

# Anti-smoking treatment may be hazardous to health

By Sue Doerfler

Not only is smoking dangerous to a person's health, but a treatment called rapid smoking, designed to help persons quit, also may be hazardous, according to John J. Horan, psychologist at the Division of Counseling and Education at Pennsylvania State University.

Participants in the rapid smoking program are required to inhale from their cigarettes every six seconds until they no longer are able to do so, Horan said. During each period, which usually lasts five to six minutes, they are able to smoke about four to five cigarettes, he said.

Horan has conducted two studies concerning the effects of the rapid smoking treatment. Six participants were observed during the eight sessions of the first study, and 30 persons were monitored in the second.

Horan said he has found as a result of the treatment, persons experience discomfort afterward and have changes in their heart rates.

He also is concerned with the dosage of nicotine that a person receives during rapid smoking, he said. During the last experiment, blood was drawn from the participants, and is being analyzed for nicotine level, he said.

**Hazardous or innocuous**

"We're still very concerned as to whether it (the treatment) is hazardous or innocuous," he said.

Horan said he began experimenting with the rapid smoking technique because he wanted to develop a treatment program that was 90 per cent successful.

"My definition of success is no smoking," he said. "It's not a temporary thing."



Ninety per cent success in a smoking treatment is ideal, he said, but fifty per cent is very good.

"More (other) smoking programs are ... failures," he said. From these treatments, 25 per cent of the participants stop smoking and a few months later, only 13 per cent have quit, he said.

"The only exception to this is the rapid

smoking treatment," he said. The success rate immediately following the sessions is about 100 per cent, he said, and 50 per cent after a few months.

**Effective technique**

"It's the most effective technique in the statistical sense," Horan said, but he questioned how effective it was if considered a hazard. He said that the more he stud-

ied the treatment the more concerned he became with the hazards.

"All over the country, people are using the technique," he said. They do not use as many precautions and are not as concerned with the dangers, he said.

Horan still is trying to develop a successful treatment program, and is experimenting with a "focused smoking" technique. Participants look at a blank wall and concentrate on the unpleasant aspects of smoking, such as what the cigarettes are doing to them, he said.

The University Health Center uses neither the rapid smoking nor the focused smoking methods, but a five-day technique which employs motivation methods, according to Garland Bare, health center M.D.

He gives students medical information about smoking hazards and a psychologist provides relaxation techniques, he said.

**Alternatives**

Alternatives to smoking such as drinking fruit juice, are offered so participants will be able to make it through the first five days, he said.

Awareness of smoking is brought to a conscious level, by requiring students to write down when they smoke and what their feelings are at the time, he said.

"The real success ... is if a person isn't smoking a long time later," he said. Most of the participants are not smoking one year after the treatment, he said.

The number of clinics depends on the student demand, Bare said. During the last three years, three groups have formed with about ten students participating in each. The next clinic will be scheduled when ten students show an interest, he said.

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