



## LETTERS

## NEW POLITICS TARGETING THE NANNY STATE

## Heated tobacco and politics in Italy

Giulio Formoso *pharmacist*<sup>1</sup>, Maria Grazia Celani *neurologist*<sup>2</sup>, Silvia Minozzi *epidemiologist*<sup>3</sup>, Michela Cinquini *statistician*<sup>4</sup>, Paola Mosconi *researcher*<sup>4</sup>, Vanna Pistotti *librarian*<sup>4</sup>, Teresa Cantisani *neurologist*<sup>2</sup>, Roberto D'Amico *professor of medical statistics*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Local Health Authority, Via Amendola 2, 42122 Reggio Emilia, Italy; <sup>2</sup>Azienda Ospedaliera di Perugia—Cochrane Neurological Sciences Field, Perugia, Italy; <sup>3</sup>Cochrane Review Group on Drugs and Alcohol, Department of Epidemiology, Lazio Regional Health Service, Rome, Italy; <sup>4</sup>Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research IRCCS, Milan, Italy; <sup>5</sup>University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

Big tobacco companies using political links to foster their business is concerning.<sup>1</sup> In Italy, a “sunshine act” proposal to make financial links between healthcare professionals and industry more transparent has been approved by the Chamber of Deputies and is currently being discussed by the Senate for definitive approval.

In the meantime, the Italian Senate has been the stage of a conference on cardiovascular prevention, with the non-conditional support of Philip Morris, discussing among other things the potential benefits of heated tobacco products. Invited experts expressed their interest and support for these products, which can reduce health risks and might help smokers to shift from cigarettes.<sup>2</sup>

Risk reduction strategies should be proposed when adequate evidence is available, which is not yet the case for heated tobacco products, as highlighted by the World Health Organization<sup>3</sup> and Public Health England.<sup>4</sup> This is especially

important when such topics are brought to the attention of politicians to avoid the risks of undue lobbying.

Competing interests: None declared.

All authors are members of the Alessandro Liberati Association—Italian Cochrane Network.

- 1 Gornall J. Big tobacco, the new politics, and the threat to public health. *BMJ* 2019;365:l2164. doi: 10.1136/bmj.l2164 31092403
- 2 Salute. Scompenso cuore 'epidemia' del nostro tempo, esperti a confronto. *Adnkronos* 2019 May 14. [https://www.adnkronos.com/salute/2019/05/14/scompenso-cuore-epidemia-del-nostro-tempo-esperti-confronto\\_MDRIkR9EJkXLHSHI75gTL.html](https://www.adnkronos.com/salute/2019/05/14/scompenso-cuore-epidemia-del-nostro-tempo-esperti-confronto_MDRIkR9EJkXLHSHI75gTL.html)
- 3 World health Organization. Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI). Heated tobacco products (HTPs) information sheet. [https://www.who.int/tobacco/publications/prod\\_regulation/heated-tobacco-products/en/](https://www.who.int/tobacco/publications/prod_regulation/heated-tobacco-products/en/)
- 4 McNeill A, Brose LS, Calder R, Bauld L, Robson D. *Evidence review of e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products 2018. A report commissioned by Public Health England*. 2018. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/684963/Evidence\\_review\\_of\\_e-cigarettes\\_and\\_heated\\_tobacco\\_products\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684963/Evidence_review_of_e-cigarettes_and_heated_tobacco_products_2018.pdf)

Published by the BMJ Publishing Group Limited. For permission to use (where not already granted under a licence) please go to <http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions>