

MEMORANDUM

RJR

F. G. C. O. C.
Assistant Director of Scientific Issues
Research Department

SECRET

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No. 12 By _____ August 19, 1981

Mr. Samuel B. Witt, III

RE: COMSTOCK STUDY VS WHITE & FROEB STUDY

SUMMARY

In my judgment, the Comstock study identified below, does not invalidate the White & Froeb publication. I am, however, convinced more than ever, that the White & Froeb data are fraudulent or biased at best. An attempt to subpoena their raw data, or to force them to publicly refuse to yield these data, is, in my opinion, imperative. PLEASE COMMENT.

MEMORANDUM

The following study has just been published:

"RESPIRATORY EFFECTS OF HOUSEHOLD EXPOSURES TO TOBACCO SMOKE AND GAS COOKING".

George W. Comstock, Mary B. Meyer, Knud J. Helsing, and Melvyn S. Tockman
(Dept. of Epidemiology, School of Hygiene and Public Health, and the Dept. of Medicine, School of Medicine, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.)

Supported in part by research grants from Natl. Inst. Environ. Health Sciences and Natl. Heart, Lung and Blood Inst. - Am. Rev. Resp. Dis. 124(2):143-148 (Aug. 1981)

The study is based on a population of 1724. It comes, with reference to the alleged effects of smoking on non-smokers, to the following conclusion:

"The presence of a smoker in the household other than the subject was not associated with the frequency of respiratory symptoms and impaired ventilatory function."

This finding is perspective all the more significant, because a significant association was allegedly found with the use of gas cooking stoves in the households, as follows:

"The use of gas for cooking was related to an increased frequency of respiratory symptoms and impaired ventilatory function among men, being most marked among men who had never smoked. There was no evidence that cooking with gas was harmful to women."



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Nevertheless, in my judgment, this study, while helpful, is not sufficient to expunge the citability of the White & Froeb study in legislative and litigative situations.

This is mainly for the following reasons. The White & Froeb study deals with alleged effects of smoking on non-smokers at the work place. It also alleges this effect on a relatively subtle respiratory function test for the small airways. On the contrary, the Comstock study deals with households and measures relatively major respiratory symptoms and relatively much less sensitive respiratory function tests of the large and small airways combined. For these reasons, probably, Comstock does not mention directly the White & Froeb study. The sole exception is the reference to a letter to the New England Journal of Medicine, commenting favorably on the White & Froeb study by citing a French household study which alleges results contrary to the Comstock findings.

The Comstock study is written from an obviously very strong anti-smoking bias. The findings are therefore all the more valuable, notwithstanding their lack of relevancy to White & Froeb. In general, some comments of interest in that study have been indicated on the attached copy by marginal "fishheads". Other statement of interest have been underlined on the attached copy.

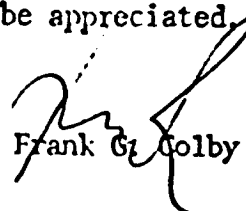
However, the anti-smoking language is in my judgment such, that the Comstock study can not be used, even for P.R. purposes. For all these reasons my following recommendations are all the more important.

With reference to White & Froeb, Congressman Rose, when he interviewed Dr. White together with Dr. Lebowitz, left to himself open the option to question Dr. White via an ad hoc Congressionally recruited special committee. In my opinion it is imperative that Congressman Rose be encouraged to implement these plans. Dr. White should be subpoenaed to either hand out all his raw data, or he should be forced to refuse to do so in public. Safeguards need, of course, be taken to preempt Dr. White using for his refusal some subterfuge, such as allegedly protecting the privacy of the subjects of his study, etc. There is not the slightest question in my mind that Dr. White will refuse to turn over his raw data, because I firmly believe that his data are based on either fabricated results, or results which have been "massaged" with a conscious bias. If he should unexpectedly turn over his results, I am absolutely convinced that his data will make this obvious.

Short of the nearly impossible task of spending several years of repeating the White & Froeb study, this "subpoena" is, in my view, the only way how the Industry can prevent the study from being cited in attempts to legislate anti-smoking restrictions in this country and abroad, and possibly even in litigations.

Your early comments on this memorandum will be appreciated.

FGC/ks
Att:1


Frank G. Colby

cc: H.C.R.
M.H.C.

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