

Q: “Who knows how many moviegoers have started smoking because of what they have seen on screen?”

Kirk Douglas, *The New York Times*, May 3, 2003

A: “Smoking in movies is responsible for addicting 1,070 American adolescents to tobacco every day, 340 of whom will die prematurely as a result.”

“Commentary,” *The Lancet*, June 7, 2003

THIS JUNE, *THE LANCET*, ONE OF the world’s leading medical journals, published a landmark study.

Researchers followed thousands of nonsmoking kids 10-14 for two years to gauge the real-world effect of smoking in the movies. The results are stunning. On-screen smoking is:

▶ *Now responsible for recruiting more than half of all new smokers.* In the U.S. alone, that means 391,000

teens a year, 124,000 of whom will die early from smoking-related disease.

▶ *More influential than conventional advertising.* This will come as no surprise to tobacco companies who, despite legal agreements banning paid product placement, never demur when studios feature starter brands like Marlboro in their youth-rated movies.

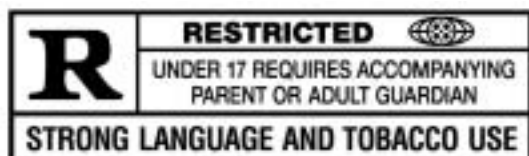
▶ *More powerful than parents.* Movie images of smoking have more than twice the impact on nonsmokers’ children than on smokers’ kids.

Bad news? Rigorously controlling for other factors, this study demonstrates that smoking in the movies exerts an almost straight-line “dose effect”: the greater the exposure to smoking images, the more likely an adolescent is to start smoking. Going to U.S. movies

can more than *triple* the chance that a kid will smoke.

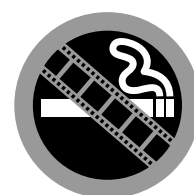
The good news? The effect also works in reverse: the less smoking kids see in the movies, the less chance they’ll start smoking. Rating smoking movies R would cut kids’ exposure by 60% or more, preventing 195,000 new tobacco addictions a year and averting 62,000 premature deaths. An R leaves producers free to include smoking. They’ll just need to decide if smoking, which doesn’t sell tickets, is worth losing the wider audience.

Your choice? Retreat into silence, denial and rationalization, as the tobacco industry does when confronted with the evidence. Or just do the right thing.



FOUL LANGUAGE IS MERELY OFFENSIVE. *But promoting tobacco on-screen kills more people in the U.S. than illegal drugs, gun crime, drunk driving, suicide and AIDS combined.*

Read the research at SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu



**SMOKE
FREE
MOVIES**

The R-rating and other Smoke Free Movie proposals are endorsed by the World Health Organization, the American Medical Association, the American Legacy Foundation, L.A. County Department of Health Services, and other public health authorities. This initiative by Stanton Glantz, PhD (coauthor of *The Cigarette Papers* and *Tobacco War*) of the UCSF School of Medicine is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. To learn how you can help, visit our website or write to us: Smoke Free Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390.