A summary of the young people's recorded use of drugs.

**Use of illegal drugs**

A comprehensive list of illicit drugs comprised several questions in the HBQ. We combined these drugs into the following groups:

- Controlled drugs: cocaine, opiates, heroin
- Stimulants/Barbiturates: amphetamines, barbiturates, tranquillizers
- Hallucinogens: natural, synthetic
- Cannabis: leaf, resin

**Ecstasy**

We then examined, in relation to family life, four aspects of knowledge or behaviour regarding these substances:

- Did they know anything about them?
- Did they know anyone who had used them?
- Did they have their own of any of them?
- Did they use any of them?

**Gender differences in family influence**

In summary, boys tended to be heavier drinkers, generally in line with gender differences in adult alcohol use. For boys, family type was an important influence on their level of drinking. Girls reported smoking more often, and family type was not an influence on this or other substance use.

How might we explain this contrast? Possibly girls, because of social conventions, face restrictions on their level of drinking. Girls who are heavy drinkers do not have the same social approval as heavy-drinking boys, and therefore cigarettes may offer an alternative resource which is more acceptable. Heavier smoking by girls could be important, although potentially harmful, "equal opportunity" drug use strategy.

This difference may also be a factor in the lack of influence of family on smoking and other substance-use by girls. Drinking is a socially acceptable behaviour — the use of alcohol by adults is generally condoned, as those people who choose not to drink are in the minority, and therefore drinking by young people is a behaviour subject to strong socialisation influences.

**Conclusion**

Differences in family style seem to be associated with differences in adolescent health behaviours, and these effects can vary in direction and degree from one behaviour to another. At this stage these are only tentative suggestions, requiring further examination with a larger research programme. However, what is clear from the present results is that:

1. Drinking, smoking and other forms of drug-taking are distinct activities, and should not be lumped together, as part of the same 'problem behaviour', by researchers, educators, and practitioners.
2. Family type seems to be more influential on drug use by boys than by girls.
3. For boys and girls, the neglecting and authoritative family types are associated with higher use of all types of drug. Those types are both low on support, and it may be that these families not only control, but are the critical factor behind these behaviours.

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**Recruiting the young smoker**

The advertising campaign to sell Regal cigarettes in the north of England based on the character of Reg was recently won the top award from the advertising industry. Research carried out in three high schools in Kirklees LEA with 11-15 year old pupils suggests that they are highly vulnerable to the advertisements. This comes at a time when the government has again postponed a decision to enforce an EC directive to ban the advertising of tobacco products.

It is widely accepted that the tobacco industry has to find 300 new smokers every day in order to replace the number who die from tobacco-related diseases. In this "replacement" context, the young must be a target. Companies usually justify their advertising as "competing for their market share" and not promoting more smokers. However, the research in Kirklees shows that 73% of the young people see Reg as advertising cigarettes rather than Regal.

Many tobacco industry-watchers were initially puzzled by the nature of the Reg advertisements, which portray an overweight, middle-aged man with severely limited intelligence and lifestyle. How could such an image be attractive to young people?

I carried out this research using questionnaires with 113 pupils in years 7, 8, and 10. The classes were in all cases mixed ability, with about 10% of the children being from Asian families.

The vast majority (85%) of the pupils were familiar with the Reg advertisements, of whom about half liked the campaign. Although the majority did not like Reg as a character and would not have liked him as a friend, they thought that Reg would be popular amongst his own friends and that he enjoyed life. The most important part of the survey found that of those who had seen the advertisements a consistent percentage, in the low forties, thought that they would influence young people and make them more likely to smoke. It was also clear that those who thought that Reg did not worry about life were also more likely to think that he would influence young people to smoke.

It is evident that the Regal campaigns do affect young people. Although Reg is not a character they admire or would want to emulate, he does have certain characteristics with which they identify — mainly those of enjoying himself and not worrying. Hence there seems to be an association between a stress-free, relaxed life and smoking.

The amount of pressure on young people in the Britain of today is considerable, and into this area of doubt and anxiety comes Reg who, although his "philosophy" (his advertisement is often used in the group discussions), does appear to have put all his troubles behind him with the help of Regal cigarettes.

This study supports three recommendations:

1. That the government accepts that young adolescents are generally aware of tobacco advertisements and the messages they contain.
2. That larger-scale and more sophisticated studies be established to establish the impact of tobacco advertising on young people, particularly those more esoteric, non-tobacco-specific campaigns.
3. That the government prepares for a total ban on advertisements for all tobacco products should these urgent needed surveys confirm the Kirklees findings.

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