



THIS HAS BEEN YET ANOTHER EXCITING YEAR FOR ASH. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO DEVELOP THE WORK ON TOBACCO SMUGGLING AND ROGUE BEHAVIOUR BY TOBACCO COMPANIES, WHILE LEADING A SUBSTANTIAL CAMPAIGN TO GET THE TOBACCO ADVERTISING BILL BACK ON TRACK. WE HAVE LAUNCHED NEW INITIATIVES ADDRESSING IMPORTANT PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES, SUCH AS SMOKING AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES, ORAL HEALTH AND TACKLING THE NEEDS OF SMOKERS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2001

WE CONTINUE TO EXTEND OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

We continue to extend our international presence both in the context of European Union legislation and the WHO Framework Convention, where ASH has taken a lead role in lobbying and shaping development of the convention and engagement of the non-governmental organisations.

ASH is leading the information war - with our extensive web site and e-mail networks we have substantially reduced our dependence on paper. We aim to give everybody the information they want in the format they need it. Our hope is that ASH is enabling several thousand people now working on tobacco control in Britain, Europe and around the world, to campaign more effectively.

Tobacco Advertising

"The government believes that an advertising ban could reduce tobacco consumption in the longer term by 2.5%. This would translate into an estimated 3000 lives per year saved."

Rt. Hon Alan Milburn MP, Secretary of State for Health, December 2000

The government's decision to drop a Bill banning tobacco advertising from the 2001 Queen's speech shocked and stunned the public health community, and attracted much criticism both in the press and in parliament. ASH reacted with great speed, gathering responses from the big names in the health field, and playing ministers' quotes back to them. Ministers and the Prime Minister responded saying they would make efforts to bring it forward to this parliamentary session if possible. There is now a substantial ASH campaign of mobilisation, polling, letter writing, postcards and lobby work underway.

ASH has been working closely with Liberal Democrat peer Lord Clement Jones, who is taking a Private Member's Bill to ban tobacco advertising through the House of Lords. In November, the Bill received its second reading and there was overwhelming support for it, with 80% of peers who spoke during the debate in favour of the ban.

European Union

ASH seized the initiative in the wake of the collapse of the EU directive on tobacco advertising – annulled by the European Court of Justice on a legal technicality – by producing a model advertising directive that would comply with the judgement and still be effective in controlling tobacco advertising. Some 40 national organisations have signed up to the text, which is the main lobbying document for the public health community.

We also shared in the success of a new directive that will bring in bigger, bolder warnings, a ban on 'light' branding, disclosure of additives and new mechanisms for updating the regulatory controls in Europe.

Internet promotion

ASH took initiatives aimed at challenging the use of the Internet to promote tobacco. Our Public Affairs Manager, John Connolly, undertook some test-purchases to show that buying cigarettes over the Internet was a risky rip-off. BAT released its Citygobo.com web site – a glossy listings site designed to promote venues at which BAT products would be heavily promoted – but with no mention that BAT is the architect. ASH developed a counter site Citygobo2.com to explain BAT's tactics to young people and 'outed' the company in the European media.

No Smoking Day 2001

ASH worked closely with the No Smoking Day organisers to gain publicity for the event and to promote the report arguing that 'cutting down' is a bad strategy. ASH also initiated a smoke-free comedy night hosted by Lee Hurst on the evening of No Smoking Day. ASH is now represented on the board of No Smoking Day.

Smuggling

The campaign against global tobacco smuggling continues with ASH launching a new offensive – this time the focus is Imperial Tobacco – with a steady stream of corrosive press coverage. The tobacco company's recent commercial success is heavily dependent on growth in

smuggling and the export of UK-made cigarettes that will be smuggled back into the UK black market. Estimates suggest that over half of Imperial's exports return in this way. ASH argues that evidence suggests Imperial facilitates this trade and we keep repeating the question: "why are so many billion cigarettes exported from the UK to places where no-one smokes them, and the most obvious customers are organised crime gangs that will smuggle them back to Britain?"

ASH has taken the information that it has amassed on Imperial Tobacco to the new Treasury Select Committee. It is hoped that the government will act on this evidence and investigate the company's overseas activities.

Pressure on the tobacco industry

ASH kept up the pressure – especially on British American Tobacco. We intervened effectively at the AGM, challenged the company's phoney 'stakeholder dialogue', and exposed the cynicism of the company's new voluntary global marketing code by releasing a report from an analyst at Credit Suisse Group. The report reassured shareholders that the code would improve image and fend off legislation, while doing little to impede marketing and business as usual.

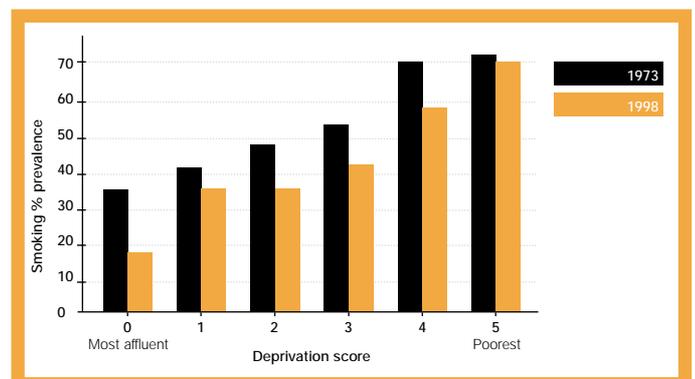
Smoking cessation

ASH has been among the most active voices in defending the new specialist services and promoting the mainstreaming of smoking cessation in the NHS. ASH formulated a response to the National Institute of Clinical Excellence making a convincing case for widespread use of smoking cessation therapies.

Smoking and Health Inequalities

ASH has focused its work on the development of UK tobacco policy on the role played by smoking in health inequalities. Smoking has been identified as the primary reason for the gap in healthy life expectancy between rich and poor. Smoking rates are sharply related to deprivation, and, as the chart below shows, smoking among the poorest reaches over 70% and has not improved since the 1970s.

In June, ASH held a joint conference with the Health Development Agency (HDA) bringing together experts in the field of smoking and health inequalities. Subsequently, ASH and the HDA commissioned a range of new projects to take the work forward in both the public and political arenas.



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Mental Health Project

"They really don't care if you smoke as long as you're taking your medication"

ASH has teamed up with SmokeFree London and the mental health charity, mentality, to focus on a seriously neglected and urgent public health issue: access to appropriate smoking cessation information, advice and support for people with mental health problems. Smoking prevalence is significantly higher among people with mental health problems than among the general population. In November a Symposium, attended by some 150 people, was held in London. The participants made a broad ranging set of recommendations to help establish smoking cessation strategies that are appropriate, acceptable, accessible and effective for service users.

Passive Smoking

In September, ASH produced a submission to the Greater London Assembly's (GLA) Smoking in Public Places Investigative Committee outlining the science, policy, legal and economic background to smoking in public places and smoke-free policies in the capital. The submission highlighted the damaging health implications associated with exposure to passive cigarette smoke in public and work places. It put forward a number of recommendations aimed at protecting non-smokers and promoting the provision of smoke-free environments in London. Wider progress has been slower, with the government's Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) stalling, but the GLA inquiry gives an opportunity to press again for the ACoP to control smoking in the workplace.

Oral Health

In contrast to its effect on other parts of the body, the health impacts of tobacco on the mouth receive relatively little attention. ASH believes there is an urgent need to raise public awareness of oral cancer and the numerous risk factors associated with it. Research Manager, Amanda Sandford, joined with the British Dental Association to produce an information leaflet for dentists to give to their patients. ASH has also produced a comprehensive report on oral cancer and other illnesses that can occur in the mouth from smoking and chewing tobacco.

Price Fixing

More damning evidence of tobacco industry corporate mal-practice emerged in July when The Economist magazine published an article revealing that British American Tobacco was engaged in price fixing negotiations with its competitors in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The documents analysed by The Economist describe meetings between BAT and its competitors, Philip Morris and RJ Reynolds at which prices were fixed in key markets – the idea being to control price competition and reduce the marketing costs associated with competing with each other. The documents also show BAT executives trying to conceal what they were doing, for example by insisting that colleagues stick to verbal communication instead of writing.

Clive Bates, Director of ASH, told the national media:

"BAT and the others have been running a classic cartel – covert anti-competitive meetings to carve up key markets to make more money with less effort. As if killing their customers isn't enough, the big tobacco companies have been ripping them off as well."

Nottingham University and British American Tobacco

Nottingham University has accepted £3.8 million from BAT for funding an International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility. ASH, appalled by the university's decision to accept tobacco industry money, joined with students in a protest demonstration during the college's Open Day in March. ASH has led a campaign targeting the individuals responsible for accepting the money.

World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

ASH continued to play an important and constructive role in and around the latest WHO FCTC meeting, held in Geneva, Switzerland in May. The Convention, currently being developed by the 191 member states of the World Health Assembly, will be the world's first international agreement on tobacco control if successfully negotiated. ASH worked closely with colleagues from around the world on the development of the FCTC and related protocols. Using our database of 500 government contacts, we have been effective in promoting text into the official process.

ASH's Director, Clive Bates, also achieved high visibility on many international media outlets – issuing a warning to governments and the WHO, that the Treaty could be in danger of serious and irreversible failure due to weak and ill-considered negotiating text. He told journalists that "too many governments just want a treaty, and any treaty will do". The success or failure of this treaty will be judged on whether it bans tobacco advertising, protects consumers and tackles smuggling.

Tobacco Action Network

The Tobacco Action Network (TAN) succeeded the Tobacco Control Alliance in July 1999. Since then membership has grown from 230 to over 850 members. The network is a member orientated organisation that aims to bring together the most active tobacco control advocates in the UK in order to share resources, knowledge and best practice. The Network members have given tremendous support this year in the campaign on the Tobacco Advertising Bill.

New Technology and Information

The ASH web site [www.ash.org.uk] goes from strength to strength – now averaging around 60-70,000 page requests per week! All new ASH documents – reports, press releases, fact sheets, briefing papers – are made instantly available on the site. During the past year it has been made easier to navigate and is now an invaluable source of information for both the media and the public. A significant design update will be complete before the end of 2001.

ASH produces a high quality daily round up of tobacco newspaper and magazine articles, which is e-mailed round the world early every morning. ASH also writes a weekly report of European news.

Accounts 2000-2001

The annual accounts for the year ended 31st March 2001 show an income of just over £525,000. Direct charitable expenditure increased by 18%, whilst staff costs increased 10%.

ASH would like to thank the British Heart Foundation, the Cancer Research Campaign, the Department of Health, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, and the Health Development Agency for supporting our work during the year.

A full copy of the audited accounts is available from the ASH office upon receipt of a large stamped addressed envelope.

Patron

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO

President

Professor Sir Richard Doll

Chair of the Board

Professor Joy Townsend

In order to keep administration costs to a minimum ASH employs a small team of staff on a permanent basis, commissioning additional consultants, researchers or experts when necessary.

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