

THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

A. D. S.

There is so much said about cancer these days, and with the American Cancer Society advocating a bill in California which would create a cancer committee having absolute control of everything pertaining to the treatment or diagnosis of cancer, it seems appropriate to print the following bulletin from the University of Wisconsin News Service on the effect of smoking in cancer of the lungs and also in heart disease.

U. W. News from the University of Wisconsin News Service Release: 3/21/57.

Madison, Wis.—A person's smoking habits are a "mileage ticket on his life," Dr. Alton Ochsner, head of the department of surgery at Tulane University Medical School, said Wednesday.

Dr. Ochsner predicted that life insurance companies will soon grant lower premium rates to persons who do not smoke because they live longer.

He spoke at a University of Wisconsin Medical School postgraduate course in general medicine.

Studies by the American Cancer Society show that the incidence of lung cancer is 400 per cent higher among smokers than non-smokers, Dr. Ochsner said.

But lung cancer does not seem to be the only disease linked with smoking, he added. These same studies show that the incidence of heart disease is 95 per cent higher and the rate of all cancers is 156 per cent higher among persons who smoke, he said.

The number of cases of lung cancer has jumped markedly in recent years, he said. In New York state alone lung cancer among men has increased 468 per cent during the past 20 years while all other cancers have increased only 2 per cent. Among women in New York lung cancer has increased 68 per cent while all other cancers have decreased 15 per cent.

Lung cancer is most often linked with cigarette smoking

while smoking a pipe or cigars may cause cancer of the lip and tongue, Dr. Ochsner said.

A man 50 years old who has smoked one package of cigarettes a day for the past 25 years has a 10 times greater chance of developing lung cancer than a man who has never smoked, he said.

The incidence of lung cancer directly parallels the rate of smoking, he said. A person who smokes six cigarettes a day, he said, is more likely to develop lung cancer than a person who smokes only three cigarettes, and a person who smokes a full package a day is more likely to develop cancer than the person who smokes only six.

"Of course, the person who does not smoke at all is least likely to develop lung cancer," the surgeon said.

Cancer of the lung is most prevalent in person between the ages of 50 and 70, Dr. Ochsner said. This type of cancer usually takes 25 years to develop and produce a noticeable effect, he explained.

"If the cancer-causing agent in tobacco—called '3, 4-benzpyrene'—is not willingly removed by the tobacco industry, tobacco may come under the same kind of federal control which now directs the use of morphine," Dr. Ochsner speculated. "But while morphine does have a medical advantage because it controls pain, there is absolutely no advantage in the use of tobacco other than for pleasure."

Editor's Note:

Would not the American Cancer Society accomplish more for the cause of cancer if, instead of getting legislation passed in California giving them absolute dictatorship over everything to do with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, they did something about the growing menace of cigarette smoking as a cause of cancer? The American Food and Drug men will prosecute some small concern, claiming that their product may be injurious to health, but do nothing about tobacco advertisements on billboards, in magazines, newspapers and over radio and television; so that our children are continually seeing and hearing of the wonders of the various kinds of cigarettes. Naturally they are anxious to try these cigarettes that are so

wonderful. These advertisements do not even mention what may be the ultimate results from smoking these fine cigarettes in later years, when smokers may be more prone to cancer of the lungs and heart trouble.

Would it not be gratifying if the American Cancer Society would use some of the millions that they are collecting to fight cancer, in fighting this great cause of the increase of the incidence of cancer—cigarette smoking? It may be that the cigarette and tobacco companies are contributing liberally towards the cancer funds and thus must be protected. Cigarette smoking used to be mainly an adult vice among men, but now it is more popular among women and young people. At the rate cancer is increasing and cigarette smoking is becoming more popular, the Cancer Society will need more than dictatorial powers over the diagnosis and treatment of cancer to accomplish any real results in the future. They should realize that other groups besides those under their control might have something of value in cancer cases, and that everyone not under their control is not necessarily what they like to label as quacks.

—*The Layman Speaks, Jan. '58*