

*Continuing to smoke while smoking any cigarette does not reduce harm- NZ and Norwegian studies agree.*

## **New state-of-the-art filter cigarette more toxic than Holiday**

### **Marlboro UltraSmooth: a potentially reduced exposure cigarette?**

**Murray Laugesen (Health New Zealand) and Jefferson Fowles (ESR).**

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The Marlboro UltraSmooth (MUS) cigarette, test marketed in the United States in 2005, with combined acetate and carbon filter, is arguably "state of the art", designed to reduce smoke emissions. It removes almost all emissions if the machine inhales 250 ml of smoke, and removes half from 380 ml of smoke, but on a per milligram of nicotine basis, implying a doubling of smoke inhaled to obtain the same amount of nicotine, MUS smoke per cigarette was estimated to be potentially more toxic than for 13 out of 18 regular brands tested (Marlboro, Holiday and 16 from British Columbia). On this basis, MUS does not qualify as a potentially reduced-exposure product (PREP).

Note: Marlboro UltraSmooth is not on sale in New Zealand, and Philip Morris has no known plans to sell it here. For abstract see [www.tobaccocontrol.com](http://www.tobaccocontrol.com) and search under Laugesen or Fowles.

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## **Reducing daily cigarette consumption does not reduce mortality**

A three-county cohort study of 50,000 men and women in Norway by Bjartveit et al has found no significant decrease in all-cause or other mortality in heavy smokers who reduced their daily cigarette consumption over many years. The (dismal) findings agree with a Copenhagen cohort study which also found no significant decrease in mortality due to "cutting down." See Aage Tverdal and Kjell Bjartveit Health consequences of reduced daily cigarette consumption. Tob. Control, Dec 2006; 15: 472 - 480.

**Comment:** Previous studies by Doll (UK) and Bjartveit have shown that mortality is higher for heavy smokers. However the practical question is whether heavier smokers can reduce their risk without quitting. They cannot, even if they stay reduced for many years, as in this study. Whereas, those who quit reduced their risk 50% in this study.

This study confirming the Copenhagen study, increases the pressure of tobacco control programmes to measure results entirely in the numbers quitting and staying quit.

This is not to deny that reduced smoking can assist some smokers to quit a short time later. In that case only, reducing smoking is helpful.