

# Environmental health and social impacts of smoking



Sitting under the hot sun, we all relaxed after the long exhausting obstreperous cricket game. Sweating like crazy, we all took a knee on the warm grass and started to make plans for the upcoming weekend and my friend's party. Enjoying the cool breeze as the sun hid behind the enormous clouds periodically, everyone had a blank face and just wanted to loosen up. The smell of the fresh cut grass was rushing through out body. Dead silence filled the air for quite awhile and everyone just wanted to sleep. But the warmth did not last for long . From nowhere, huge smog of cigarette smoke filled the atmosphere of the whole park which made some of my friend's splenetic. No matter where we went, it felt as if smoke from the cigarettes were stalking our every footstep that we took in the park. Not knowing what to do, we decided to leave the park and find another place where we could sit down and enjoy the evening without any intruders.

Imagine sitting in a restaurant unable to enjoy your meal due to cloud of smoke coming from the neighbor's table. The fact that there was no designated area for the smokers and this put non-smokers in an uncomfortable situation. Probably each of us has experienced such a situation, when standing on a bus stop, sitting in restaurant or stood near the person smoking outside the library. Unwillingly suffering from redundant smoke and we become second-hand smokers.

A ban on smoking has been proposed in many states. Whereas some places have taken action for it as well as against it. Americans waste billions of dollars annually on tobacco products in our country. These products include drugs such as crack or marijuana. In which, these products are considered to be illegal in the United States. At the same time they have been proven

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killers throughout history. However cigarettes are perfectly legal in the country and kill millions of people around the world each year. If certain harmful drug substances such marijuana or crack are illegal in the country, then cigarettes should not be permitted either because they are harmful to the society and effects the environment indirectly. In Kansas, the smoking ban prohibits smoking in any enclosed area to which the public is invited or in which the public is permitted, except in designated smoking areas, which are not limited in size, but in either case (smoking or nonsmoking) must post warning signs to inform people and to keep them aware. It also prohibits smoking in places of business where minors under 18 are allowed. This includes restaurants, retail stores, office buildings, medical facilities, daycares, theaters, banks, bars, manufacturing plants, vehicle repair shops, public areas of hotels and motels, wholesale business services, warehouses and home-based businesses. Although businesses may allow smoking if they have smoking rooms enclosed on all sides by solid walls or windows extending from the floor to ceiling and must have self-closing doors and maintain a negative air pressure. Also no person under the age of 18 can be allowed in such smoking rooms (Science Daily). By doing this, it will permit anyone from smoking and keep away harmful substances from innocent people who believe that smoking ban should be enacted.

Cigarettes cause health problems in smokers as well as capriciously to nonsmokers. They harm adults as they do youth. Although smoking has only pernicious effects on the body, the use of cigarettes is legal while other drugs are banned. Most products proven dangerous are banned or recalled. Cigarettes should be no different. While there was a little interest in a total

prohibition on smoking in the workplace and in the restaurants, airplanes, trains and hotels there was significant support among both smokers and nonsmokers for limiting the activity in the designated areas. Some states imposed restrictions on public smoking. By the end of 1985, eighty-nine cities and counties had done so, approximately 75 percent of which were in California. Finally by 1988, four hundred local ordinance restricted smoking had been done in United States. (Unfiltered)

Smoking has several trenchant and detrimental effects on the body.

Cigarettes cause eighty-five percent of lung cancer and are responsible for thirty percent of all deaths resulting from cancer. (Bartecchi, 49) People who have smoked for a significant period of time will have noticeable problems breathing and will most likely be in poor health. One out of four deaths of people thirty-five to sixty- four years old result from smoking. On the average, every cigarette takes five and a half minutes of life away from a smoker. (Bartecchi, 46) Although restrictions have been placed on the use of cigarettes in public areas such as restaurants and airplanes, the US has yet to place a ban on smoking. The government frequently inspects items sold to the American public. Commercial products that may be dangerous such as food, cars, and toys have been recalled in order for alterations. In the August 1995 issue of consumer reports, twenty- four products were recalled because of possible dangers to the consumer. These products included a car that may lose a wheel while in motion, a hair dryer that poses a fire hazard, and cookies that can cause an allergic reaction. (Consumer Reports, 500) Yet, the sale of cigarettes, known to be unsafe, has never been prohibited by the

government. Why are cigarettes any different from other products sold in the United States?

Cigarettes are not only unsafe for users, but are also damaging to all people in the vicinity of a smoker. Second hand smoke from cigarettes is just as damaging as smoke inhaled by users. Each year, 53, 000 people die from the effects of second hand smoke. I think this is completely iniquitous to nonsmokers. According to article in [www. MSNBC. com](http://www.MSNBC.com), 126 million nonsmokers are exposed to second hand smoke. A person living with a spouse who smokes has a thirty percent higher chance of getting lung cancer. (Bartecchi, 49) Parents who smoke force their children to breathe the fumes every day. Seventeen percent of lung cancer is attributed to people who grew up with parents who were smokers. Children of smokers have a lower birth rate and are often less intelligent. (Bartecchi, 49) People who have chosen to smoke have accepted the unhealthy risk of the drug. However, nonsmokers have not opted for the hazards involved with smoking and therefore should not be introduced to these hazards. The government has chosen not to place a ban on a drug that puts even the nonusers at risk to health problems. People who do not smoke must always be wary of toxic cigarette fumes that may be in their presence.

Most people are aware of the health risks involved with smoking. For this reason cigarette manufacturers have invested much of their advertising campaign to the most uninformed segment of the population, minors. The average age when children start smoking in the US is fourteen and a half years old. Ads such as the cartoon character Joe Camel, A camel who rides a motorcycle in the presence of attractive women, are obvious gimmicks to <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-health-and-social-impacts-of-smoking/>

attract children and teenagers. Allan M. Brant in his book "THE CIGARETTE CENTURY" talks about his personal experience. When he was seven years old he went to New York City for the first time with his parents. He visited many sights and attractions but nothing elicited his attention and fascination more than the famous camel billboard looming above the time square. The Camel blew endless perfect smoke rings in to the neon-lit night sky. After watching that he was made aware by his parents that smoking was bad for him. But in his mind he kept thinking someday he also would smoke giant smoke rings. Before the appearance of " Joe Camel", Camel cigarettes made six million dollars from sales to minors. However, just two years after the first appearance of the cartoon character, sales of Camel cigarettes to minors rose to \$476 million. In a recent study, just as many six year old children recognized " Mickey Mouse" as " Joe Camel." (Bartecchi, 47-48) Thousands of minors become addicted to cigarettes every year, posing health problems later in life. The US should not allow the sale of a product aimed at harming our children. Smoking advertisements have a major impact on adolescents who are convicted of smoking. A lot of the tobacco ads are aimed at the youth of the society. A study suggests that introduction to tobacco advertisement reveal that nonsmoker adolescents who were more familiar to tobacco advertisement had the potential to become smokers afterwards. Recent studies have revealed that cigarette companies are still promoting advertisements that have a greater influence on young people in contrast to anti-smoking announcements (How advertising impacts smoking).

According to the federal trade commission cigarette manufacturing companies spend approximately \$1. 06 billion for the promotion of

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cigarettes. A large amount of this money is spent at the retail store level targeting youngsters and teenagers.

The smoke ban eliminates secondhand smoke from public areas and makes the environment cleaner. Smoking does not only affect the health of people, but also effects the environment at the same time. On average, there are 868 cigarettes per person around the world. The butts of the cigarettes affect the environment the most. This results in pollution in the water, land and air. Smokers are less aware of the environmental problems compared to health issues that arise from smoking. There are almost four thousand chemicals in cigarettes. There are about 30 percent of the American population that smoke on a regular basis. That means that the air is being polluted heavily as well as the ground. Millions of cigarette butts are left on the ground on a daily basis (how smoking affects the environment). Most of those butts are left in the rivers and the lakes. All of the filter-tipped cigarettes are bio-degradable. Butts in the water take about twenty five to twenty six years to decompose. As they decompose, the remaining of the chemicals are released in the soil and the water, which eventually pollutes the plants and water. Also the land used for growing tobacco can be used to grow food for third world countries. Tobacco absorbs six times more potassium than any other crop in the world. This results in the soil to be in poor condition to be used for growing crops or food for people around the world. Moreover as the tobacco plant is highly susceptible to pests and disease, so to maintain their proper growth and health, various chemicals and pesticides are being sprayed. These chemicals are used in large amounts to last for three months to keep the growth and health of tobacco.

Some of the chemicals used are Aldrin, Dieldrin and DDT (McLaren). Also Methyl bromide is used and this chemical contributes significantly to the depletion of the ozone layer. There is a chance of these chemicals of running into contaminating water supplies. The more chemicals that are used, the more pesticides will develop resistance in flies as well as mosquitoes. This will cause diseases such as malaria more difficult to control. For the production and packaging of the cigarette requires a lot of trees (how smoking effects environment). Almost five percent of the entire deforestation taken place in Africa is caused by tobacco production. Also some places around the world are at a risk because of deforestation. Places like Miombo have their forests at risks because they account for twenty percent of deforestation. A lot of the habitats are in danger and each year six hundred trees are destroyed every year to fuel tobacco. This means that one tree is destroyed for every three hundred cigarettes. With the use of more advance technology, tobacco growing companies can save the environment but that way the companies will lose billions of dollars. The companies are not willing to save the environment and rather make profit, Even if it means hurting the habitat. The best way to help the environment is by not buying tobacco products. By doing this, it will positively affect the health of person and the environment indirectly.

Being in the vicinity of smoking harms the body, either being passive smoking or by actually smoking a cigarette. It affects every part of the body. The smoking ban is proposed to help out the individuals and protect them from harm. It is not created to have restrictions on individuals. It does not take away liberty and freedom of people's rights. If freedom is the biggest



concern, then everyone will have to consider the smoker's freedom to smoke but also the freedom of others to be free of secondhand smoke. That is regardless of whatever one thinks of the health effects of cigarette smoking. That can only be done by having the smoke ban and people carrying it through. If smokers want to smoke, they have the freedom to do it in their house and not in public areas. Some places have seen benefits of carrying out the smoking bans and some places are still in the process of passing the law. Places like airports and restaurants have seen restriction on smoking, but smoking cigarettes have not yet been banned in many places where it is causing an uprising. Nationwide smoke ban has seen a decrease in people smoking. A study shows that smoking has decreased by a large margin in England. More than two billion fewer cigarettes have been smoked and four hundred thousand people have quit the habit since the ban was enacted a year ago. Researchers believe that it will prevent forty thousand deaths over the next ten years alone in England (Laurence). England's smoking ban outlawed people to smoke in public spaces, which included pubs and restaurants. As of businesses, the smoke ban will have little effect on their business. Most of the businesses around the states already have separate places for smokers and non-smokers. Most of the businesses have been following the smoke ban with it actually being enacted. Most of the businesses have voluntarily regulating a separation between smokers and non-smokers.

It is very hard to control smoking in the public areas. But not until people start to take action, nothing is going to change and people are still going to be exposed to smoking in everyday life. It is a process that will take time and

people need to be patient. The pros in the smoke ban definitely outweigh the cons of smoking. Both sides need to be taken in consideration before any decisions are taken. The government will need to take this issue very seriously and make the right decision to pass the smoking ban and not stop dilatory of this issue. Tobacco is the second leading cause of death in the world. In which one in every ten person dies from some sort of contact with a tobacco product. A person does not have to be a smoker to do harm to their health. There are not many people who look at smoking from an environmentalist point of view. The smoke ban not only helps the society to be smoke free, but at the same time it will make the atmosphere cleaner and people can breathe without having any problems. Not only should the smoke ban be enacted in our state, but also around the world to save the environment, people from secondhand smoke and to protect the patriots who are being harmed from the silent killer.