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Health

**Polonium-210, Hidden in Cigarettes, Kills 17,000/yr, Totally Unregulated**

**Polonium-210 Hidden in Cigarettes, Says Study by the Mayo Clinic and Stanford University // It Kills More Than 17,000 Every Year But Is Totally Unregulated and Not Even Disclosed**



Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)  
[<http://ash.org/>] America's First Antismoking  
Organization

2008-07-17 14:55:37 - **A new study shows that tobacco**

**companies suppressed their own internal research on Polonium-210 - minute amounts of which killed former KGB agent Alexander V. Litvinenko - so as to avoid "waking a sleeping giant" as a Philip Morris memo put it, and that it causes as much radiation exposure as 300 chest X-rays a year, is responsible for 1% of all U.S. lung cancers, and more than 1,600 U.S. deaths and over 11,000 deaths worldwide every year.**



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The study, by the Mayo Clinic and Stanford University, found that cigarette makers "continue to minimize its [polonium-210's] importance in smoking and health litigation and remain silent on the issue on their Web sites and in their messages to consumers."

[www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/AJPH.2007.130963v1](http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/AJPH.2007.130963v1)

Ironically, although this is one of the most deadly substances known to science - 250,000 times more toxic than hydrogen cyanide

- the federal government has no power to regulate the amounts in cigarettes, nor to even require tobacco companies to disclose this ingredient to the public, says public interest law professor John Banzhaf of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH).

Indeed, surveys show that most people have no idea that there is Polonium-210 in the cigarette smoke both smokers and nonsmokers inhale. The few who do know about its existence apparently assume that the dose is too small to have any significant health effect, never dreaming that it is killing over 17,000 people every year.

Unfortunately, the bill before Congress to give the FDA authority to regulate cigarettes, while prohibiting the use of most arguably-benign flavorings like clove and peppermint, does not require the removal or even any decrease in the toxic gases (like cyanide), more than 40 other cancer-causing chemicals (like benzene), or radioactive substances (like plutonium or uranium).

By coincidence, a study just yesterday showed that the tobacco industry manipulated menthol levels in an effort to attract young children into smoking (by masking the harsh taste of smoke for first time smokers), and to increase the addictive hold of nicotine on smokers - a disclosure which might delay the FDA regulation bill.

Because the bill would ban the use of all other flavoring additives (like cloves and

peppermint) but permit the use of menthol, and since menthol is overwhelming used by African American smokers -- including Black children -- it has already been damned for being racially insensitive if not outright racist by the Congressional Black Caucus, African American former HHH Secretary Louis W. Sullivan and most other former HHS Secretaries, the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network, and ASH, America's first antismoking organization.

[www.pr-inside.com/menthol-manipulation-killing-cigarette-bill-r7 ..](http://www.pr-inside.com/menthol-manipulation-killing-cigarette-bill-r7...)

LAW PROFESSOR JOHN BANZHAF  
Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)  
2013 H St., NW, Wash. DC 20006  
(202) 659-4310 ash.org

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**Press Information:**

**Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)  
America's First Antismoking  
Organization**

2013 H St., NW, Wash., DC 20006

**Contact Person:**

Public Interest Law Professor John Banzhaf  
Executive Director and Chief Counsel  
Phone: (202) 659-4310  
email: [email](mailto:email)

Web: [ash.org](http://ash.org)

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