

Accounts 2004-05

A full copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2005 can be found on the ASH website at <http://www.ash.org.uk/html/about/fs2005.pdf>

Sir Richard Doll

Professor Sir Richard Doll, whose research established the causative association between smoking and lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and many other disorders, died after a short illness on Sunday 24 July, aged 92. As his longstanding colleague Sir Richard Peto said on hearing of his death:

“Richard Doll's work has prevented millions of premature deaths in the 20th century and will prevent tens of millions of premature deaths in the present century. He was unique in medical history.”

As President of ASH he was a great supporter of our campaign for smokefree workplaces, saying:

“It is clear that a lot of people have not yet appreciated the full extent of the hazards of smoking. It is vital that ASH continues its efforts to inform people, to persuade the Government to improve facilities for the treatment of addiction, and to bring about a ban on smoking at the workplace, comparable to the ban on other chemical hazards.”

Richard remained a leader in his field of epidemiology and the spread of disease until his death. He is sadly missed by his colleagues and friends at ASH.

ASH would like to thank the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, the Department of Health and our individual members for supporting our work during the year.

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With the help of all those involved in the Smokefree ACTION coalition we have made huge progress during 2005 towards making all work places smokefree.

But the fight goes on to amend the Health Bill to ensure that all workers get the same protection.





“An hour a day in a room with a smoker is nearly 100 times more likely to cause lung cancer in a non-smoker than 20 years spent in a building containing asbestos” Professor Sir Richard Doll

This Annual Report gives an overview of our work but further details of all of our campaign work, press briefings, fact sheets and reports, can be found on the ASH website at: www.ash.org.uk

ASH information and media work

ASH is the pre-eminent tobacco control organisation in the UK. When asked which organisations are involved in tobacco campaigning 1 in 5 of the adult population named ASH, and when prompted and unprompted awareness are combined 55% of the population know of our work.

ASH staff are called on daily by the media to provide reaction to, and information for, tobacco related news stories. On average there were 12 references to ASH in the print media and 7 appearances on radio and TV every week last year. Our weekly ‘reach’, (that is the number of people exposed to our messages) was around 6.5 million, not including the internet. Media coverage is balanced but has tended to be supportive of the lines that ASH takes.

The website, which is updated daily, has continued to increase in size and popularity throughout 2005. It has a huge searchable content on all aspects of tobacco control and is a key factor in our campaign work and public profile. Currently it is averaging more than 3,000 users a day.

Smokefree workplaces

When this campaign started two years ago there was no prospect of smokefree workplace legislation. We now have legislation due to be implemented by the summer of 2007, covering the vast majority of the working population.

It will not currently cover private members’ clubs and pubs not serving food but the Secretary of State has said there will be a consultation on how best to fulfil the manifesto commitment to protect workers by prohibiting smoking in the bar area. This will make sure the debate about how best to protect the workforce will continue to rage while the Bill makes its way through parliament.

We will continue to push for comprehensive smokefree legislation to cover all workers. ASH director, Deborah Arnott said:

“There is no excuse whatsoever for the Government to accept that secondhand smoke is a serious health and safety issue and then to try to exempt some of the employees most at risk. The Government will also find it impossible to set safe standards for pubs and clubs that still allow smoking.”

There will be a review of the legislation within three years, so even if some exemptions for pubs and clubs are allowed there is the potential for them to be removed in the near future.

Working towards comprehensive smokefree legislation will therefore continue to be central to tobacco control work in England and Wales for at least the next year or so.

On a further positive note, at least 30 UK local authorities have now passed policies supporting smokefree legislation. Many used materials from the ASH/Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) toolkit, which was produced last year, and took written and oral evidence from Ian Willmore, ASH Public Affairs Manager.

Publicans Survey shows health inequalities set to worsen: Many pubs would drop food for exemption from smokefree law

ASH joined forces with Cancer Research UK in September, publishing a survey of publicans on the issue of banning smoking in bars and pubs. The findings confirmed fears that a partial ban would widen the health gap between rich and poor, as 45% of pubs in the poorest areas don’t serve food, compared to only 14% in the most affluent areas.

The survey also showed that many pubs would stop serving food to get round the Government’s proposed smokefree legislation. The results indicated that the proportion of exempt pubs in England and Wales could rise by a third – from 29 per cent at present to 40 per cent – if the Government proceeds with a smokefree law that excludes pubs that do not serve prepared food. In the poorest areas, the proportion could be as high as 50 per cent.

Cancer Research UK’s Chief Executive, Professor Alex Markham, commented:

“This survey provides strong evidence that a partial smokefree law would widen the health gap between rich and poor. By introducing comprehensive smokefree legislation the Government would demonstrate that it is truly serious about addressing health inequalities.”

Poll shows overwhelming support for total smoking ban: Republic of Ireland embraces ban one year on

A public opinion poll carried out in January showed that 78% of the British public support a smokefree law covering ALL workplaces, including all pubs and all restaurants, higher than in Ireland where support was only 67% before its legislation was introduced.

And in Ireland support for the law increased after its introduction. Surveys commissioned by the Irish Department of Health reported in Summer 2004 that 82% of the public backed the smokefree law and 90% agreed it would benefit workers. The legislation had its first anniversary in March 2005 and it is widely agreed that it has been a major public health success.

ASH Director, Deborah Arnott stated:

“The Irish smokefree law has been a resounding triumph. It is popular. It needs little enforcement. The dire predictions of the drinks trade have proved false but cigarette sales have fallen and public health is improving as a result. This experience shows that bold political moves can be successful and popular.

Welsh Assembly call for powers to end workplace smoking

The National Assembly for Wales made a demand to the UK Government in May, requesting the necessary powers to introduce a new law ending smoking in enclosed workplaces and public places in Wales. ASH’s Public Affairs Manager Ian Willmore, who had previously given evidence to the Welsh Assembly, welcomed the announcement:

“Welsh politicians have rightly chosen to follow the Irish model, and join their colleagues in Scotland in opting for a comprehensive law, rather than the half-measure still on the table for England.”

Smoking can cost an arm and a leg

In August ASH released a report where we revealed the devastating health consequences of a common but little-understood circulatory disease, peripheral arterial disease (PAD). Smokers have a 10-16 times greater risk of developing PAD than non-smokers.

The report was released in collaboration with the British Heart Foundation and the British Vascular Foundation. Professor Peter Weissberg, Medical Director of the British Heart Foundation, said in a press statement:

“It affects all arteries in the body, so people who smoke are risking the blood supply to all of their vital organs. Loss of blood supply leads to death of part or all of that organ, so that in the brain it causes strokes and in the heart it causes heart attacks, both of which are sudden and may be fatal. But in the limbs, particularly the lower limbs, it leads to chronic, disabling and often untreatable pain until gangrene finally sets in and amputation is inevitable. If a smoker with arterial disease continues to smoke, it is only a matter of time before all the organs are affected with devastating consequences.”

Smoking Cessation

Throughout 2005 we continued our efforts to encourage policies for the wider availability and use of Nicotine Replacement Therapy. These were reflected in the Government White Paper “Choosing Health”. The “one stop shop” for smoking cessation on the ASH website has now been up and running for more than two years.

Tax and Smuggling

ASH produced a submission to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, supported by many other health charities, requesting changes to tobacco taxes in the Budget. It focused on raising tax by at least the rate of inflation, improving the strategy to deal with tobacco smuggling, the impact of the governments proposed smokefree legislation on health inequalities and the need to improve the market reporting of data.

Advertising

The Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002 was finally fully implemented in July 2005, when the ban on tobacco sponsorship of global sports including Formula One motor racing came into effect. ASH wrote to the European Commission to seek clarification about how the EU Directive would be enforced. We have reported breaches of the law to the EU and will continue to monitor the broadcasting of sports with tobacco links.

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

We continued our lobbying work, in cooperation with international groups and the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA). ASH attended the second Inter-Governmental Working Group on the FCTC in Geneva at the end of February 2005. At this meeting we lobbied hard for a secretariat which would be accountable to the Conference of the Parties (COP) and for NGO access to the COP.

