalent in our society than it actually is.

Stars Who Smoked in Recent Movies

Ben Affleck	Matthew McConaughey
Antonio Banderas	Eddie Murphy
Pierce Brosnan	Bill Murray
Matt Damon	Matthew Perry
Johnny Depp	Christina Ricci
Leonardo DiCaprio	Tim Robbins
Harrison Ford	Julia Roberts
Andy Garcia	Chris Rock
Daryl Hannah	Rebecca Romijn-Stamos
Goldie Hawn	Adam Sandler
Salma Hayak	Charlize Theron
Kate Hudson	John Travolta
Hugh Jackman	Liv Tyler
Scarlett Johansson	Denzel Washington
Ashley Judd	Naomi Watts
Diane Keaton	Owen Wilson
Nicole Kidman	Kate Winslet
Val Kilmer	Renée Zellweger
Jennifer Love-Hewitt	Catherine Zeta-Jones

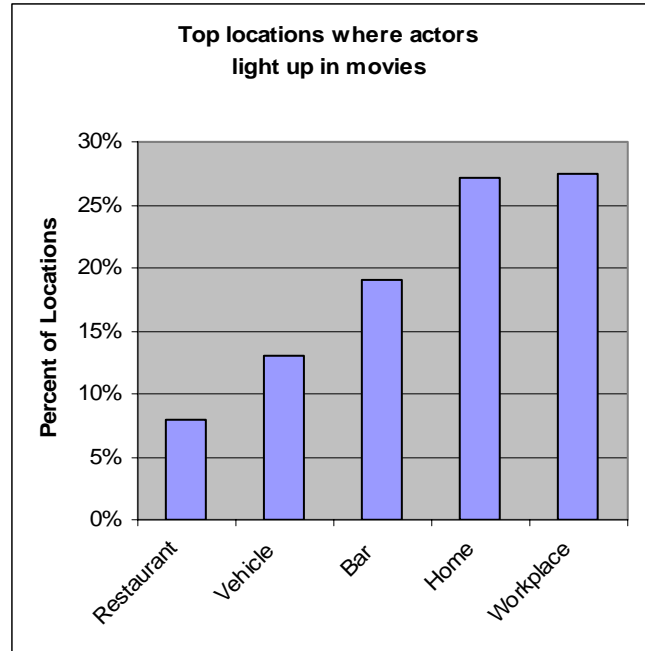
78% of Movies with Tobacco Carry Pro-Tobacco Messages

One of the reasons filmmakers include tobacco in movies is because it serves as an effective prop that can relay information about the actor. For example, a teenage girl actor lighting up a cigarette is seen as being rebellious. Each year TUTD youth reviewers are asked to provide their perspective on tobacco messages included in movies. Between 2002 and 2004, reviewers reported that 78 % of the 207 movies they reviewed with tobacco contained pro-tobacco messages. Only 36 % contained anti-tobacco messages. The top five pro messages are reflected in the chart on the right. These messages are the same messages the tobacco industry incorporates into its advertising campaigns and provide a powerful inducement for kids to take up smoking.



Workplace Is Number One Site for Lighting Up in Movies

Efforts to protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of environmental tobacco smoke have led to numerous local ordinances and state laws banning tobacco use in the workplace and in other public areas. Actors, in the meantime, continue to light up in enclosed areas subjecting nonsmoking actors to their secondhand smoke and sending a message that this is acceptable behavior. Actors lit up inside in 56% of the 286 movies reviewed by TUTD between June of 2002 and May of 2004. This figure climbs to 77% for movies with tobacco. The most frequent location for smoking was the workplace at 27% followed closely by the home. Bars, vehicles and restaurants filled out the rest of the top five. Actors also lit up in medical facilities and at schools.



New Strategies Called for...

While continuing to work with and educate the entertainment industry on the public health aspects of tobacco use in the movies is important, the seriousness of the issue combined with the limited effectiveness of educational efforts suggests new strategies are called for. The TUTD Project recommends the following:

- Eliminate tobacco from kid oriented films:** Modify the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) Guidelines to eliminate tobacco use depiction from all newly produced G, PG and PG 13 movies, unless the presentation of tobacco clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or represents accurately the smoking behavior of an actual (as opposed to fictional) historical figure.
- Reduce tobacco in R rated films:** Encourage the entertainment industry to reduce and/or eliminate tobacco use depiction in R rated movies and other entertainment productions through education and through the denormalization of tobacco use within the industry.
- Counter pro-tobacco messages:** Promote media literacy activities that inoculate young people against pro tobacco messages that appear in movies including placing in-theater and on-video anti-tobacco messages before movies that include tobacco use.
- Zero out tobacco industry influence:** Eliminate tobacco industry influence on the entertainment industry productions through aggressive enforcement of the Master Settlement Agreement, the adoption of studio based policies, and the inclusion of a statement at the end of the movie declaring that nobody involved in the production received anything of value from anyone in exchange for using or displaying tobacco.

The American Lung Association, American Heart Association, World Health Organization, American Medical Association and American Academy of Pediatricians have all adopted policies urging a change in MPAA guidelines.

The most effective step listed above is to modify the MPAA ratings to include tobacco. According to MPAA, the rating system "is a voluntary system sponsored by MPAA and theater owners to provide parents with advance information on films." Since MPAA represents the entertainment industry and the rating system is voluntary, censorship is not an issue. It is the entertainment industry establishing internal standards that reflect the broader interests of the general public. Freedom of speech and children can both be protected while eliminating tobacco from kid oriented films.

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Coming this Summer...

“Hollywood Speaks Out on Tobacco”

A book written by Curt Mekemson, TUTD’s primary consultant, and published by the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails that utilizes quotes from and about celebrity smokers to counter the glamorization that takes place when stars portray tobacco use on the screen with the reality of tobacco use in their own lives.

Sample Quotes:

“I stopped smoking the day I knew I was pregnant. Ethan and I both stopped on that day. It’s like you’re just one puff away from your entire family being invaded by an evil addiction.”

Uma Thurman Elle Magazine, Nov. '99

“I won’t smoke upstairs, near the kids’ bedroom. Besides, I don’t want to stink up my clothes or the bedroom.” **Arnold Schwarzenegger**

cigaraficionado.com

“I’m trying really hard to stop. I think it’s pretty hard to stop if you are a smoker. I’ve had friends who have kicked really terrible things such as heroin, and they always say giving up cigarettes is physically harder.”

Elizabeth Hurley Fashionave-

The Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! Project

Thumbs Up Thumbs Down was created in 1994 by the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails to analyze movies and other entertainment industry productions for tobacco content, work with and educate the entertainment industry on the issue and raise public awareness. Each year it recruits and trains teenagers to analyze the top 10 domestic box office movies weekly. Each movie is reviewed by a teen/staff team for the amount and type of tobacco being used, who is using it, where it is used, brand use, and perceived messages resulting from use. In instances where reviewers differ substantially, another review is carried out by project staff. Data is then analyzed and released to the entertainment industry and general public.

Since 1994 TUTD has developed a database on over 800 movies and worked with public health organizations and educational institutions as well as the entertainment industry on a state, national and international level to reduce tobacco content in movies. This past year, its methodology was adopted by the World Health Organization and India to analyze movies made in India for tobacco content. The project is funded by a California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, Proposition 99 Grant # 0090377.

For Further Information

Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down! and Scene Smoking: (<http://www.saclung.org/>) and (<http://www.scenesmoking.org>) These two web sites of the American Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails provide a comprehensive look at tobacco use in movies. The TUTD site provides summarized data on tobacco use in the top 50 domestic box office movies annually beginning in 1991. Scene Smoking provides current data by rating the top ten movies weekly. Both sites provide background information, recommendations for action and ways to become involved.

Smoke Free Movies: (<http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu>) Smoke Free Movies is a comprehensive site of the University of California at San Francisco which provides detailed background information on smoking in the movies, its impact on the initiation of tobacco use among teenagers and the tobacco industry’s efforts to encourage tobacco use in movies.

Sources

1. Dalton, MA, Sargent, JD et al. Effect of viewing smoking in movies on adolescent smoking initiation, A cohort study. The Lancet 362(9380): 281-285
2. Mekemson CV, Glantz SA. How the tobacco industry built its relationship with Hollywood, Tobacco Control 2002; 11:0-10
3. Phillip Morris Cigarette Marketing, Kelly Weedon Shute Advertising, pmdocs.com/getallimg.asp?DOCID=2501057693/7719
4. Glantz SA. Smoking in movies, a major problem, published on line June 10, 2003, thelancet.com/extras/03cmt159web.pdf
5. Tickle, Sargent, Dalton, Beach and Hea therton (Favorite movie stars, their tobacco use in contemporary movies and its association with adolescent smoking. Tobacco Control, 2001:10:16-22