

Smoking and Women's Magazines, 2001 - 2002

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Executive Summary

Many women rely on magazines for information about health. Yet past studies of popular women's magazines (including studies by the American Council on Science and Health [ACSH]) have found little or no coverage of the serious health consequences of smoking, the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

ACSH's current survey examined the health and smoking-related coverage during 2001 and 2002 in 15 magazines (*Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Health*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Prevention*, *Reader's Digest*, *Redbook*, *Self*, *Shape*, *Vogue*, and *Woman's Day*). The survey evaluated various forms of smoking-related messages, including:

- articles primarily about smoking
- references that conveyed the risks of smoking or otherwise portrayed smoking negatively
- references that portrayed smoking in a positive light
- advertisements – both for cigarettes and by anti-smoking campaigns.

ACSH's survey revealed that the quantity of information about smoking hazards and smoking cessation continued to increase from past ACSH surveys, and many magazines sent strong and frequent anti-smoking messages. Some magazines used a variety of means to set an anti-smoking tone, for example by discussing the monetary cost or unattractiveness of smoking, or by featuring anti-smoking role models. Further, since cigarette companies have reduced the number of cigarette advertisements in magazines (particularly those with younger readership, under the terms of the Master Settlement Agreement between the tobacco industry and 46 state governments), readers were exposed to fewer messages promoting smoking (4.3 pages of ads per issue in 1999 and 2000 versus 1.5 pages per issue in the current survey).¹

¹ This figure only includes the 10 magazines included in both this survey and the 1999-2000 survey (*Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Self*, *Vogue*, and *Woman's Day*).

However, there was still room for improvement. It was still the case that only a small fraction of health articles (1.3%, 55 out of 4156) focused primarily on smoking cessation and prevention or on the risks of smoking (even while many magazines devoted much space to other serious health topics such as breast cancer, skin cancer, and obesity). Some magazines continued to ignore smoking-related information when it was relevant, downplayed the risks of smoking when they *were* mentioned, or even sent positive editorial messages about smoking to their readers (the magazines contained a total of 176 “pro-smoking mentions”). Additionally, even after the reduction in cigarette advertisements, readers were still exposed to 390 pages of advertisements that condoned or promoted smoking (contained in the 9 magazines in the sample that carried such ads). While magazines do not claim to be authoritative sources of health information and are not obligated to report the risks of smoking, they do a disservice to their readers by failing to cover adequately the dangers of smoking and by giving mixed messages about smoking.

Introduction

Many women read popular magazines for their coverage of topics such as beauty, relationships, and fashion, while others turn to them for health information. In fact, many Americans rely on magazines as a significant source of their information about health (Gerlach et al., 1997; Noll et al., 2001). Through their health coverage, magazines can play an important role in shaping readers' understanding of the seriousness and importance of various health issues, such as the enormous health toll of smoking.

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, estimated to cause over 440,000 deaths annually from 1995 through 1999 (USDHHS, 2004). While the Surgeon General (USDHHS, 2004, p. 25) has concluded that “smoking harms nearly every organ of the body,” several studies have shown that most smokers do not think of themselves as being at increased risk, even for some of the stronger and better-publicized risks, such as lung cancer and heart disease (Ayanian & Cleary, 1999; Moran et al., 2003). Studies of adolescents show they misunderstand the short-term and cumulative risks of smoking (Slovic, 2000) and underestimate the effects of smoking on longevity (Romer & Jameison, 2001). There is a gap between what public health experts know about smoking and what the public knows.

Tobacco use among women is a particularly troublesome public

health issue. Lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer death among women since 1987, with women's death rate from lung cancer up 600% since 1950, correlated with their increased smoking rates (USDHHS, 2001). Some research has suggested that women are more vulnerable to tobacco carcinogens than men, although this claim is not conclusive and is the subject of controversy (Patel et al., 2004). Approximately 24% of American females age 12 and above currently use tobacco (SAMHSA, 2004). Additionally, in recent decades, the rate of decline of smoking among women has been less than the rate of decline among men (USDHHS, 2001).

While smoking is a crucial health issue for women, past reviews (by both ACSH and others) of popular magazines' coverage of smoking indicate that the risks of smoking are omitted or downplayed, and that magazines have sent mixed messages to their readers about smoking. The American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) has evaluated the smoking-related coverage of popular women's magazines dating back to 1965 and has found a paucity of coverage of the health consequences of smoking, although coverage has steadily increased and improved over time (Dale, 1982²; Whelan 1992, 1995, and 1996; Maroney, 2001; and others). Other surveys of popular magazines, even through the late 1990s, found similar patterns (Kessler, 1989; Hoffman-Goetz et al., 1997; Sciacca & Antonucci, 2003). ACSH's most recent report, on coverage during 1999-2000 (Maroney, 2001), indicated that there was still much room for improvement in the smoking-related messages sent by women's magazines.

ACSH's current study evaluates a selection of women's magazines published in 2001 and 2002. The study underscores the need for readers to think critically about the health-related messages to which they are exposed. Additionally, by highlighting strengths and weaknesses in smoking-related messages in these magazines, this report may serve as a tool for magazine editors to improve the quality of their smoking-related coverage.

Methods

The survey covers a two-year period, from January 2001 to December 2002. A total of 15 magazines were analyzed. Ten of them – *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Redbook*, *Self*, *Vogue*, and *Woman's Day* – were included in ACSH's previous quantitative studies on this topic (Lukachko &

² Dale, 1982 examined the coverage by magazines dating back to 1965.

Table 1. **Readership and Median Age of Readers of 15 Magazines during Spring 2001 (Mediamark Research, Inc. in Papazian, 2002)**

Magazine	Total number of adult readers (000)	Of women readers (000)	Median age of adult readers
Cosmopolitan	17,107	14,222	32.4
Elle	4,548	4,053	32.4
Family Circle	22,264	20,051	48.0
Glamour	12,125	11,100	32.2
Good Housekeeping	25,214	21,876	46.7
Harper's Bazaar	2,309	1,989	36.5
Health	6,317	4,161	42.7
Ladies' Home Journal	14,936	13,950	48.5
Prevention	10,722	8,522	50.6
Reader's Digest	43,091	25,503	47.9
Redbook	11,028	10,118	42.0
Self	5,260	4,919	35.0
Shape	5,283	4,589	33.1
Vogue	10,249	8,909	33.9
Woman's Day	21,116	20,161	46.0

Whelan, 1999; Maroney, 2001) and in other ACSH surveys (Whelan, 1995; Whelan, 1996). The magazines were chosen for previous studies because of the variety of their respective audiences and their large numbers of female readers; they continue to have varying focuses of content, varying median ages of readership, and large readership among women (see Table 1). *Good Housekeeping*, *Health*, *Prevention*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Shape* were added to the current study. *Health*, *Prevention*, and *Shape* were added both because of their health-focused content and their large readership among women. While *Reader's Digest* is a general interest magazine, almost 60% of its readers are women and it had a higher number of female readers than any other magazine in the survey. With the second highest number of female readers in the survey, *Good Housekeeping* was also an important addition to the study. As early as

ACSH's 1982 and 1986 surveys, *Good Housekeeping* and *Reader's Digest* had some of the best coverage of smoking, and for decades neither has accepted cigarette advertisements.³ We were therefore particularly interested to study their current smoking-related content.

Among the 15 magazines included, 12 published 12 issues per year. *Health* published 10 issues per year (with January and February, as well as July and August, combined), *Family Circle* published 16 issues in 2001 and 15 issues in 2002 (two in February 2001, and two in April, in September, and in November of both years, and one during all other months), and *Woman's Day* published 17 issues per year (two in February, April, June, September, and November, and one during all other months). 372 out of 373 individual issues of these magazines from 2001 and 2002 were analyzed.⁴

For each magazine, ACSH counted the number of articles that focused primarily on health, categorizing them by length and primary topic. "Long articles" contained one or more full pages of text, while "short articles" contained less than one full page of text. "Long articles" with shorter related sub-sections of less than one page of text within them were counted only as one "long article." The articles were categorized under 29 different health subjects.

Each magazine was also evaluated for a variety of smoking-related content. "Cigarette ads" and "anti-smoking ads" were each counted by number of pages containing an advertisement; therefore, a two-page spread added 2 to the tally in its respective category (the few ads shorter than one page also added 1 to their category). "Anti-smoking ads" included advertisements whose messages were fully anti-smoking, such as ads by the American Legacy Foundation and ads about Philip Morris's "We Card" and "Youth Smoking Prevention" programs.⁵ The category also included advertisements that contained anti-smoking mentions, such as a page of a health-related advertising supplement containing a paragraph encouraging readers to quit smoking (each page with a mention counted as one "anti-smoking ad"). Cigarette advertisements (which included a Surgeon General's warning), advertisements for nicotine replacement therapies,⁶ and advertisements for medications (such as

³ They were not, however, included in the more recent ACSH studies in the 1990s.

⁴ An InfoTrac OneFile search for articles in the missing issue (*Family Circle* from February 1, 2001) did not reveal any anti-smoking articles.

⁵ Issues with anti-smoking advertising by cigarette companies are discussed in the "anti-smoking advertisements" section

⁶ ACSH decided not to include advertisements for nicotine replacement therapy because such ads do not discourage smoking and instead focus on encouraging the use of their product among people who have decided to quit.

oral contraceptives) that contained smoking information in their fine-print warnings were not included in the category of “anti-smoking advertisements.”

ACSH calculated the number of “anti-smoking articles,” articles that were completely or primarily about smoking prevention, cessation, or the detriments of smoking. Articles focusing on other tobacco-related topics, such as smokeless tobacco and the use of money from the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies, were not included in this count.⁷ ACSH also tabulated the number of “smoking mentions” in each magazine, adding up both “anti-smoking” and “pro-smoking” mentions (those deemed to be neutral were not added to the results). “Anti-smoking mentions” portrayed smoking as a negative activity and/or encouraged not smoking, for example, by discussing or identifying a risk of smoking, pointing out the stench of a cigarette smoke-filled room, mentioning smoking as an example of a bad habit, or mentioning that a celebrity or person trying to become healthier had quit. Mentions could be as short as a few words or as long as a few paragraphs within an article. The broader term “anti-smoking messages” encompasses both “anti-smoking articles” and “anti-smoking mentions.”

“Pro-smoking mentions” portrayed smoking in a positive light, such as linking smoking with glamour or sophistication, or with positive experiences or effects (such as weight loss). “Pro-smoking mentions” also included photographs and illustrations of people (usually celebrities or models) smoking or holding cigarettes. Images of smoking in the context of an article about quitting or the detrimental effects of smoking were not counted as “pro-smoking.” Likewise, otherwise “pro-smoking” mentions in the context of people talking about challenges that they surmounted while trying to quit (such as a woman saying how her cigarettes had always calmed her) were also not counted as “pro-smoking” due to their context.

While efforts were made to compare data collectors’ results to ensure consistency and resolve areas of subjectivity, we do recognize that some of the judgements made in evaluating the data remain subjective (such as “primary topics” of articles and whether a smoking-related mention is anti-smoking, pro-smoking, or neutral). Even though data collection in studies of this topic may not reflect a completely objective and precise “science,” we are confident that the results illustrate important issues in health coverage by women’s magazines.

⁷ *Reader's Digest* included two such long articles – one on smokeless tobacco (October 2002) and one on the misuse of tobacco settlement money (October 2001).

The methodology for advertisements and article characteristics (length and topic) are comparable to those in ACSH's 1999-2000 study. However, the current methodology for smoking-related mentions – both anti and pro – may have included mentions that were more indirect than in the past. Thus, such differences do not allow for direct comparison of the numbers of smoking-related mentions with the past study.

ACSH also attempted to contact editors of each magazine (a member of the health editorial staff, when possible) in order to get their perspective on the health coverage by their magazine, including comments on how they decide what health topics to cover and how much coverage smoking should receive in their magazines. While a minimum of two attempts were made to contact an editor from each magazine, an editor from only one magazine agreed to be interviewed. We therefore did not have enough information to include a discussion of editors' views in this survey.

Results and Analysis of Smoking-Related Messages

Smoking-related messages came in many forms, and the results and analysis are divided accordingly. The *quantity of editorial content* (Section I) was examined to gauge the general commitment of each magazine to covering various health issues, and to examine the proportion of such articles that focused on smoking. The *quality of editorial content* (Section II) can be broken down into strong and weak points in the magazines' editorial messages about smoking. The *advertising section* (Section III), in addition to discussing the presence of smoking-related advertisements, looks at recent relevant changes in advertising policies and campaigns.

I. Quantity of Editorial Content

1. Commitment to Health

Over the two year period, the fifteen magazines published a total of 4,156 health articles – 1,345 (32%) of which were long and 2,811 (68%) of which were short. While the majority of magazines published between 200 and 500 health articles over the two year period, totals ranged from a low of 28 health articles (in *Harper's Bazaar*) to a high of 913 health articles (in *Prevention*). Some magazines, such as *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Redbook*, also occasionally contained supplemental handbooks or guides about health and wellness. While each magazine published numerous articles

Table 2. **Number of Health Articles (Short or Long) for the Five Most Represented Health Topics, January 2001-December 2002**

Magazine	Total Health Articles	Nutrition	OB/GYN	Fitness	Diet	Mental Health
Cosmopolitan	154	0	71	3	16	8
Elle	158	25	27	24	9	14
Family Circle	301	31	13	20	32	15
Glamour	185	18	37	16	20	16
Good Housekeeping	202	15	15	1	16	7
Harper's Bazaar	28	4	2	2	1	3
Health	394	84	48	17	25	23
Ladies' Home Journal	210	26	16	10	10	17
Prevention	913	245	35	87	66	48
Reader's Digest	259	57	7	17	8	16
Redbook	197	14	72	4	19	15
Self	455	92	31	89	40	31
Shape	331	71	24	30	58	35
Vogue	33	4	5	7	0	3
Woman's Day	336	40	21	20	20	17
TOTAL	4156	726	424	347	340	268

on health-related topics, the focus and goals of each magazine differed.

Many of the articles were about the classic health topics of women's magazines, such as shedding unwanted pounds, getting in shape, and evaluating characteristics of different types of contraception. The most frequent article topics were nutrition (726 articles; 17% of all health articles), obstetrics/gynecology (424 articles; 10%), fitness (347 articles; 8%), diet (340 articles; 8%), and mental health (268 articles; 6%) (see Table 2).⁸

⁸ "Nutrition" articles were about supplements and foods for health, while "Diet" articles were geared towards weight loss. "Obstetrics/Gynecology" articles focused on issues such as contraception, fertility, sexually transmitted diseases, and healthy pregnancy. "Fitness" articles covered anything dealing with exercise and its health benefits. "Mental Health" articles covered topics such as depression, mental illness, and stress.

Especially in short articles, many magazines made statements based on a single recent study – however preliminary the findings – sometimes translating the implications into conclusive advice for its readers. While past ACSH studies noted that magazines tended to focus largely on minute, oddball, hypothetical risks (such as electromagnetic fields from refrigerators and alarm clocks [Whelan, 1992]), their coverage now includes more on major health risks and healthy lifestyle changes. Even while magazines often focused on a new and attention-grabbing health claim, over 400 articles focused on the serious problems of either heart disease or cancer, the two leading causes of death in the United States (Arias et al., 2003). Given that the health coverage in the magazines tended to focus on disease prevention, and because of the focus on cancer and heart disease in many of the articles, one might expect that articles and mentions about smoking and smoking cessation would be a significant part of the health coverage.

2. Health Coverage of Smoking

a. Overall Anti-Smoking Health Information and Articles on Lung Cancer

The magazines studied carried 55 anti-smoking articles – 13 long and 42 short in total (see Table 3). Therefore, 1.3% of all health articles in the 15 magazines were primarily about smoking prevention, cessation, or the detriments of smoking. For the 10 magazines included in both this study and the two previous ACSH studies (see beginning of “Methods” section), the percentage of health articles primarily about smoking has increased from .36% (over 10 months in 1997 and 1998) to .95% (over 13 months in 1999-2000) to 1.4% (over 24 months in 2001-2002). Furthermore, these 10 magazines contained no long anti-smoking articles in the 1999-2000 study, but 8 of their 28 anti-smoking articles in 2001-2002 (29%) were long, containing more than one full page of text. While the quantity of anti-smoking coverage has increased, the amount of health coverage about smoking is still proportionally very small considering the importance of the topic.

As in past ACSH surveys, lung cancer did not receive much attention by the magazines. While many of the anti-smoking articles did mention or discuss lung cancer, sometimes even mentioning that it is this cancer that causes the greatest number of deaths, only six health articles (out of over 4,000 in total) focused primarily on lung cancer (*Cosmopolitan* December 2002; *Family Circle* April 2, 2002; *Glamour* March 2002; *Good Housekeeping* April 2002; *Prevention* December 2001; *Woman’s Day* August 7, 2001). Of those six articles, two did not

Table 3. Number of Health-Related Articles, Smoking-Related Ads, and Smoking-Related Messages in 15 Magazines, January 2001 - December 2002

Magazine	Issues analyzed	Long health articles	Short health articles	Cigarette ads	Anti-smoking ads (number of which were by Philip Morris [PM])	Anti-smoking mentions	Total anti-smoking articles (number of which were long)	Anti-smoking messages	Total pro-smoking mentions (number of which were images)
Cosmopolitan	24	42	112	59	5	20	2 (1 long)	22	11 (6 images)
Elle	24	37	121	3	0	32	5 (1 long)	37	58 (30 images)
Family Circle	30	94	207	68	13 (8 PM)	21	7 (1 long)	28	0
Glamour	24	73	112	40	6	27	4 (1 long)	31	4 (3 images)
Good Housekeeping	24	68	134	0	9 (2 PM)	29	8 (2 long)	37	4 (3 images)
Harper's Bazaar	24	18	10	40	0	17	0	17	40 (17 images)
Health	20	101	293	0	0	38	2	40	0

Ladies' Home Journal	24	94	116	72	3 (2 PM)	40	0	40	2 (1 image)
Prevention	24	266	647	0	0	61	9 (1 long)	70	0
Reader's Digest	24	63	196	0	1 (1 PM)	37	5 (2 long)	42	6 (3 images)
Redbook	24	85	112	39	9 (2 PM)	15	1	16	2 (1 image)
Self	24	164	291	0	5 (1 PM)	71	7 (4 long)	78	0
Shape	24	98	233	0	0	19	3	22	1 (1 image)
Vogue	24	29	4	8	4 (1 PM)	16	0	16	48 (20 images)
Woman's Day	34	113	223	61	6 (4 PM)	67	2	69	0
TOTAL	372	1345	2811	390	61 (21 PM)	510	55 (13 long)	565	176 (85 images)

Note: The number of Philip Morris "anti-smoking advertisements" is indicated due to the questionable and controversial nature of such ads (see "background" section of "anti-smoking advertisements" section).

focus on the importance of avoiding cigarettes in order to prevent lung cancer (smoking accounts for close to 90% of all lung cancer deaths [American Cancer Society, 2004]). *Family Circle*'s "Lung Cancer Warning" was about radon and its link to lung cancer (mentioning in passing that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer) and *Cosmopolitan*'s "Battle Secondhand Smoke" encouraged readers to use vitamins to lower their risk of lung cancer due to secondhand smoke.⁹

While the magazines did not have many articles devoted entirely to smoking and/or lung cancer, they did have many shorter anti-smoking mentions. The sample contained a total of 510 anti-smoking mentions, approximately 2/3 of which were presented in the context of health articles. Therefore, an additional 265 health articles (6.4%) contained one or more anti-smoking mentions. While some of these mentions in health articles were extensive and focused on the consequences of smoking, some only used smoking as an example of an unhealthy habit or mentioned that somebody quit.

b. Distribution of Anti-Smoking Articles by Magazine Type

Contrary to what one might expect, the number of anti-smoking articles (and messages) did not always correlate with the type of magazine (i.e. – focusing on fashion, family/home, etc.) or number of general health articles in each magazine.¹⁰ *Family Circle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Prevention*, and *Self* each had 7 or more anti-smoking articles, while *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Vogue* each contained no anti-smoking articles. *Health* and *Shape*, two of the magazines ostensibly devoted primarily to health, did not contain *any* long anti-smoking articles among their combined total of 199 long health articles over the two-year period.

Three of the four health-focused magazines (*Health*, *Prevention*, and *Shape*) devoted less than 1% of their health articles to smoking. This lower proportion of smoking coverage in health-focused magazines versus general interest magazines is similar to Sciacca and Antonucci's (2003) findings for such magazines in 1996 through 1999. Although one may assume that some readers of health-oriented magazines already view not smoking as a given, those who read these magazines in the hopes of finding out the best ways to lead a healthier

⁹ However, an analysis of studies that have examined this claim has found that there is no evidence to support recommending the use of vitamins to prevent lung cancer in healthy people (Caraballoso et al., 2004).

¹⁰ See the "Discussion and Conclusions" section for more information on how coverage varied between magazines that carried cigarette advertisements versus those that did not.

lifestyle could be misguided. *Shape*, for example, carried only three short anti-smoking articles over two years and few additional mentions of the specific detriments of smoking. In contrast, in 2001 alone, *Shape* had four multiple-page articles on how stress and/or impatience can affect one's health and fertility.

Redbook, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar* had the fewest anti-smoking messages (articles plus mentions) (see Table 3). Of the scant anti-smoking coverage by these three magazines, *Redbook's* is particularly notable because the magazine seemed to be quite committed to health coverage, carrying a relatively large number of health articles (197) in comparison to *Harper's Bazaar's* 28 health articles and *Vogue's* 33 health articles. *Self*, *Prevention*, and *Woman's Day* carried the greatest number of anti-smoking messages (78, 70, and 69 respectively).

II. Quality of Editorial Content

1. Strengths of Smoking-Related Coverage

Even though a small proportion of total health articles focused on smoking, some of the magazines conveyed many strong messages about the negative consequences of smoking (although some information about quitting left room for improvement). Magazines used many different contexts, not just health articles, to point out various effects of smoking. Additionally, many of the magazines profiled or mentioned anti-smoking role models.

a. Smoking Mentioned in Connection with Many Harmful Effects

While some effects of smoking, such as lung cancer and emphysema, are more widely known, smoking causes widespread damage throughout the body (ACSH, 2003; USDHHS, 2004). The magazines in the survey collectively mentioned or discussed a relationship between smoking and a broad variety of harmful effects, including:¹¹

- Lung cancer (*Glamour* November 2001 and 2002; *Ladies' Home Journal* January 2001 and June 2002; *Prevention* December 2001; *Self* April 2001)
- Emphysema (COPD) (*Woman's Day* May 14, 2002; *Prevention* August 2001; *Self* June 2002)
- Heart disease (*Elle* September 2001; *Family Circle* November 20,

¹¹ The magazines listed for each of the effects are provided as examples and some of the lists are therefore not exclusive.

- 2001; *Glamour* November 2001; *Harper's Bazaar* July 2001; *Ladies' Home Journal* February and October 2001; *Prevention* November 2001; *Self* July 2002; *Woman's Day* June 26 and November 1, 2001, February 1 and 19, 2002, and others)
- Stroke (*Ladies' Home Journal* May 2002; *Prevention* October 2002; *Woman's Day* September 1, 2001)
 - Peripheral arterial disease (*Prevention* February and November 2002; *Reader's Digest* January 2002)
 - Cancers (colon, cervical, breast, and others) (*Elle* March 2001; *Family Circle* December 17, 2002; *Glamour* January 2002; *Self* April 2001; *Shape* February 2001; *Woman's Day* February 19, 2002)
 - Osteoporosis (*Glamour* May 2001; *Health* March 2002; *Prevention* September 2001; *Reader's Digest* October 2001; *Redbook* February 2001; *Woman's Day* October 9, 2001)
 - Asthma (*Woman's Day* June 26, 2001 and May 14, 2002)
 - Infertility (*Cosmopolitan* January 2002; *Elle* February and March 2002; *Glamour* February 2002; *Good Housekeeping* July 2001; *Health* December 2002; *Self* October 2001)
 - Vision problems (*Prevention* August 2002; *Woman's Day* May 14, 2002)
 - Complications during surgery (*Ladies' Home Journal* May 2002) and difficulty healing after surgery (*Family Circle* July 16, 2002)
 - Sleep Disturbance (*Cosmopolitan* June 2002; *Good Housekeeping* September 2001; *Redbook* April 2001)
 - Wrinkles (*Cosmopolitan* April 2002; *Elle* July 2001; *Family Circle* September 1, 2001; *Glamour* April 2001 and September 2002; *Harper's Bazaar* October 2002; *Prevention* April 2002; *Shape* November 2002; *Vogue* October 2001; *Woman's Day* September 18, 2001)
 - Reflux and heartburn (*Health* October 2001; *Ladies' Home Journal* May 2001; *Prevention* March 2002)
 - Erectile dysfunction (*Family Circle* April 23, 2002; *Prevention* February 2001 and April 2002)
 - Decreased sexual arousal (*Glamour* May 2002) and the ability to achieve orgasm (*Self* March 2001)
 - Yeast infections (*Self* October 2002)
 - Gray hair (*Cosmopolitan* December 2001)

While many magazines did draw attention to the various health effects of smoking, some of their reporting styles left room for improvement. For example, writers could have cited their sources for all smoking-related claims (and all health-related claims, for that matter) and referred readers to resources where they could find additional

relevant information, especially when the topic of smoking cessation was mentioned.

b. Quality and Strength of Some Anti-Smoking Information

Information on the Hazards of Smoking

Some magazines made very strong and informative statements about smoking, working to place the risks of smoking in perspective. For example, many of the magazines (such as *Glamour* November 2001 and 2002; *Ladies' Home Journal* January 2001; *Prevention* December 2001; *Self* April 2001; *Woman's Day* August 7, 2001) specifically mentioned that lung cancer was the number one cause of cancer-related death among women (and included information on the role of smoking). Not smoking or quitting smoking were discussed as being among the best ways to: be a perfect patient (*Self* October 2001), radically improve general health (*Elle* March 2001; *Glamour* October 2002; *Health* December 2002; *Prevention* August 2001), cut cancer risk (*Self* April 2001), and reduce the risk for heart attack (*Family Circle* November 20, 2001). *Woman's Day* had many articles on heart disease and related risk factors such as high cholesterol; eleven of these articles mentioned the role of smoking as a risk factor and/or discussed smoking as a habit that had put somebody at risk, sometimes urging readers to quit (the magazine, however, offered little in the way of advice and resources for quitting).

Some magazines specifically worked to debunk myths about smoking – for example, *Family Circle* (April 23, 2002; December 17, 2002), *Glamour* (March and November 2002), and *Good Housekeeping* (April and June 2002) warned against the risks of light cigarettes or smoking “only” a few cigarettes, indicating that there is no safe way to smoke. Others mentioned the health risks of smoking in order to keep other health-related claims in perspective. *Elle* (December 2001) mentioned smokers' very highly elevated lung cancer risk in contrast to the extremely slight increased risk of death that one study found to be associated with questioning one's faith, and *Prevention* (February 2002 – in a speculative article on anti-aging supplements) pointed out in a sidebar that not smoking is a scientifically *proven* way to promote longevity.

Information on Smoking and Cessation and Prevention

Most of the long anti-smoking articles provided advice and information about quitting smoking. In fact, 5 of the 13 long anti-smoking articles were completely focused on helping readers to quit smoking (*Cosmopolitan* January 2002, *Family Circle* November 19, 2002,

Glamour November 2002, *Good Housekeeping* June 2002, *Self* March 2002¹²). These articles often approached the topic of quitting through a variety of methods, using related sidebars with comparisons of nicotine replacement therapies, testimonies by people who successfully quit, or steps to take in order to curb cigarette cravings while quitting. Three additional long anti-smoking articles focused on personal stories by or about people who had struggled to quit (*Elle* January 2001, *Self* January 2001, *Self* August 2002), and 2 additional long articles detailed steps on how to quit after primarily discussing how smoking affected women (*Reader's Digest* July 2001, *Self* January 2001). Another long article focused on smoking prevention and cessation among youth (*Good Housekeeping* November 2002).

In some magazines that did devote entire articles to smoking cessation, the articles omitted relevant information. For example, *Cosmopolitan's* "Guide to Kicking Butts" (January 2002) was mainly devoted to rating quit methods. The six methods mentioned were: going "cold turkey," hypnosis, and four different methods involving nicotine replacement therapy and/or pharmaceuticals. Noticeably absent was any mention of counseling, support groups, or other methods that have been proven to help people quit smoking by addressing motivations and encouraging the development of the psychological coping skills necessary to quit (Dunston, 2003). *Self's* "I Quit!" challenge had little information about cessation in the second and third parts of the three-month series. Both of these parts occupied about 1/4 of a page within a larger health section. For example, the third part (in May 2002) devoted a few sentences to overcoming relapse, with just as much space devoted to reminding readers about the prizes that they may win from having signed up online for the Smoking Challenge. While these magazines can be commended for devoting significant space to discussing smoking cessation, they seem to have gone only halfway in their attempts to convey information about cessation.

c. Variety of Messages in Anti-Smoking Mentions

Messages deemed to be anti-smoking were not limited to health warnings about smoking and contained a variety of comments that reinforced a negative tone towards smoking. While many of these mentions were relatively subtle, they discouraged the behavior and may be helpful in further motivating women to quit, or not start, smoking (especial-

¹² In ACSH's report published in 2001, we encouraged *Self* to include a smoking cessation challenge similar to their fitness- and nutrition-focused "Self Challenge." Interestingly, in 2002, *Self* introduced an "I Quit!" challenge modeled after its "Self Challenge."

ly as some readers may tune out direct warnings about the health effects of smoking). Of the anti-smoking mentions, 167 (approximately 1/3) were not in the context of health articles.¹³

Anti-smoking mentions came up in a wide variety of contexts. For example, when discussing ways to save money, both *Prevention* (February 2001) and *Woman's Day* (July 17, 2001) mentioned smoking as an expensive habit. In their humor section, *Reader's Digest* published two jokes with messages about the health effects of smoking (October 2001, September 2002). In both 2001 and 2002, *Self* put the Great American Smokeout¹⁴ on its November calendar. *Elle* (August 2001) mentioned that a chef adapted his cooking because his clientele of smokers had sensory impairment. In *Cosmopolitan* (March 2002), a stylist who was dressing a model lamented that the model “would not stop smoking” through the entire photo shoot and that the model’s dress therefore caught on fire and was destroyed.

Some mentions (particularly in *Glamour* and *Cosmopolitan*) portrayed smoking as unglamorous and unsexy, which is notable because of the preponderance of messages to the contrary in past surveys (as well as the current one, which will be discussed later). Smoking was also twice mentioned as unfashionable, with a caption saying “the cigarette as accessory is always a don’t” under a photograph of a smoking musician (*Glamour* October 2002) and a clothing designer mentioning that the “worst accessory” was “cigarettes and the idea that it’s fashionable for women to smoke” (*Glamour* December 2002). In a few magazines, men mentioned smoking as unsexy or as a choice for biggest “turn-off” on a first date (*Cosmopolitan* November 2002, *Glamour* March 2002, *Glamour* September 2002), and women indicated that a man’s smoking habit had made him unattractive (*Cosmopolitan* June 2001) or that their own smoking habit had been the reason that a boyfriend had ended their relationship (*Cosmopolitan* September 2001).

d. Anti-smoking Role Models

By drawing attention to the issue of smoking cessation and prevention, anti-smoking role models may help to influence magazine readers’ perceptions of the norms related to smoking. In particular, anti-smoking models and celebrities can challenge the belief that smoking enhances one’s image, a factor which puts adolescents at risk for smoking (USDHHS, 2001).

¹³ However, some of those delved into the health effects of smoking even though the article did not primarily discuss health, just as some of the mentions in health articles did not directly warn about the health risks of smoking.

¹⁴ The American Cancer Society promotes the Great American Smokeout every year as a day for smokers to try to quit smoking, at least for one day.

Anti-smoking role models were present in many of the magazines and were mentioned in a variety of contexts. Two of *Self's* long anti-smoking articles (January 2001, August 2002) primarily discussed the struggles of actresses to quit smoking. A few other magazines mentioned or discussed the fact that celebrities had quit or were trying to quit smoking (for example, *Harper's Bazaar* August 2002, *Ladies' Home Journal* July 2002, *Redbook* June 2002).

Most notably, the majority of magazines (9 out of 15) either mentioned or featured model and former smoker Christy Turlington as an anti-smoking advocate. Five short anti-smoking articles focused on her (*Glamour* April 2001 and November 2001; *Prevention* December 2001; *Shape* June 2001 and November 2001). Some magazines contained relatively brief mentions of her anti-smoking campaign in the context of general articles about her (for example, *Vogue* October 2002, *Elle* March 2002), while other mentions discussed her experiences and anti-smoking work in greater detail. *Redbook* (October 2001), for example, featured her as a "Mover and Shaker of 2001" because of her work helping to "challenge the myth of the glamorous smoker."

Anti-smoking messages involving Turlington were present in all 6 magazines with the fewest health articles, as well as the 5 magazines with the fewest anti-smoking messages. Her anti-smoking presence in these magazines, which were in general least committed to publishing health and/or anti-smoking materials, indicates how celebrities who are public about a cause can have a broad reach and appeal with their message.

2. Shortcomings and Failures of Smoking-Related Coverage

Aside from having a low quantity of information about smoking, some magazine coverage had other weaknesses. Magazines did not mention smoking even in relevant contexts, downplayed the risks of smoking, and sent pro-smoking messages to their readers through their editorial comments and images.

a. Missed Opportunities and Neglecting the Role of Smoking in Tobacco-Related Health Problems

As smoking increases the risk for a variety of cancers and many other health problems, and also plays a role in cosmetic problems with skin and teeth, there are ample opportunities and contexts for women's magazines to discuss the detriments of smoking. While the risks of smoking were discussed in relation to many different detrimental effects, mentions and discussions of smoking seemed to be absent from

some articles and sections of magazines.

For example, *Prevention's* long article titled "Cut Your Cancer Risk As Much As 90%" (August 2001) focused on the variety of lifestyle changes that can help prevent different types of cancer, yet did not mention smoking. *Glamour's* long article, "A Smiler's Guide to Gorgeous Teeth" (March 2002), gave many tips to their readers about how to have a whiter-looking smile, such as eating apples, avoiding foods such as red wine, and bleaching one's teeth, but did not touch upon tobacco as a tooth-stainer. *Redbook's* "How to Stay Healthy" (November 2001) listed and discussed many ways to boost the immune system and avoid colds and the flu – such as eating foods rich in antioxidants, listening to music, avoiding procrastination, and sharing secrets. While some of the claims were based on only one study, the article ignored smoking, a strong immune system compromiser (ACSH, 2003). These omissions might be more understandable if those hazards of smoking were frequently discussed elsewhere in the magazines, but in most cases, they were not.

Some magazines (*Redbook*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Glamour*, and *Ladies' Home Journal*) had issues containing supplemental handbooks or guides on general health and wellness. Not one of them contained any articles on lung cancer, smoking or smoking cessation. Although *Redbook's* "Medbook" supplement (July 2001) informed readers that they should learn about their "largest cancer risk" by reading about "five key [cancer] risk factors you must know about," the article that it referred to was about skin cancer and the section had no mention of smoking. Skin cancer is certainly an important topic to discuss, and the topic was featured again in a long *Redbook* (December 2001) article. However, the magazine's seeming concern over their readers' largest cancer risks and risk factors did not translate into concern about lung cancer and smoking, which received only a couple of passing mentions over two years.

A few magazines regularly contained articles or sections on parenting and/or children's health (*Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Woman's Day*, *Redbook*). However, only *Good Housekeeping* discussed smoking and smoking prevention among youth, devoting an entire long article to the topic (November 2002). *Family Circle* had many articles on children's health, including multiple-page articles about protecting children from much more uncommon dangers such as amusement park rides (September 1, 2001) and rock concerts (November 1, 2001), yet did not even mention protecting children from smoking or the well-documented effects of environmental tobacco smoke on children. Given that daily more than 5,000 Americans under the age of 18 smoke their first cigarette and about 2,000 will

become daily smokers (SAHMSA, 2003), tobacco use and prevention among adolescents is a crucial children's health issue. Surely, even if magazine editors do not want to lecture their readers by telling them about the risks of smoking and urging them to quit, those with content on children's health and parenting can still offer parents advice on how to help their children stop or not start smoking.

b. Downplaying and De-emphasizing the Hazards of Smoking

In some cases, even when magazines chose to mention smoking as a harmful activity, they downplayed or deemphasized the role of smoking as a cause of disease. For example, in the article "Death by Dust," *Health* (June 2002) devoted approximately five pages of text to warning readers about how various particles in polluted air cause lung disease and "surges in heart attacks." The text of the article itself did not mention smoking – the major cause of a variety of respiratory problems and heart disease. In a sidebar offering tips that "experts recommend to benefit your lungs and heart – and the environment," the magazine advised readers to take measures such as turning on a kitchen vent while cooking and upgrading one's vacuum cleaner, and also advised staying away from cigarette smoke. By sandwiching this anti-smoking information in between such measures and not indicating its relative importance, the article did not give smoking the proper attention as a major contributor to the very heart and lung problems about which it warned.

At least two magazines made unscientific claims that downplayed the effects of smoking. In "Overeating: The New Smoking," *Prevention* (August 2002) informed its readers that, "shaping up your eating habits can cut your risk of dying from these cancers just as much as quitting smoking: breast, colon, lung, throat, stomach, uterus, and, possibly, prostate and pancreas." While a few of these claims are plausible, the article's claim about lung cancer and throat cancer are baseless. The article attributed these claims to the American Cancer Society, but it did not cite a specific person or publication, and it is difficult to imagine the ACS making such a claim. A co-author of the article was contacted but did not answer requests for information about the source for the article.¹⁵ In a beauty advice article, *Harper's Bazaar* (October 2002)

¹⁵ Based on other information attributed to the ACS in the article, it is possible that the source for the article was "The Complete Guide – Nutrition and Physical Activity" (available at http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_3_2X_Diet_and_Activity_Factors_That_Affect_Risks.asp). However, this source clearly indicates that tobacco smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer and does not directly compare risk reduction from changes in eating habits and smoking cessation for many other cancers.

stated strongly that “the best beauty tip is to stop smoking,” explaining that smoking turns skin gray and wrinkled. However, the article then stated, “Fortunately, once a woman stops smoking, her complexion is completely different.” While the article made it sound as if these effects will go away automatically and overnight, past heavy or long-time smokers still exhibit more facial wrinkling than those who have never smoked (Koh et al., 2002).

A few magazines equated various alleged health threats to the risks of smoking, which may act to obscure the dangers of smoking. Readers were told that a stressful job (*Ladies’ Home Journal* November 2001) and not drinking enough¹⁶ water (*Prevention* November 2002) are or may be as harmful to one’s heart as smoking. Other magazines mentioned that chronic sleeping pill use (*Vogue* November 2001) and the smoke from incense (*Health* November 2001) were as harmful for one’s health as smoking. By using smoking as the paradigm of an unhealthy behavior, the magazines underscore the harm caused by the activity. However, when magazines repeatedly equate other risks to the risks of smoking based on only one study or preliminary claim, readers’ perceptions of the seriousness of the consequences of smoking may be diminished. After all, it may seem, just about any activity may be as harmful as (or more harmful than) smoking.

c. Abundance of Pro-Smoking Mentions and Role Models

By associating smoking with glamour, sophistication, and attractiveness, as well as describing smoking as an activity done for its positive effects, magazines glorify a deadly activity and obscure the overwhelmingly detrimental effects of smoking. Over 2001 and 2002, the magazine sample carried 176 pro-smoking mentions, 85 of which were photographs or illustrations (many of them of celebrities) (see Table 3).

Over 80% of all pro-smoking mentions were published in only three of the magazines - *Elle* (58 mentions), *Vogue* (48 mentions) and *Harper’s Bazaar* (40 mentions), the three magazines whose content focused mainly on fashion. In ACSH’s 1999-2000 survey, the same magazines also contained the large majority of all pro-smoking mentions. However even some magazines with relatively good anti-smoking coverage published pro-smoking mentions; ten of the fifteen magazines had at least one pro-smoking mention.

Pro-smoking mentions took a variety of forms – for example, describing smoking as a “rock star quality” (*Vogue* October 2002), as an activity taken up for stress relief by people who had never smoked or

¹⁶ Two or fewer glasses of water daily as opposed to five or more daily.

had not smoked in years (*Elle* February 2001, *Harper's Bazaar* May 2002), as a method that people have tried in order to lose weight (*Redbook* September 2002, *Elle* February 2002), and as an activity done by someone feeling "truly indulgent" (*Vogue* March 2001). *Glamour* (August 2001) featured a picture of an attractive woman with a cigarette in her mouth, surrounded by hands of men who were all trying to light her cigarette. In *Vogue* (January 2001), an article discussing the Yves Saint Laurent (YSL) cigarette case handbag noted that one non-smoker "purred," "Did you see that bag? It's so cool it almost makes me want to smoke" and that the creative director of YSL said, "The YSL woman smokes. She smokes! She drinks! She has sex! She lives!"

The December 2001 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* contained two articles with particularly glaring pro-smoking mentions. The first was on model Sophie Dahl using organic and natural products for a day (at the magazine's request). Ironically, as part of her seemingly "more healthful" day, she passes up an inviting croissant for breakfast, instead opting for an "additive-free" cigarette¹⁷ and a cup of exotic tea. Later, while standing in a beautiful community garden, she states that, "The only thing missing from this scene is a deliciously toxic, far more satisfying Marlboro Light." This statement was highlighted by the editor, written a second time in large letters in the middle of the article. A second article, about actress Anjelica Houston, informs readers that the actress loves cigarettes, later quoting her as saying that cigarettes have been her "best friend since [she] was a teenager," and after being "bitterly depressed" while giving up cigarettes for some time, she is now smoking again and is "happy as a beaver." While pro-smoking mentions would be more understandable if they were offset or outweighed by realistic messages about smoking that portrayed the activity negatively, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Vogue* all had more pro-smoking mentions than anti-smoking messages in 2001 and 2002.

III. Advertising

As advertisements typically occupy many pages of popular magazines, they contain a significant number of the messages that readers will receive regarding various products and lifestyle issues. Messages about smoking are no exception; in total, the sample of magazines contained over 400 pages of smoking-related advertisements, including both cigarette ads and anti-smoking ads.

¹⁷ There is no scientific evidence that additive-free cigarettes are safer than other cigarettes, and they may in fact cause more harm (Malson et al., 2002).

1. Cigarette Advertisements

a. Background

Cigarette Advertisements and Women's Magazines

Like pro-smoking mentions, cigarette advertisements can also conflict with and undermine magazines' anti-smoking content. In general, cigarette advertisements link smoking with positive qualities and images, and cigarette ads aimed at females in particular have promoted smoking as being associated with independence, attractiveness, sophistication, and athleticism (USDHHS, 2001). A recent review of nine studies concluded that tobacco advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will begin smoking (Lovato et al., 2004), but some possible ways that cigarette advertisements may increase adult smoking have received less public attention (Warner, 2000).

Aside from sending direct messages condoning or glorifying smoking, the advertisements may have broader effects on the content of a magazine; magazines' acceptance of cigarette advertisements has been associated with less coverage of the hazards of smoking, particularly for magazines directed towards women (Kessler, 1989; Warner et al., 1992). In fact, ACSH's original interest in women's magazines and smoking coverage was sparked by ACSH president Dr. Elizabeth Whelan's experiences of having smoking-related content from her health articles in women's magazines routinely edited out during the 1970s. Implicitly or sometimes explicitly, her articles were rejected or edited due to the magazines' dependence on revenue from cigarette advertisers (Whelan, 1984). Economically, it makes sense that magazines with many cigarette ads would need to avoid deriding tobacco and annoying their major advertisers.

Changes in the Presence of Cigarette Ads in Magazines

Significant changes in tobacco marketing that occurred shortly before or during 2001 and 2002 foreshadowed a change in the presence of advertising in women's magazines. The Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) of 1998 between tobacco companies and 46 states imposed numerous restrictions on tobacco marketing, including prohibiting advertising and marketing that directly or indirectly targeted youth.¹⁸ However, it did not spell out the criteria to be used in order to

¹⁸ Section III(a) of the MSA states: "No Participating Manufacturer may take any action, directly or indirectly, to target Youth within any Settling State in the advertising, promotion, or marketing of Tobacco Products, or take any action the primary purpose of which is to initiate, maintain or increase the incidence of Youth smoking within any Settling State." (MSA, 1998)

determine which magazines were off limits, and the standards remained controversial.

Enforcement of the MSA's youth targeting prohibition has been difficult, but vigorous pursuit of the issue by some states' Attorneys General resulted in changes in advertising practices. In 1999, these Attorneys General noted that the number of cigarette ads in magazines with high youth readership had actually increased considerably, despite the MSA prohibitions (Lieberman, 2004). They contacted the major tobacco companies about their compliance with the MSA, and three of the four major companies agreed to change their policies. In May 2000, Philip Morris agreed to pull advertisements from magazines with more than 2 million readers under 18 or with more than 15% teen readership (using the definition of significant youth readership proposed by the FDA in 1996 [Regulations Restricting..., 1996]). The change took effect in late 2000 and affected five magazines in this survey (*Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, *Self*, and *Vogue*). Brown & Williamson and Lorillard decided to place advertisements only in magazines with youth readership of less than 15% and 18%, respectively (Lieberman, 2004).

R.J. Reynolds Company, however, lowered its advertising threshold to 33 1/3% youth readership¹⁹ after notification of the California Attorney General's intent to sue, and then to 25% youth readership in March 2001 (announcing the decision on the same day that they were sued for targeting youth with advertisements) (*People v. Reynolds*, 2002). In 2002, the lawsuit fined R.J. Reynolds Company for violating the MSA by continuing to target youth. Additionally, the lawsuit applied the MSA's prohibition against targeting youth to require the company to take further steps to "reduce Youth exposure to RJR tobacco advertising to a level significantly lower than the level of exposure to targeted groups of adult smokers" (*People v. Reynolds*, 2002).

Expenditures on marketing and promotion by six major United States cigarette manufacturers demonstrate the general shift away from promoting cigarettes through magazine advertisements. The companies' spending on magazine advertisements went from \$377.4 million in 1999 (4.6% of total advertising and promotion expenditures) down to \$106.9 million in 2002 (0.9% of total advertising and promotion expenditures) (Federal Trade Commission, 2004). In contrast, when spending on cigarette advertisements in magazines peaked in 1984, the companies spent about 20% (\$425.9 million) of their total advertising and promotional money on magazine ads (FTC, 2004). However, while the

¹⁹ Effectively cutting out advertising from only one magazine (*People v. Reynolds*, 2002).

Table 4. **Pages of Cigarette Advertisements Per Magazine Issue in Current and Past ACSH Reports**

Magazine	May-Sep. 1997 and May-Sep. 1998 (average over 10 months)	Aug. 1999-Aug. 2000 (average over 13 months)	Jan. 2001-Dec. 2002 (average over 24 months)	Change in Cigarette Ad Pages Per Issue from 1999-2000 to 2001-2002
Cosmopolitan	6.1	9.8	2.5	- 75%
Elle	2.8	4.6	0.1	- 97%
Family Circle	0.9	1.3	2.3	+ 75%
Glamour	5.5	8.8	1.7	- 81%
Harper's				
Bazaar	0.6	3.2	1.7	- 48%
Ladies Home Journal	1.7	3.3	3.0	- 9%
Redbook	2.7	3.0	1.6	- 46%
Self	1.1	0.9	0	(- 100%)
Vogue	5.6	6.5	0.3	- 95%
Woman's Day	2.0	2.4	1.8	- 26%
WEIGHTED AVERAGE	2.9	4.3	1.5	- 64%

- *Good Housekeeping, Health, Prevention, Reader's Digest, and Shape* were not studied in the previous 2 reports.
- Page per issue data is rounded for presentation while percentage calculations use data that has not been rounded.

public is now exposed to fewer cigarette ads in magazines, cigarette companies have actually increased their overall expenditures on advertising and promotion from \$8.2 billion in 1999 to an all-time high²⁰ of \$12.5 billion in 2002 (focusing more on promotion through promotional allowances²¹ and retail value added²²) (FTC, 2004).

²⁰ Current FTC data only reports information up to 2002.

²¹ Such as discounts to retailers and wholesalers to pass on to consumers, and payments to retailers and others to facilitate cigarette sales, for example, through prominent in-store displays.

²² Distributing bonus items such as cigarettes or other products with the purchase of cigarettes

Table 5. Total Pages of Cigarette Advertisements Per Year in 1981 and 2001

Magazine	1981 (Whelan, 1984)	2001
Cosmopolitan	198.8	33
Family Circle	194.2	31
Glamour	149.2	26
Harper's Bazaar	68.4	28
Ladies' Home Journal	162.3	37
Redbook	183.1	16
Self	79.2	0
Vogue	110.0	3
Woman's Day	166.6	36
TOTAL	1311.8	210

- Whelan, 1984 included fractions of pages, whereas data for 2001 counted the few ads of less than 1 page as 1. Therefore, the data slightly underestimates the difference in pages between the 2 years.

b. Results and Analysis

Over two years, the magazines carried a total of 390 pages of cigarette advertisements (see Table 3). The majority of pages (237, 61%) were for cigarettes by Philip Morris, 15% (57) were for cigarettes by Brown & Williamson, 12% (47) were for cigarettes by R.J. Reynolds, and 7% (29) were for cigarettes by Lorillard.²³ Six of the magazines (*Good Housekeeping*, *Health*, *Prevention*, *Reader's Digest*, *Self*, and *Shape*), including all 5 that were new to this study, did not have any cigarette advertisements.

The 10 magazines in this study that were also examined in recent ACSH studies had an average of 1.5 pages of cigarette ads per issue over 2001-2002. In contrast, in the 1999-2000 study, the same 10 magazines had an average of 4.3 pages of cigarette advertisements per issue, and in the 1997-1998 survey, they had an average of 2.9 pages per issue (see Table 4). Since the 1999-2000 study, there has been a considerable reduction in the number of cigarette ads per issue in most of the magazines. To keep this recent change in perspective, it is important to note

²³ The remaining pages of ads were by Vector Tobacco (18, 5%) and Natural American Spirit (2, 0.5%).

the even larger change over the span of two decades: from 1981 (Whelan, 1984) to 2001, cigarette advertising in the nine magazines with data for both years shrank from more than 1,300 pages to 210 pages (approximately an 85% reduction) (see Table 5).

The reduction in magazine cigarette advertising between the 1999-2000 study and the current study seems to have affected the magazines with younger adult readership the most. Among all nine magazines carrying cigarette ads in both this survey and ACSH's previous (1999-2000) survey, the percent of reduction/change in average cigarette ad pages per issue was positively correlated with median ages of adult readership (correlation of 0.85) (see Table 4). In both prior studies, *Glamour*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Vogue*, whose median age of adult readership is relatively young (see Table 1), contained the highest average numbers of cigarette ad pages per issue. From the 1999-2000 to 2001-2002 surveys, the decrease in average number of cigarette ad pages for these three magazines was dramatic – 9.8 to 2.5 for *Cosmopolitan*, 8.8 to 1.7 for *Glamour*, and 6.5 to 0.3 for *Vogue*. On the other hand, pages of cigarette advertisements in family-oriented and seemingly “wholesome” magazines declined the least; *Family Circle* had an increase in cigarette ad pages (1.3 to 2.3 on average per issue), and both *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Woman's Day* had only very modest declines in their average numbers of cigarette ad pages per issue (9% and 26% respectively).

2. Anti-Smoking Advertisements

a. Background

Anti-smoking advertisements began appearing in ACSH's 1999-2000 survey of women's magazines. Since then, anti-smoking advertisement campaigns have become more prominent in magazines popular among women. In 2002, the American Legacy Foundation began a print and television advertisement campaign featuring women suffering from smoking-related illnesses. The print ads showed a photograph of a stern-faced or crying woman, with the text of a few personal handwritten parting notes to family members, friends, and/or cigarette companies.

Cigarette companies themselves are, ironically, another major source of anti-smoking advertisements. According to Landman et al. (2002), youth smoking prevention programs by cigarette companies began in the United States in the 1980s in order to forestall legislation that would regulate the tobacco industry. The MSA required cigarette manufacturers to devote resources to youth smoking prevention, and in

1999, Philip Morris began an advertising campaign with the message “Talk to your kids about not smoking. They’ll listen.”

The actual intent and effects of anti-smoking advertising by cigarette companies is questionable; some critics (reacting to tobacco company documents) accuse cigarette company youth smoking prevention advertisements of shifting blame away from cigarette companies and working to gain credibility and legal protection for the industry (Landman et al., 2002). “We Card” advertisements in particular, which mention keeping youth from smoking and were part of a general Philip Morris campaign discussing their socially conscious work, are oriented towards promoting the image of Philip Morris. However, an analysis of the effects of Philip Morris’s countermarketing is beyond the scope of this paper, and the ads in question are categorized as “anti-smoking advertisements” because of their messages against youth smoking.²⁴

b. Results and Analysis

Over 2001 and 2002, the fifteen magazines contained a total of 61 pages of anti-smoking advertisements (see Table 3). The largest numbers of pages of anti-smoking advertisements were by the American Legacy Foundation (28 pages) and Philip Morris (21 pages; including “Talk. They’ll listen.” and “We Card” advertisements). Most of the rest of the advertisements were by organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Academy of Family Physicians, as well as government agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services. In the 1999-2000 survey, the 10 magazines that were also included in the current survey had carried a total of only 3 pages of anti-smoking advertisements over a period of 13 months. The numbers increased greatly in 2001 and 2002: the same 10 magazines carried 51 pages of anti-smoking advertisements.

Because of both the decline in cigarette advertisements and the increase in anti-smoking advertisements, the ratio of pages of cigarette advertisements to pages of anti-smoking advertisements in these ten magazines changed from 193 to 1 in 1999-2000 to 7.6 to 1 in 2001-2002. Overall (including the 5 magazines added to this survey – all of which had no cigarette ads), there were 6.4 pages of cigarette ads for every page of anti-smoking ads in the sample of magazines. While there are many more anti-smoking advertisements than in the past, these ads are still considerably outnumbered by cigarette adver-

²⁴ Table 3, however, singles out the number of “anti-smoking ads” by Philip Morris so as to differentiate them from other “anti-smoking ads.” Because these ads were categorized as “anti-smoking” in ACSH’s 1999-2000 study, categorizing them as such in the current study allows for comparison between studies.

tisements and may have trouble competing for the attention of magazine readers.

Discussion and Conclusions

The quality and quantity of coverage of smoking and smoking cessation by women's magazines has steadily improved since ACSH's first reports in the 1980s, and some magazines in this survey sent abundant and strong anti-smoking statements to their readers. However, even while focusing on a wide variety of health topics, some magazines still did not give substantial information about the dangers of smoking or downplayed what information they did give. Lung cancer, the top cancer killer of women, received surprisingly little attention by magazines. Especially given the influence that magazines may have over readers' perceptions about healthy behaviors, it is disappointing that some magazines have downplayed the risks of smoking or omitted mentioning them when relevant, and that some even had editorial messages that promote smoking.

The 9 magazines that carried cigarette advertisements risked undermining their anti-smoking messages by doing so. Even after the recent decrease in number of cigarette ads, the magazines that carried cigarette advertisements contained 390 pages of advertisements promoting cigarettes and only 4 anti-smoking articles with a minimum of one full page of text. Six of the magazines (*Cosmopolitan*, *Family Circle*, *Glamour*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Redbook*) had more pages of cigarette advertisements than anti-smoking messages. While we will not attempt to gauge and compare the effects of cigarette advertisements and anti-smoking messages, one thing is for certain: through their cigarette advertisements, some magazines continued to send mixed (or perhaps even mainly positive or condoning) messages to their readers about smoking.

It has been hypothesized that the paucity of discussions about the health dangers of cigarettes is at least in part due to magazines' economic dependence on revenue from cigarette advertisements (Whelan, 1984; Warner et al., 1992). The current survey found both a significant decline in the number of cigarette advertisements and an increase in the quantity and quality of anti-smoking messages, but the study was not designed to establish a causal relationship between the two changes. The six magazines without cigarette advertisements (40% of the magazines) *did* carry a disproportionate share (62%) of the anti-smoking articles, long articles in particular. *Good Housekeeping* and *Self*, which did not pub-

lish cigarette advertisements, had some of the best and most abundant anti-smoking coverage. However, some magazines (such as *Glamour* and *Woman's Day*) that accepted cigarette advertisements also had frequent or strong anti-smoking messages. On the other hand, some magazines that carried no cigarette advertisements (such as *Shape* and *Health*) or few cigarette advertisements (such as *Vogue*) had scarce information about smoking. This suggests that there are other reasons why magazines do not give high priority to covering the hazards of smoking and informing readers about smoking cessation.

Magazines may simply focus on entertaining and grabbing attention rather than informing readers about important health risks, inadvertently misinforming readers in the process. Oddly, though, even some health-focused magazines and other magazines (such as *Redbook*) that often focused on important health risks (including obesity, breast cancer, and skin cancer) lacked substantial information about smoking, lung cancer, and smoking cessation. Perhaps editors assume that readers already know the hazards of smoking and have sufficient access to smoking cessation information. Yet, 24% of American women have used tobacco in the past month, and every day thousands more smoke for the first time (SAMHSA, 2004). Therefore, many women may be able to benefit from information about and resources for cessation, as well as information on the effects of smoking. Additionally, editors have ample opportunities to report on new studies and reports about smoking (such as the Surgeon General's 2001 report on women and smoking) that should be of particular interest to women.

While magazines may try to avoid warning readers about smoking in order to avoid seeming like "health nannies" (Whelan, 1992; Whelan, 1996; Lukachko and Whelan, 1999), magazines can use a variety of contexts to send anti-smoking messages to their readers without seeming to lecture them, as the mentions of smoking noted in this survey suggest. Both the anti-smoking mentions in non-health-related contexts and the large number of pro-smoking mentions indicate that even magazines that do not focus primarily on health can send many messages to their readers about smoking.

Women's magazines are not obligated to provide information about smoking, yet they do have the potential to raise women's awareness about its impact (USDHHS, 2001). By ignoring the risks of smoking, downplaying them, or even sending positive messages about smoking, women's magazines do a disservice to their readers and miss an opportunity to educate readers about an important topic.

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