

The Nicotine Challenger

Autumn 2000

This issue: Growth & Change

Volume 9, Number 1


11th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health

by Bernice Order-Connors, L.C.S.W., CADC

Four thousand, five hundred and nine participants from close to 150 countries attended the 11th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health August 6-11 in Chicago. The meeting was designed to provide networking opportunities among national and community health leaders for the sharing of information and ideas as well as the development of a consensus on global approaches to tobacco control. The conference was co-chaired by Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization (and former Prime Minister of Norway) and Dr. C. Everett Koop, former US Surgeon General.

Dr. Brundtland issued a challenge to attendees to stand up to the powers that continue to promote the growing global epidemic of tobacco-caused disease, citing that presently tobacco kills 4 million people worldwide annually and is set to cause 10 million deaths annually by 2030, over 70% in developing countries. Dr. Koop in his keynote address said, "We all must work to isolate and contain the tobacco industry, which has never had any self-control of its own." He said, "We must continue to work until people of every culture, of every race, and of every walk of life know the truth about the dangers of tobacco use. The deceptive practice and misinformation campaigns of big tobacco must be challenged. Their behavior is an outrage and only we can stop it."

NIDA Director Alan Leshner addressed conference attendees at the Nicotine Plenary explaining that "people start smoking because they like what it does to their brains." He explained that having quit smoking for 20 years following 27 years of active use, "every time I have a good cup of coffee I still have an overwhelming craving for a cigarette. That's because the people, places and things in your life become associated with the drug." Leshner displayed an MRI showing nicotine-induced cortical stimulation of the brain. Other slides demonstrated how nicotine, cocaine, THC and methamphetamine all produce very similar dopamine spikes. More than 50% of people who smoke daily will become addicted; furthermore, 32% of those who merely try tobacco will become addicted, compared with 23% for heroin, 16% for cocaine, and 15% for alcohol.

The World Conference on Tobacco OR Health can be revisited on the web at <http://www.conferencecast.com/wctoh>. Visitors to the site can hear the Nicotine Plenary and Advocacy Plenary in English, Spanish, French, or Mandarin. 

New Program Director Jonathan Foulds, Ph.D.



Dear Readers,

Please help us welcome Jonathan Foulds (pronounced "folds") to the Tobacco Dependence Program, as well as to UMDNJ, New Jersey, and the United States.

Dr. Foulds, who has begun as director of the expanded tobacco program (formerly the *Addressing Tobacco Project*) and as an associate professor in the UMDNJ-School of Public Health, has come from an academic post in London to work with the program here.

Dr. Foulds is a psychologist with extensive training not only in tobacco dependence but also more broadly in the addictions field and in mental health. He is a research scientist as well as a clinician, having conducted ground-breaking studies of nicotine replacement medicines, and important laboratory studies on the nature of tobacco dependence, among other subjects.

He has been the Research Director for the largest quit line in the world, and has played a key role on a team that organized a World Bank-funded tobacco control program in Hungary.

He was a contributor to a landmark report on tobacco addiction from the Royal College of Physicians and is an advisor to the World Health Organization (Europe) on tobacco control policy.

A trim, redheaded Scot, Dr. Foulds is among the brightest young scientists in the field today. While he worries from time to time that Americans may have difficulty understanding him through his brogue, I have not found that to be the case at all.

Please help us make him feel welcome here as he works with us to build the best consultation, training and treatment system for tobacco dependence here in New Jersey.

Warm regards,

John Slade, M.D.

Director, Program in Addictions
UMDNJ-School of Public Health
sladejo@umdnj.edu