

Effects of Tobacco

The important point is what amount of these substances are absorbed by the body and what are their effects when taken in regularly over long periods of time. This will vary with whether the user inhales, swallows the saliva, uses a holder, as well as upon the kind and forms of tobacco used.

Nicotin causes a brief stimulation of the brain and spinal cord followed by depression. The salivary flow is increased temporarily followed by a decrease. The heart action is at first slowed and blood pressure increased followed by rapid heart action and lowered blood pressure. Its final effects are not that of a stimulant but of a narcotic.

Habit Formation

The use of any narcotic is always accompanied by the danger of habit formation with its consequent dependence upon the substance. This applies with peculiar force to tobacco. The individual who is miserable unless he has his given amount of tobacco at a given time comes in the same category, psychologically, as the morphine habitue.

Tobacco and Efficiency

A large number of experiments have been made to determine the relationship of the use of tobacco to mental and physical efficiency.

In the field of mental accomplishments, the evidence seems to show a higher accomplishment among non-smokers, though many of the experiments were not conducted with adequate controls and standard conditions.

From the physical standpoint, the evidence is clearer both from practical and experimental experience. The athletic coach does not permit his teams to smoke. The mortality experience of the insurance companies show more favorable death rates among non-users of tobacco.

- References: Storey--Defensive Hygiene, Chapter 16.
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Pearl--Alcohol and Longevity
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Earp--The Student Who Smokes
O'Shea--Tobacco and Mental Efficiency
Eddy, C.--One Million Drug Addicts in U. S. Current History, July, 1923.
Waring, J. J.--The Hygiene of Smoking, Hygeia, June, 1925
California Narcotic Commission--Narcotic Habit, (363.99 C153)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is it true that chemical causes of ill health are relatively unimportant in the United States? Why?