

ASH/ Passive smoking/ Sunday Telegraph press statement attacking ASH

Sunday Times press statement 27th March 1998

The Sunday Telegraph

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March 27, 1998

PRESS STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT MADE TO PCC BY ASH

STATEMENT BY DOMINIC LAWSON, EDITOR

Dominic Lawson, Editor of the Sunday Telegraph, says: "We stand by our original story reporting the findings of the World Health Organisation study into the links between passive smoking and lung cancer which showed no statistically significant risk of cancer from passive smoking. This result is clearly not the one desired by ASH, but it really should learn - with its long experience with the media - not to shoot the messenger. In particular it is dishonest of ASH to imply that we said that either smoking itself is not harmful or that passive smoking cannot cause bronchial problems in small children. In fact, in our leading article on the day (8 March) we released the information from the WHO report, we wrote: "Smoking remains an unpleasant habit for those who do not themselves smoke, and it is undoubtedly bad for the health of those who do". Where we part company with ASH is that unlike them, we do not think it conducive to the public's health to whip up panic and hysteria by stating, without the required evidence, that non smokers can develop lung cancer from contact with smokers. Naturally we will be happy to demonstrate the truth and journalistic responsibility of our story to the PCC if asked to do so, although I personally regret that ASH have chosen the PCC as a means to promote their own sectional interest as a lobbying organisation."

ENDS

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT LUCY GOODWIN AT THE SUNDAY
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