CHANGES IN SMOKING HABITS, 1959-1963

BY

F. PYGOTT

Radiologist, Central Middlesex Hospital

Early in 1959 it was decided to carry out an inquiry into the smoking habits of 10,000 consecutive persons attending the mass x-ray section of the X-ray Department at the Central Middlesex Hospital. The information was obtained by the receiving clerk as a part of normal documentation and the answers given were not questioned by her, in order not to give the examinee an impression that this was other than a normal routine. It was decided to repeat the inquiry again in the same period of 1963, using precisely the same method to see whether there had been any change in smoking habits as a result of the increase in the anti-smoking campaign and the report of the Royal College of Physicians on smoking and lung cancer.

On inquiry both in 1959 and in 1963, it was found that very few examinees smoked cigarettes and pipe with equal enjoyment; if they smoked both they were predominately smokers of one or another. If they were mainly pipe smokers and smoked only the odd cigarette, they were classified as pipe smokers, and their cigarette consumption disregarded. If they were mainly cigarette smokers but also smoked an ounce or more of tobacco as pipe tobacco weekly, they

were classified as cigarette smokers, and credited with smoking an extra twenty cigarettes a week per ounce of pipe tobacco. In fact, this adjustment was found to affect the number of cigarettes credited daily to only a very small proportion of the total number of smokers.

The two series show a very similar scatter of both age and sex. Thus, in 1959 there were 4,828 men and 5,172 women and in 1963, 4,845 men and 5,155 women. Only in the 15 to 19-year-old women was there a difference of more than 200 persons in the age break-down between the two series, and in nearly all other groups the differences between the two series were of the order of fifty persons in totals of between 600 and just over 1,000 in all but the groups over 65 years of age.

SMOKING HABITS OF MEN 1959 AND 1963

The smoking habits of men in the two years 1959 and 1963 are shown in Table I. In both years the proportion of smokers was least in the youngest group, 15 to 19 years of age, with peaks at ages 33 to 44 and 45 to 64. Thereafter, there was a small

TABLE I
SMOKING HABITS OF MEN AND WOMEN, 1959 AND 1963, BY AGE GROUP

Sex		Men				Women			
Year	Age Group (yrs)	Total No. of Men	Per cent. Non-Smokers	Per cent. Smokers		Per cent. All Smokers	Total No. of Women	Per cent. Non-Smokers	Per cent. Cigarette Smokers
				Cigarette	Pipe				
1959	15-19	585	43	56	1	57	767	66	34
	20-24	651	34	65	1	66	950	58	42
	25-34	1,026	34	62	4	66	1,249	56	44
	35-44	829	22	73	5	78	805	41	59
	45-64	1,491	22	71	7	78	1,241	59	41
	65+	246	28	62	10	72	160	74	26
1963	15-19	715	47	52	1	53	974	63	37
	20-24	654	38	58	4	62	962	61	39
	25-34	979	33	61	6	67	1,133	61	39
	35-44	856	25	62	13	75	827	49	51
	45-64	1,463	24	60	16	76	1,113	53	47
	65+	178	27	45	28	73	146	78	22

decline in the proportion of smokers probably influenced by financial changes on retirement. Considering cigarette and pipe smokers separately, the trend was somewhat different. Over half the young men aged 15 to 19 were cigarette smokers and the proportion increased with age, except in the oldest group where there was a decline. On the other hand, a very small proportion of those aged 15 to 19 were pipe smokers, and this proportion increased steadily to reach peak levels in the oldest group, 65 years and over.

The chief contrasts between the pattern in 1959 and in 1963 are that the proportion of pipe to cigarette smokers is greater in the later years, particularly among older men. Taking cigarette and pipe smokers together, the proportion of smokers to non-smokers had not changed much between the two years.

SMOKING HABITS OF WOMEN IN 1959 AND 1963

As might be expected, the proportion of smokers amongst women was less at each age than among men (Table I). Among those aged 15 to 19 years, about one-third were smokers and the proportion increased in successive age groups to reach a peak in both years at age 35 to 44. Thereafter there was a decline, so that among women 65 years and over there was the smallest proportion of smokers. The proportion of smokers between the ages of 20 and 44 and at 65 years and over was less in 1963 than in the

earlier year, but at 15 to 19 and 45 to 64 years it was greater. At no age had the proportion changed much and in general the pattern was similar in both years.

AMOUNT SMOKED

(a) Cigarette Smokers

In both years over half the men aged 15 to 19 smoked less than ten cigarettes a day (Table II). Older men smoked rather more and, except for those 65 years and over in 1959, well over half smoked ten or more a day. In each age group the amount smoked was greater in 1963 than in 1959.

Among women, as in men, the amount smoked was least in those aged 15 to 19 and 65 years and over (Table II). Between 1959 and 1963, there was an increase in the proportion of heavier smokers, although the general levels were considerably lower than those for men.

(b) Pipe Smokers

The amount of tobacco smoked was least in those aged 15 to 19 years, in the majority of whom it was less than 2 oz. a week (Table III, opposite). In older age groups the amount consumed was greater and the majority of pipe smokers consumed more than 2 oz. per week. There was a slight fall in consumption in the oldest group, 65 years and over.

In general the main change between 1963 and 1959 was an increase in the amount smoked, most pronounced for the younger men.

TABLE II
NUMBER OF CIGARETTES SMOKED BY MEN AND WOMEN, 1959 AND 1963, BY AGE GROUP

Sex	Year	Age Group (yrs)	Total No. of Cigarette Smokers	No. of Cigarettes Smoked Daily (per cent.)					Average No. of Cigarettes Smoked Daily
				0-4	5-9	10-19	20-29	30+	
Men	1959	15-19	330	28	39	30	2	1	8.4
		20-24	422	15	42	37	4	2	9.7
		25-34	640	14	29	47	7	3	11.7
		35-44	604	10	23	51	12	4	13.2
		45-64	1,060	11	26	47	11	5	12.9
		65+	153	23	35	38	2	2	9.3
	1963	15-19	375	25	31	38	5	1	9.7
		20-24	384	9	17	60	10	4	13.7
		25-34	592	10	19	54	11	6	13.9
		35-44	534	7	16	56	15	6	14.9
		45-64	871	10	16	49	17	8	15.9
		65+	80	14	15	55	12	4	12.2
Women	1959	15-19	261	48	40	11	1	—	5.6
		20-24	400	36	42	21	1	—	7.0
		25-34	552	28	40	28	3	1	8.5
		35-44	473	23	40	32	4	1	9.2
		45-64	504	32	37	27	3	1	8.2
		65+	41	51	32	12	5	—	6.2
	1963	15-19	359	44	29	25	2	—	7.0
		20-24	372	27	31	38	3	1	9.3
		25-34	437	26	26	39	8	1	10.3
		35-44	423	18	29	44	8	1	11.0
		45-64	513	20	26	45	7	2	11.1
		65+	32	35	25	28	9	3	9.6

TABLE III
NUMBER OF OUNCES OF TOBACCO SMOKED BY MEN 1959 AND 1963

Year	Age Group (yrs)	Total No. of Pipe Smokers	Ounces of Tobacco Smoked Weekly (per cent.)				Average Ounces of Tobacco Smoked Weekly
			-1	1+	2-3	4+	
1959	15-19	5	60	40	—	—	0.9
	20-24	9	67	33	—	—	0.8
	25-34	28	36	50	11	4	1.4
	35-44	44	18	20	55	7	2.3
	45-64	103	13	28	49	11	2.4
	65+	25	12	40	44	4	2.1
1963	15-19	5	20	60	20	—	1.6
	20-24	20	5	30	65	—	2.4
	25-34	61	25	23	49	3	2.1
	35-44	109	12	22	61	5	2.4
	45-64	241	13	21	56	10	2.4
	65+	50	18	18	52	12	2.4

CONCLUSIONS

Review of the information obtained from the two series shows that there has been generally a slight decline in the proportion of smokers among the men, taking cigarette and pipe smokers together, which does not amount to more than 4 per cent. in any of the groups under the age of 65. Over the age of 65 there was little change in smoking habit. There was a transference to pipe-smoking among men smokers, so that this is now more than twice as popular as it was in 1959. The amount of pipe tobacco smoked per head increased.

Among the men who smoke cigarettes it is clear that the consumption increased at all ages, and that heavy smoking (*i.e.* thirty or more daily) was more frequent from 25 years to the age of 65 than it was in 1959. Thus 97 out of a total of 2,689 men smokers between the ages of 25 and 64 in 1959 smoked thirty or more daily (3.6 per cent.) while 139 out of 2,398 did so in 1963 (5.8 per cent.). The totals who smoked forty or more daily, however, had risen from 28 to 48 in the same age range.

In the women questioned in 1963 there was a decline in the number smoking of 3 to 8 per cent. in the age groups up to 45 years, and there was an

increase of 6 per cent. in the 45 to 64 age group compared with 1959. Among the women who smoked in 1963 there was a clear increase in the average number of cigarettes smoked. Out of a total of 1,529 women cigarette smokers between the ages of 25 and 65 in 1959, only ten smoked more than thirty a day (0.6 per cent.), but in 1963 21 out of 1,373 did so (1.5 per cent.). The totals who smoked over forty daily in the same group were none and seven respectively.

The investigation suggests that the campaign to reduce smoking has so far had a very small but definite effect in reducing the proportion of smokers in age groups of both sexes, except among the women between 45 and 65, more of whom are smoking in 1963 than in 1959. Among the remaining cigarette smokers in all age groups there is a very considerable increase in the amount smoked. The number of men pipe smokers has more than doubled in the period and now amounts to 15 per cent. of the total number of smokers. It is obvious that, if the connexion between smoking and lung cancer is accepted, the present effort to discourage smoking has had very little effect and that much more needs to be done if this disease is to be brought under control.