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## Cardiologists and smoking

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Not only cigarette smoking but, to a lesser degree, also pipe and cigar smoking are highly deleterious to health.

The smoking habit, which is addictive, shortens life expectancy and increases cardiovascular and cancer mortality. The recommendations to the public concerning the prevention of disease always include a warning against smoking. Smoking a pack of cigarettes a day shortens life expectancy by about 8 years. It is well known that smoking in public by VIPs, including artists, medical doctors and politicians, promote smoking at the population level, particularly in the younger generation. In a ranking of professions established by Confucius (551-479 BC) in his ethical teachings, the intellectuals and scholars were listed in the highest

category, merchants in the lowest. According to Confucius, the intellectuals, belonging to the highest rank, have the moral duty to set an example by their life style which would have a positive influence on the general population. But even without referring to Confucius it seems only logical for cardiologists not to smoke, at least not in public. During the scientific meetings of the European and American societies of cardiology, smoking is strictly forbidden. The Japanese Society of Cardiology issued a statement asking its members not to smoke. It would be highly desirable for all cardiologists worldwide to follow this recommendation, thus assuming their responsibility towards society.

Hugo Kesteloot and Luc Piérard, editors-in-chief