



## Up in Smoke

**U**h, oh. Kids are smoking more, says a new national survey of high school seniors. Not only that, researchers fear that kids are smoking more because they see more stars puffing away in popular movies.

Cornelia Pechmann, an associate professor of marketing at University of California at Irvine, says one way to keep kids from smoking is to turn the tables on celluloid smokers by running anti-smoking public service announcements immediately before a film starts.

In a series of tests on nearly 1,500 teens over the past few years, she's found that anti-smoking ads work. Her latest study involved 232 ninth graders, who were divided into two groups. Each group was shown the movie "Reality Bites," which features

stars Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke smoking like chimneys. One group saw a 30-second anti-smoking ad before the films. The other half saw an ad about drunkenness.

Pechmann and her research colleague Chuan-Fong Shih found that the kids who saw the anti-smoking ad found smoking significantly "less exciting and fun, and were able to hold onto their negative preconceptions about teenage smokers" better than those who saw the anti-drunkenness ad.

These researchers recommend that anti-smoking ads be placed before films that feature profligate puffing—and that smoking be a criteria for determining a movie's rating.

After all, they note, a "single sexually derived swear word in a sexual context or a depiction of drug abuse will cause a movie to receive an R rating," while movie stars can smoke with impunity in a G-rated film.

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*Want to share bits of unconventional wisdom? E-mail them to: [morinn@clark.net](mailto:morinn@clark.net)*