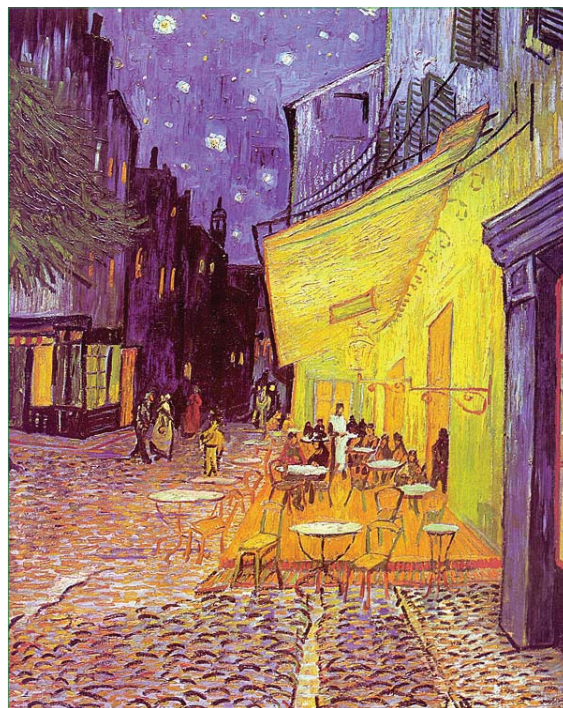


Coffee and Cigarettes: Second-Hand Smoke and Smoke-Free Laws

by

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It was Joshua Davenport's dream to own a coffee bar/bistro, the kind that he had frequented in the Trastevere section of Rome as an exchange student in his senior year of high school. Being from the small town of Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania, situated on the Delaware River, he wanted to bring that old world elegance to his rural community, a place where neighbors could meet and converse over espresso drinks prepared by an expert barista.

"Espressivo" was conveniently located in the borough and attracted many young people, especially the college students from the nearby campus, where Espressivo was known as the hot spot (commonly referred to as "E"), a cultural mecca with monthly art galleries, acoustic bands, and poetry slams. It also attracted an older clientele, who came before and/or after work to either start their day or end it, as well as on weekends, as part of their shopping ritual for antiques and other curios from the unique shops in town.

In keeping with the tradition of a European espresso bar, Joshua allowed smoking inside the bar and the patio that surrounded the open-air layout of the corner location. Although Joshua was a reformed smoker himself, he wanted his customers to feel comfortable. Besides, Pennsylvanians were known for being especially vocal about their personal and political rights, rights that the Founding Fathers had established and fought for in the near by battles of the Revolutionary War.

But in September of 2008, the state passed the Pennsylvania Clean Indoor Air Act, which prohibited the smoking of tobacco products in most indoor public places, although it included a provision that allowed businesses to offer outdoor smoking on all patios, decks, and outdoor seating areas. The general public had become aware of the harmful effects of second-hand smoke and the cover-ups of previous research by "Big Tobacco." Public pressure not only influenced the indoor smoking bans in many states, but also fostered negative attitudes towards smoking in outdoor areas and the issue of second-hand smoke. After the Clean Indoor Air law was passed, many neighboring family-style restaurants with outdoor seating began to extend the smoking ban to their outside dining areas.

Joshua had observed that many of his regular younger customers liked to smoke while enjoying their drinks and small menu items, but he also noticed that his wealthier weekend/working clientele were negatively commenting about his outdoor smoking policy, and there was a slight decrease in business from families. Joshua needed to decide whether to continue to allow outdoor smoking or to ban smoking in keeping with the trend towards reducing exposure to second-hand smoke.

Questions

1. What is meant by second-hand smoke from tobacco products? Why is it harmful?

2. What are some of the medical, ethical, and societal issues that surround the passage of laws regarding smoking in indoor public areas and the subsequent pressure on eliminating public outdoor sources of second-hand smoke? Which of these are scientifically based reasons?
3. Do you think that the decision to ban smoking in public indoor areas is a national, state, or local governmental issue? Why?
4. If you were the owner of a beverage/food serving business in the city where you live, would you institute a smoking ban in outdoor dining areas? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of any method that effectively reduces smoke in enclosed indoor areas that could be used in an outdoor public area that allows smoking?
6. Based on the problem presented and the information presented in the case, formulate a hypothesis about the smoking policy in the outdoor dining area and profitability. Make a prediction about your hypothesis and then think of the possible scientific methods that could test your hypothesis, accumulating data to support (or disprove) your hypothesis.



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