



**Japan Society for Tobacco Control**

日本禁煙学会

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Sadayoshi Fujishige, Chairman of AC Japan  
To all presidents of media companies in Japan

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Mr. Manabu Sakuta, Chairperson, Japan Society for Tobacco Control, General incorporated

The <featured article> published in Nihonkai Shimbun essentially advertises tobacco products in violation of an international agreement and makes false and medically inaccurate statements. Because the public interest group AC Japan appears to have published this article, this seems to be an especially serious problem. This Society believes that a serious negative influence on public welfare can result and advises that concerned parties not repeat such cases in the future.

To whom it may concern:

From Nihonkai Shimbun on 25 June 2019

<https://notobacco.jp/pslaw/nihonkai190625.pdf>

An entire page of the <featured article> "Don't stress during down time-relax in your own way" was published with the following three sections:

"Heal the soul and recharge-forest therapy in Chizucho"

"Feeling refreshed and accomplished-commuting and leisure by bicycle"

"Transform your mood with a puff: 'coexist' with heated tobacco" (C)

Above the last paragraph that states "Transform your mood with a puff: 'coexist' with heated tobacco", it states that "a new product has increased the taste and volume of vapor, and enhanced satisfaction, while being considerate of passive smoke". In a photograph next to the text, a smoker holds a "Plume Tech Plus" and exhales, and another shows a "Plume Tech Plus starter kit".

The text is explained as follows (the quoted people are underlined with (A)-(D)).

"The pleasure of smoking comes from relaxation, changing mood and increasing concentration. (A) ... (partly omitted) ... "heated tobacco", which now reduces the effects of passive smoke, (B) is marketed by all manufacturers. Japan Tobacco Inc. (JT), which says that it aims for a sustainable society where smokers and non-smokers can coexist (C), launched the marketing of Plume Tech Plus on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Due to low temperature heating,

substances causing health concerns have been reduced by approximately 99% compared to the combustion of traditional cigarettes (D). The stench of traditional tobacco has also been reduced, while using a traditional stick of tobacco and improving the output from suction. ... (partly omitted) ... In a questionnaire, some respondents said that the use of tobacco gave them a chance to talk or to chat with others. "Plume Tech Plus" can allow smokers and non-smokers to share the same space and to engage in interpersonal communication." (C)

Warnings (1) against misinformation

#### 1. Concerning the underlined phrase (A): smoking worsens mental health

This written advertisement states that "the pleasure of smoking comes from relaxation, changing mood and increasing concentration", citing a questionnaire of smokers as evidence.

However, it is misleading to use a questionnaire of smokers to assess the mental effects of smoking. Smokers feel that smoking helps to relieve stress, but only a temporarily, because withdrawal symptoms (brain dysfunction when not smoking) soon occur due to nicotine dependence. Reports from the US, UK and Japan have clearly demonstrated that smoking has no mental health benefit 1-3).

To fully assess the mental effects of nicotine, one needs to assess the mental state of a person who has permanently quit tobacco. According to a statistical method called meta-analysis, evidence clearly shows that smoking cessation reduces anxiety, depression and stress; and that it improves mood. In addition, large representative surveys have shown that those who quit smoking are much less likely to attempt suicide than those who continue to smoke, 5), 6).

Therefore, advertisements that currently imply a mental benefit from using tobacco, including heated tobacco, are highly misleading. For people who feel stress and complain of mental health problems, quitting tobacco entirely is the best step for lasting mental well-being.

- 1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease. 2010.
- 2) Great Britain Department of Health: Report of the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health. 1998..
- 3) Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare: Smoking and health, Research committee report on smoking and health problems (2016).
- 4) Taylor G et al: Change in mental health after smoking cessation: systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ* 348:g1151, 2014.
- 5) Yaworski D et al: The relation between nicotine dependence and suicide attempts in the general population. *Can J Psychiatry* 56(3):161-170, 2011.
- 6) Iwasaki M et al: Cigarette smoking and completed suicide among middle-aged men: a population-based cohort study in Japan. *Ann Epidemiol* 15(4):286-292, 2005.

#### 2. Concerning the underlined phrase (B): "being considerate of passive smoke" is a mere marketing strategy

The tobacco industry holds no interest in eliminating passive smoke. International and national laws that require "indoor smoking bans" to limit areas to smoke also regulate the

sales promotion of tobacco, including heated tobacco. Promoting the use of heated tobacco indoors to limit passive smoke would effectively try to extend the use of tobacco indoors, contravening existing laws that ban indoor passive smoke. If a company is “being considerate of passive smoke”, then it should immediately stop the production of combustible tobacco cigarettes, and then it should try to reduce the consumption of all tobacco products.

3. Concerning the underlined phrase (C): it is dangerous to "share the same space" with a user of heated tobacco

Harmful chemicals can be absorbed into the body from active use of heated tobacco and from the exhaled smoke or vapors generated by active users. On one hand, if the concentration of harmful substances were low, the use of heated tobacco in smoking areas would likely reduce the concentrations of passive smoke in such areas. On the other hand, if heated tobacco is used where smoking is prohibited (for example, in many indoor areas), then the dangers from passive smoke could increase. Or, if non-smokers falsely believe that it is safe to "share the same space" with heated tobacco users, dangers from passive smoke could increase.

4. Concerning the underlined phrase (D): There is no solid evidence of how dangerous heated tobacco is relative to conventional tobacco products, including conventional smokeless tobacco.

"Substances causing health concerns have been reduced by approximately 99% " has no precise meaning based because the "substances causing health concerns" were not specified. Some harmful substances occur in heated tobacco in similar concentrations as in combustible tobacco. Thus, it is deceptive to use the number "99%" in the statement and not to reveal the substances causing health concerns.

More explicitly, please refer to the following description of the risks and problems of heated tobacco.

Regarding the risk of innovative tobacco and nicotine products

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/crc512rdv8ljfu1/>

Warnings (2) against violation of Article 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and of the resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties.

1. It is a poor advertisement contrary to medical facts.

This article <featured article> introduces “Plume Tech Plus” and effectively functions as an advertisement. The content contradicts medical facts and implies that heated tobacco may be used in no smoking areas.

Regardless of whether the <featured article> is an advertisement, Article 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) prohibits "sales promotion that might produce false impressions".

○ FCTC Article 13 Tobacco advertisement, sales promotion and sponsorship

4. Signatory nations shall, in accordance with their constitution or constitutional principles, do at least the following:

(a) Prohibit advertising, promotion and sponsorship of all types of tobacco products that use false, misleading or fraudulent means or means that give a false impression of the properties of the tobacco product, its health effects, risks or emissions.

<http://www.jstc.or.jp/uploads/uploads/files/essay/20181025COP8FCTC13.pdf>

2. It is duty of signatory nations "not to promote sales of new types of tobacco products".

This <featured article> deviates from the duties of the signatory nations “not to promote sales of new types of tobacco products,” as established by the resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties, which was held on 6 October 2018 in Geneva.

○ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties

(6 October 2018, Geneva, Switzerland)

d) In accordance with Article 13 of the WHO FCTC, nations must not advertise, promote sales of or sponsor new types of tobacco products

<http://www.jstc.or.jp/uploads/uploads/files/information/COP82018106.pdf>

3. The publication by AC Japan is misleading.

Because this <featured article> has advertising content but does not mention the advertiser, the content appears to be from AC Japan and other organizations, as listed below the <featured article>. Thus, some readers might think that AC Japan, a public interest group, is advocating and endorsing heated tobacco. Such a perception would be contrary to the public interest because the publication seems to ignore dangers of tobacco products.

As mentioned above, the current <featured article> of the Nihonkai Shimbun underestimates the harmful nature of heated tobacco and claims a mental health benefits from smoking, thereby possibly causing a negative impact on society.

For the parties who are concerned, we request that similar cases not occur again.

Sincerely yours