

Letter to the Editor

About Cigarette

Somchai Bovornkitti MD, Hon.FRCPE, Hon.MRCP, FRCP, FRACP, Hon.FACP
Fellow of the Academy of Science, The Royal Society, Thailand

Nicotine is a chemical that contains nitrogen, which is made by several types of plants, including the tobacco plant. The tobacco plant is indigenous to the Americas for at least 2,000 years. It is also produced synthetically. *Nicotiana tabacum*, the type of nicotine found in tobacco plant, comes from the nightshade family. Red peppers, eggplant, tomatoes, and potatoes are examples of the nightshade family. The tobacco plant is indigenous to the world inhabitants for at least 2,000 years. Christopher Columbus is often thought to have discovered tobacco while exploring the world.

While not cancer-causing and excessively harmful on its own, nicotine is heavily addictive and exposes people to the extremity harmful effects of tobacco dependency. The smoking of pipes and cigars spread quickly throughout the 1600s. The tobacco industry grew throughout the 1700s, and exploded in 1880 when a machine was first patented to mass-produce paper cigarettes.

In 1828, Wilhelm Heinrich Posselt, a doctor, and Karl Ludwig Reinmann, a chemist, both from Germany, first isolated nicotine from the tobacco plant and identified it as a poison.

When a body is exposed to nicotine, the individual experience a “kick”, which is partly caused by stimulating the adrenal glands, which results in the release of adrenaline. Indirectly, nicotine causes the release of dopamine in the pleasure and motivation areas of the brain. The drug users experiences a pleasurable sensation. People who regularly consume nicotine and then suddenly stop experience withdrawal symptoms, including craving, anxiety, depression, moodiness, irritability, difficulty focusing or paying attention.

Current evidence suggests that vaping liquid nicotine through battery-operated electronic cigarettes is a safer alternative to inhaling tobacco smoke, as nicotine in itself

is not classified as carcinogenic. It may also help people that are trying to quit smoking mimic some of the additive behaviors of cigarette use, such as raising the hand to the mouth or seeing smoke inhaled. Liquid nicotine can help replicate these behaviors without the harmful effects of tobacco use.