Wednesday, August 26, 1992

Texas A&M WORLD The Battalion

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Study links smoking to cataracts tley

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Smoking more than a pack of

cigarettes a day doubles the likelihood a person will

develop cataracts, the clouding of the eye lenses that

The studies, involving almost 70,000 men and women, suggest approximately 20 percent of all cataract cases may be attributed to smoking, said a

researcher who found a link between the eye disease

More research is needed to determine precisely

how smoking damages the lens, Sheila West of the

Dana Center for Preventive Ophthalmology at Johns

Hopkins' Hospital said in an editorial accompanying

afflicts 3 million Americans, two news studies found.

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the studies in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association. "For now, it appears that the litany of ills associated with smoking is growing, as we add to it cataracts, the world's leading cause of blindness," Classic. College Station heard dealt with nning their run she wrote

and smoking in an earlier study.

More than a million Americans undergo cataract surgery each year at a total cost of billions of dollars. The latest studies involved 17,824 male U.S. physicians tracked from 1982 through 1987 and 50,828 female U.S. nurses tracked from 1980 through the talk revi Valsh. n of the three-tin ampion coach la 1988. e television pr

In the Physicians' Health Study, subjects who smoked 20 cigarettes or more a day were 2.05 times more likely to be diagnosed with a cataract than spaper articles ence Tuesday, Slocum was subjects who had never smoked, the researchers turn of Walsh said n expectations.

Of the 17,824 men, 1,188 smoked 20 or more cigarettes daily, and 59 cataracts developed among them, a rate of 2.5 cataracts per 100 eyes. Among the ge football after 9,045 men who had never smoked, 228 cataracts developed, a rate of about 1.3 cataracts per 100 eyes. n analyst on m 's definitely as

Smokers of fewer than 20 cigarettes daily had no increased risk compared with non-smokers, the researchers said.

Further study is needed to determine whether there is a "dose-response" relationship — that is, if ung Stanford ately will de ot Walsh's retur

the more you smoke, the greater your risk of developing cataracts, as other studies have suggested, said the chief author, Dr. William G. Christen.

Former smokers had 1.4 times the risk of nonsmokers for one type of cataract, but no increased risk for another, wrote his team, at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary.

"This is the strongest data to date that suggest cigarette smoking may be a cause of cataract," said Christen, also an instructor at Harvard University Medical School.

Smoking may reduce the number of nutrients in blood plasma that keep the lens clear, the researchers said.

In the Nurses' Health Study, women who smoked 35 cigarettes or more daily had 1.63 times the likelihood of undergoing cataract surgery as nonsmoking women. The number of nurses in each category were not given.

Past smokers of more than 35 cigarettes a day had a similarly elevated risk, even 10 years after they had quit, the researchers found. They said damaged cells are compressed toward the center of the lens rather than being replaced.

Unlike the doctors' study, the nurses' study showed a proportional increase in cataract risk with the amount of cigarettes smoked. The nurses' study was led by Susan E. Hankinson, an epidemiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital and a research associate at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Robert Sperduto, chief of epidemiology at the National Eye Institute, said two studies in which his agency participated contradicted the latest studies. He acknowledged that the latest research increases already mounting evidence of a link between smoking and cataracts.

"It seems to me one has to concede that now there are four studies pointing in the same direction," he said by telephone Tuesday, noting that two previous large studies found a link. "As you get cumulative evidence, the evidence is more convincing.'

Skinheads attack Romanian refugee camp

The Associated Press

ROSTOCK, (Germany) Authorities moved about 200 Gypsies from Romania and other refugees Monday after their temporary home was attacked by skinheads and young rowdies who fought pitched street battles with police for three straight days. About 800 police battled some

500 people armed with stones and firebombs for nearly seven hours before restoring order, police said. Hundreds of residents hampered police and cheered as

as much fanfa the radicals attacked the home overnight, said Lothar Kupfer, ough the talkd but the Aggie interior minister for Western Pomerania state.

Several troublemakers and 74 they will have police officers were injured nile their opportunity with something during the weekend fighting, authorities in the northern coastal d to open its si iana State in B

harmed, police said. Rostock authorities said about 150 people were arrested.

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city. No asylum-seekers were

The rightists came from many parts of Germany and the attack appeared to have been coordinated in advance, police said. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government denounced the

violence, and Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters rushed to this economically depressed eastern German city to assess the situation.

About 100 police in riot gear stood by as the refugees left the 12-story apartment building and headed to buses that took them to other refugee shelters in eastern Germany. About 500 residents milled about and stared.

"We all want the same thing to get rid of them," a middle-aged man shouted. "Five buses came and took them away, and everything is quiet." ARD television said a newly

arrived group of Gypsies seeking political asylum made further disturbances almost "preprogrammed."

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Windows in the refugee home were shattered, and the grassy square in front was charred in places where cars, including police vehicles, burned over the weekend. Several flagpoles were bent over and shards of glass covered the ground.

"Germany is and remains a country that is friendly to foreigners," said Norbert Schaefer, a spokesman for Chancellor Helmut Kohl. He said "all necessary legal

means" would be used to stop radical violence.

Before about 200 extremists first attacked the home on Saturday, neighborhood residents had staged a protest against the presence of asylum-seekers, complaining about their loitering, police said.

The residents started shouting xenophobic slogans and encouraged the radicals when they began attacking the home with firebombs and stones, they said



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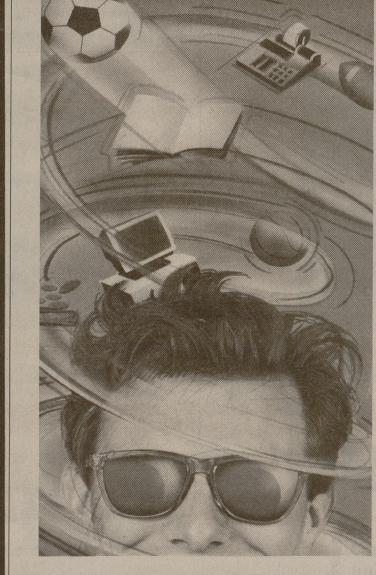
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