

Statement from Pharmacia

A study by Dr. Stephen Hecht and colleagues from the University of Minnesota Cancer Center in Minneapolis appeared in the October 24 issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Nitrosamines are known carcinogenic compounds found in tobacco smoke. The in vitro study suggested that some metabolites of nicotine from cigarette smoke can be transformed into nitrosamines, and lead to a possible mechanism for the development of lung cancer in smokers. Although the authors raised a question on the implications for nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) for long term use, no evidence is presented here, or exists elsewhere in the scientific literature, for this effect in people who are using NRT to quit smoking. Those using NRT to quit smoking should not be concerned by this study.

The safety of NRT as an approved treatment for tobacco dependence is widely acknowledged. Under any circumstances the use of NRT is always safer than smoking. NRT delivers lower levels of nicotine than cigarettes less rapidly and without exposure to the components of cigarette smoke (e.g. tar and carbon monoxide) which are considered primarily responsible for smoking-related disorders.

Recent treatment guidelines published by the US public Health Service and by the UK Health Development Agency recommend NRT as a safe and effective first line treatment for tobacco dependence. This study provides no new data to challenge such conclusions.