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January 11, 1968

*file - Tobacco Inst -
(Prof. Sterling)*

TO: Frederick P. Haas, Esq.
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Addison Yeaman, Esq.

On September 26, 1967, Dave Hardy sent to each of you an initial analysis of the Public Health Service morbidity study by Professor Theodor Sterling. Several of you responded with helpful observations and suggestions for its improvement, which we have passed on to Professor Sterling. Dave was successful in encouraging him to continue work on a longer analysis and obtained the necessary materials to assist him in the project. His recently completed study entitled "An Evaluation and Critique of the Report Linking Cigarette Smoking to General Morbidity and Disability" is enclosed, together with an Abstract and Summary.

You will find that the long "Evaluation" concentrates on what Sterling believes are the most significant defects in the morbidity study. He has demonstrated that a wide scope of error may have been introduced by the methods used to measure morbidity, disability and smoking habits. In addition to the shortcomings of any home interview method involving diagnosis of medical conditions, he points out in detail that the use of proxy responses is not acceptable.

It is interesting and probably very telling to note that most of the information used in the morbidity study came from interviews with female members of the household who were at

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home at the time the interviewer called. The information in regard to female smokers and nonsmokers was, therefore, from "self-responses" for the most part, and was not affected so greatly by the proxy error possibility as was the data with regard to the males. The data with regard to female smokers and nonsmokers do not indicate that the female smokers are significantly different from the nonsmokers. The comparison between female smokers and nonsmokers does not support the conclusions reached in the morbidity report.

In spite of our instructions to the contrary, Sterling has submitted these papers "informally" to the Public Health Service. When reminded of our wish to view the material "first", Sterling wrote to say that to do so would have "weakened" his case. He added, "As it stands now, I have set in motion the process that will force the National Health Survey to defend its methods. I cannot do that, of course, if there is the slightest possibility of compromising my integrity in this matter."

These are not the documents Sterling is preparing for Congressional use. His "long" document is to incorporate all the arguments and his "short" document is to be a summary of it. We want, of course, to make suggestions with respect to the enclosed papers and again request comment. Some initial observations are enclosed.

The data received from PHS in response to Senator Clements' letter of August 4, 1967, is, according to Professor Sterling, of "no use" in analyzing the morbidity study. His letter of January 3, 1968, on this subject, is enclosed. We have brought this letter to the attention of The Tobacco Institute and will follow up with Sterling concerning steps which may be taken to get the "tapes" he mentions on page 2. We have asked The

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Tobacco Institute to take up with Covington & Burling the issue of confidentiality as it may relate to the data.

Professor Sterling has promised to provide us with a summary of his testimony that would be available during Congressional Hearings.

Sincerely,



William W. Shinn

WWS/r

Enclosures

cc: Senator Earle Clements
H. Thomas Austern, Esq.
Abe Krash, Esq.