"UNSMOKE WORLD" ANOTHER TYPE OF MANIPULATION OF OUR YOUNGS

Florin Mihălțan
UMF C. Davila-Bucharest

Abstract

„Unsmoke world” is another offer in the last years of the tobacco industry. Manipulating the youngs is not something new but the strategies of this industry changed and we need to analyse what means this new attitude and how it works. In the same time the new „healthy products” of the same industry are promoted aggressively and with scientific arguments, splitting the medical world and with the help of researchers sponsored by this transnational tobacco companies. Harm reduction means not harmless and e cigarette and heat not burning tobacco are not healthy if we are looking to the independent researchers.

Keywords: e cigarette, heat not burning tobacco, tobacco industry.

Rezumat

„Lumea fără fum ” este o altă ofertă din ultimii ani a industriei tutunului. Manipularea tinerilor nu este ceva nou, dar strategiile acestei industrii s-au schimbat și trebuie să analizăm ce înseamnă această nouă atitudine și cum funcționează. În același timp, noile „produse sănătoase” ale aceleiași industrii sunt promovate agresiv și cu argumente științifice, scindând lumea medicală și cu ajutorul cercetărilor sponsorizați de companiile transnaționale de tutun. Reducerea nocivității nu înseamnă că nu sunt inofensive, iar țigara electronică și tutunul încălzit nu sunt sănătoase, dacă ne uităm la rezultatele obținute de cercetători independenți.

Cuvinte cheie: țigara electronică, tutunul încălzit, industria tutunului

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In the last 3 years the tobacco industry campaign became more and more aggressive and they changed the strategy. We have now a foundation of a tobacco company. In September, 2017, Philip Morris International, one of the world's largest tobacco companies, set up the "Foundation for a Smoke-Free World", with almost US\$1 billion of funding over 12 years⁽¹⁾.

Of the \$80 million annual donation from Philip Morris International, the Foundation spent \$6.46 million on research grants in 2018, \$7.59 million on communications (the majority of which was spent on public relations organisations), and \$7.03 million on staffing. \$47.45 million remain unspent. With only a further \$19.2 million of grant funding identified as approved for future payment, the Foundation appears to be struggling to fund research using the money it has received from the tobacco industry⁽²⁾. It looks neither as an independent organization nor as a scientific one but even so they try to convince researchers of its legitimacy and independence as scientific body⁽²⁾.

Another argument that this foundation is not independent is coming from the manner of organizing their research actions. They are contracting organizations' with long-standing tobacco industry links (Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, Mercury Public Affairs) or Centers of Excellence, having before grants from Phillip Morris International

(Acceleration of Harm Reduction (CoEHAR) at the University of Catania, The Glasgow-based Centre for Substance Use Research). The other proposal coming from tobacco industry is to make this world to be smoke free, but with no intention of making it tobacco free. After decades of irrefutable proof that cigarettes cause cancer and chronic heart and lung diseases, the world's largest tobacco companies are regrouping under the banner of health.

They still sell the deadly tobacco products but in the same time they promote the new healthy offers: heat not burning tobacco and e-cigarettes. They start to do it with doctors, different PR companies preparing with very persistent actions the dissemination and selling of this messages and products to the youngs worldwide. It is really surprising how they succeeded to develop researches in heat not burning products, to publish in famous scientific journals, to cross all the legal barriers and to use the results for promoting this new healthy offers. The strategy connected to e cigarettes (ENDS) and to heat not burning tobacco (HTP) are a little different.

For e-cigarette, first introduced in the U.S. market in 2006, with the more recent evolution of "pod-mod" e-cigarettes such as JUUL introduced in 2015 we assist now to an uncontrolled explosion of number of teenagers consumers recruited by tobacco

industry. This increasing is really impressive from 1.5% in 2011 to 20.8% in 2018⁽³⁾. There is concern that electronic cigarettes may be exposing a significant number of youth to nicotine who would have not otherwise be using tobacco.

At the opposite we have now a new generation of high addicted youngs. Another concern is their safety in comparison to combustible cigarettes and their use for quitting smoking. Among youth, e-cigarettes have little to no evidence as a smoking cessation tool, and very few report using it for such purposes. The use of e-cigarettes as a harm reduction strategy is and remains controversial. Many smokers believe and hope that e-cigarettes are an effective smoking cessation aid. But it is not a magic bullet for quitting. In low motivation smokers, e-cigarette use was not associated with lower combustible cigarette use.

When compared to traditional smokers, dual smokers smoked more cigarettes daily on average, had shorter smoking abstinence intervals, and had less success at quitting smoking completely⁽⁴⁾. Even after one year of using e cigarette the number of dual users of e cigarette and traditional cigarettes are not diminishing⁽⁵⁾. There are also emerging evidence suggesting that secondhand exposure to vaping aerosols may expose bystanders to potentially harmful chemicals⁽⁶⁾.

The other discovered and promoted product is the heat not burning tobacco. This offer has already 30 years from the moment of launching their first brands (Premier by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in 1988 and Accord by Philip Morris (PMI) in 1997 ^(7,8). Promoted and marketed by the cigarette companies as safer alternative to combustible cigarettes⁽⁹⁾ their impact is also huge.

The awareness of HTPs has reached significant levels in many countries from 2015 to 2017 (e.g., 48.0% of Japanese adults⁽¹⁰⁾, 38.1% of South Korean young adults⁽¹¹⁾, 19.5% of Italian adults⁽¹²⁾, and 9.3% of adults in Great Britain and 12,4% in US⁽¹³⁾. Misleading consumers is another politic of tobacco industry. There were no difference in the frequency of smoking, number of cigarettes per day, and smoking cessation behaviors between the users of HTPs and combustible cigarettes with exclusive smokers or exclusive HTP users, suggesting that HTPs reinforce nicotine dependence⁽¹⁴⁾. HTPs may have little impact on the consumption of tobacco cigarettes among smokers and may not be seen as a complete substitute product for cigarettes, but rather as a complimentary product. HTPs are not risk free, their use could renormalise tobacco use and there is no evidence to suggest they will reduce the use of cigarettes⁽¹⁵⁾.

They create another mirage for another type of offers. This scientific uncertainty should not be used as a reason to postpone preventive measures and that the precautionary principle should be applied to stop HTPs from being used. They tried in the same time using Foundation for a Smoke Free World (FSFW), to pave the road for partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO).

They found a strong opposition from many international NGO dedicated to tobacco control which in an open latter claim to WHO to respect [WHO FCTC Article 5.3](#) which seeks to protect public health policies from the vested interests of the tobacco industry and on which much of the success of the treaty rests⁽¹⁶⁾. Tobacco industry's use of harm reduction was aimed to gain access to scientists, the public health community and policy makers, and rebuild its reputation. One thing is sure: robust

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science is indeed needed to reduce harms caused by tobacco, but this science must be independent from the tobacco industry. We have not to forget “the wolf changes his hair but not his habit” and it is mandatory to protect our future generation of teenagers.

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