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FOR RELEASE

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**JAMA STUDY DOES NOT SUPPORT AIRLINE SMOKING BAN**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A study published today in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA - "Passive smoking on commercial airline flights") found that persons in and around the smoking sections of commercial airline flights were exposed to what other published scientific reports have termed minimal and biologically insignificant levels of environmental tobacco smoke.

"Anti-smokers will almost certainly attempt to use the JAMA study to buttress the case for a permanent smoking ban on U.S. flights," predicted Brennan Dawson, assistant to the president of The Tobacco Institute. "In fact," Dawson noted, "the study confirms that only minimal levels of cigarette smoke are present in nonsmoking sections, and this study presents data that is well within previously published ranges."

"The ranges of exposures published in JAMA today confirm minimal exposure levels, even in the smoking section," she added.

The JAMA study was conducted on four Air Canada flights and involved only five passengers and four flight attendants seated and working in and around the smoking sections on four-hour routine commercial airline flights.

JAMA's article reports that nonsmokers may experience annoyance or irritation -- and suggests that this correlates with exposure to tobacco smoke. However, the authors fail to account for such confounding variables as relative humidity, carbon dioxide and ozone, Ms. Dawson noted.

Dr. Larry Holcomb, author of a study published in Environmental Technology Letters that examined similar exposure data, said the JAMA study "is severely handicapped by the limited amount of data, subjects and flights." He added, "It is further inherently flawed by a complete lack of consideration of even the greatest factor affecting air quality on airlines -- relative humidity."

Holcomb said that "to characterize tobacco smoke as the culprit is irresponsible since other well known air quality factors such as humidity and ozone were not studied." On a four-hour flight, he noted, "it would not be at all unusual for relative humidity to drop to such a level as to be responsible for exactly the kind of symptoms reported by the subjects."

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In his study, Holcomb concluded that low concentrations of substances traceable to ETS in airline smoking sections confirm "the efficacy of separate sections for smokers and nonsmokers. The available data also suggest that factors or substances other than ETS may be major contributors to subjective complaints of discomfort by passengers and flight crews."

Dr. Robert M. Krauss, a psychology professor at Columbia University, reviewed a copy of the consent form obtained by The Tobacco Institute under the Freedom of Information Act. Dr. Krauss also questioned the study's findings.

"The subjects apparently were told in advance that they would be deliberately exposed to cigarette smoke and that breathing cigarette smoke is harmful. In these circumstances, it's questionable whether their reactions can be generalized to those of the average airline passenger. Without examining the responses of passengers who were not sensitized in advance to the issue of smoking, it is difficult to interpret the subjective responses of the subjects in this experiment," Krauss said.

Anti-smokers will attempt to use the JAMA report to provide ammunition to have smoking completely banned from airlines, Dawson predicted. "In fact, this latest study confirms the findings of previous research that 'the available scientific evidence does not support the prohibition of smoking on commercial aircraft'," she said.

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