

# Jane Brody on quitting smoking: She misses the most important point harm reduction

By ACSH Staff — January 28, 2014



In her Personal Health [column](#) <sup>[1]</sup> in the *New York Times*, Jane

Brody tackles perhaps the greatest problem facing public health professionals today how to get smokers to quit, or prevent non-smokers from ever starting. She does a thorough job of reviewing the stance of Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the CDC (and the former head New York City health commissioner), who applauded steps taken by the World Health Organization called Mpower. The letters stand for:

Monitoring tobacco use

Protecting people from secondhand smoke

Offering help to people who want to quit

Warning about smoking hazards

Enforcing bans on tobacco marketing

Raising taxes

Although she acknowledges that current aids for quitting, such as nicotine substitutes, low-dose antidepressants, hypnosis, and acupuncture, are not very effective, Ms Brody stops short of endorsing the newest and likely most effective aid - e-cigarettes.

E-cigs provide the addictive nicotine that smokers crave, without the carcinogenic products of burning tobacco that are the real health destroyers. As we've [reiterated](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, e-cigs may be the most effective way to help addicted smokers quit. While they won't resolve a smoker's nicotine addiction, they can reduce the harm caused by inhaling the tobacco combustion products.

Instead of endorsing e-cigs, as ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross complains, Ms. Brody is parroting the party line of the CDC, the FDA, the ACS etc. etc. and Stan Glantz, thereby doing a terrible disservice to her smoking readers who are desperate to quit. All those alphabetical reminders and "stress reducers," similar to the FDA-approved meds so admired by Frieden and his coterie, work

maybe 15% of the time to help addicted smokers quit. Yet, the officials running our "Tobacco Control Industry" and NGOs insist that smokers stick with them and not even consider e-cigarettes. Too bad Ms. Brody failed to seek comments from devotees of public health via harm reduction: the current methods do not work!

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**Links**

[1] [http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/27/helping-smokers-quit-or-not-start-in-the-first-place/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/27/helping-smokers-quit-or-not-start-in-the-first-place/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)

[2] <http://acsh.org/?s=nicotine&cat=0&x=0&y=0>