

[IMAGE]

Cigars Just as Dangerous as Cigarettes

Overwhelming evidence suggests that smoking contributes to numerous life-threatening conditions, yet cigar sales in the United States increased by nearly 50% from 1993-1997. Even more disturbing, cigars are advertised and often glamorized in the mass media. And the general perception is that cigars are safer than cigarettes, despite their similar associations with lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

A 25-year study involving nearly 18,000 men addressed this misconception by investigating the link between cigar smoking, cardiovascular disease and other major diseases. The study, which appeared in the June 10th, 1999 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, showed that cigar smokers were at higher risk for developing heart disease, COPD, or cancer of the lungs/throat than nonsmokers.

So don't believe the glamor and the hype, believe the warnings. Smoking, whether it be cigarettes, cigars or pipes, can threaten your life and the lives of your loved ones. If you're a current smoker who'd like to quit, or if you know of someone who's having trouble quitting, don't be afraid to ask your doctor for help.

Reference:

Iribarren C, Tekawa IS, Sidney S, et al. Effect of cigar smoking on the risk of cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer in men. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, June 10, 1999; Vol. 340, No. 23, pp1773-1780.

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