



Get to know your project coordinator!

As a participant in C-STOP each of you has been or will soon be introduced to Mihai Raicu, project coordinator of the study. From this exclusive interview we hope you can get to know him a little bit better.

Mihai (pronounced Mee-hi) began working at the Clinical Addictions Research Lab (CARL) in December 2005.

His job as project coordinator consists of many duties, from working with the participants directly, being on-call by pager for emergencies, being a liaison to the study physician and Dr. King, coordinating staff duties, and general administrative work.

When asked what aspect of his job he enjoys most, Mihai responded, "I enjoy a variety of jobs that I do...The rewards I get at the end of the day are hearing the success stories regarding quitting smoking from our participants."

Mihai was born in Transylvania, Romania where he lived until he moved to the US, Michigan area at age twelve. Before arriving in the US he had studied English for two years, however, it took him some time to fully adjust to the language.

Before C-STOP Mihai attended Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan for Undergraduate and Graduate School.

In his personal life, Mihai enjoys racing his car at the race track, as well as attending car conventions. He plans to take up flying in the next two or three years.

He obviously has a passion for speed; when asked what superpower he would have if given the choice he answered "Flight."

Some other facts about Mihai:

Favorite movie: Top Gun

Favorite book: Shogun, by James Clavell.

Favorite TV shows: 24 and Alias



Mihai Raicu



Director's Note:

Summer is finally here and we look forward to moving into our newly renovated C-STOP lab by July 2007.

With the study continually expanding the timing couldn't have been better.

In this issue of The Quarterly Fix we feature articles on current smoking research and highlight an interview with our project coordinator, Mihai Raicu. As always, thank you for your continued participation in C-STOP.

A King MW

Know someone who wants to quit smoking? Contact us!

Web: <http://stopsmoking.uchicago.edu> Toll Free Phone: 1-877-CSTOP-911

Telephone: (773) 834-8654 Email: stopsmoking@uchicago.edu

Alcohol Increases Urges To Smoke

Dr. King and her colleagues recently published a paper on the effects of alcohol on self-reported smoking urge in a sample of light smokers ("chippers").

The study consisted of 39 subjects, all of whom were classified as heavy social drinkers. Each subject participated in three separate sessions where they received either placebo (with 1% alcohol to mask for taste), a low dose alcohol (equivalent to about two to three drinks) or high dose alcohol (equivalent to about four to five drinks). Subjects' smoking urges were assessed with questionnaires given at different points in the session.

Overall, the results of the study showed that both the low and high doses of alcohol significantly increased smoking urges, with

the high dose producing the greatest increase. The study also found that cigarette craving peaks very early after the consumption of alcohol (within 15 minutes), but persists for up to two hours.

In sum, even non-dependent smokers may be putting themselves at habitual risk of cigarette craving and, therefore, greater levels of smoking exposure by binge drinking regularly. The results may extend to smokers who want to quit: monitoring or reducing alcohol consumption may make quitting smoking easier.

Source: Epstein, A., Sher, T., Young, M., King, A. (2007). *Tobacco chippers show robust increases in smoking urge after alcohol consumption.* (2007). *Psychopharmacology* 190: 321-329.

Chicago Stop Smoking Project Staff

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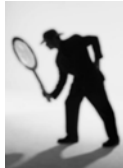
Diagnostic Interviewer
Doug Lepisto

Alcohol and Tobacco Ranked More Dangerous Than Illegal Drugs

According to a recent British study conducted by Professor David Nutt and colleagues at Britain's Bristol University, alcohol and tobacco are more dangerous than illegal drugs such as marijuana and ecstasy.

With these findings the researchers have proposed new methods for the classification of harmful drugs. In their proposition alcohol and tobacco appear within the top 10 most dangerous substances, ranking fifth and ninth respectively. Heroin and cocaine were ranked most dangerous, but were closely followed by barbiturates and street methadone. Cannabis was ranked eleventh and ecstasy appeared at the bottom of the list.

These conclusions were based on the opinion of psychiatrists specializing in addiction, as well as legal or police officials with scientific or medical expertise. These judges ranked the danger of each substance based on three factors: the physical harm on the user,



the drug's potential for addiction, and the societal impact of the drug.

The results of these rankings were harmonious amongst the groups of experts, but were not consistent with the current British ranking system, nor with the established system of any other country.

Commenting on Britain's current system Nutt wrote "The exclusion of alcohol and tobacco from the Misuse of Drugs Act is, from a scientific perspective, arbitrary." In support of this he cited evidence that tobacco causes 40 percent of all hospital illnesses, while alcohol is blamed for more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. The substances also harm society in other ways, damaging families and occupying police services.

Dr. Leslie Iversen, professor of pharmacology at Oxford University, and not

connected to the study, described the Nutt's research as, "The first real step towards an evidence-based classification of drugs." In his research Nutt has activated the promotion for change.

Based on these findings Wayne Hall, of the University of Queensland in Australia, suggested "the need for better regulation of the more harmful drugs that are currently legal, i.e. tobacco and alcohol."

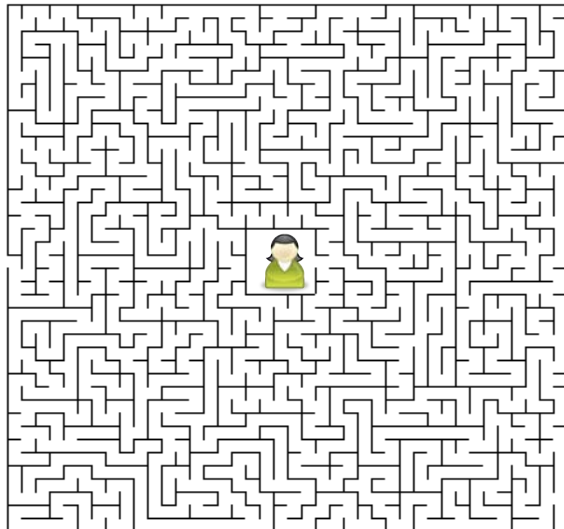
While criminalizing commonly used substances such as alcohol and tobacco is an extremely challenging task, the researchers suggest changes in government regulation and penalty in order to better reflect the dangers and risks involved in the use of a substance.



Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/03/23/drugs.report.ap/index.html>

Puzzle Corner: Help Rachel Find C-STOP's Temporary Location

The University of Chicago Hospitals is notoriously criticized for its maze-like structure; navigating the hallways may sometimes seem to require a compass. C-STOP has made every effort to provide you with the best directions to our location! Rachel, however, is lost. With your perfected navigation skills can you help her out?



Note: All of us at C-STOP thank you for your patience during our transition period and temporary relocation. We are looking forward to have our more comfortable and expanded space by July 2007.

Please note that everyone will be sent notification and directions closer to the date of the move. We look forward to our state-of-art clinical laboratory.