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benefit by Americans.) This is subtle stuff, but it is necessary to remove barriers to implementation of the lessons learned from Europe.

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Carcinogens by Fiat?

R. Jeffrey Smith, in the briefing related to preliminary findings on the carcinogenicity of xylitol (News and Comment, 10 Feb., p. 670), appears—as do several governmental agencies—to interpret the Delaney Clause as one without reasonable modifiers. The clause in its entirety is, “No additive shall be deemed to be safe if it is found to induce cancer when ingested by man or animal, or if it is found, after tests which are *appropriate* for the *evaluation* of the safety of food additives, to induce cancer in man or animal [italics added].”

The italicized words could and should be used to establish the appropriateness of the evidence used to ban varied substances. The farcical nature of decisions to ban substances given to animals, usually rodents, by stomach tube in horrendous amounts, or in other ways inappropriate to human exposure, should be apparent. On the other hand, the need of pharmacological studies for the inherent evaluation of the biological activity of such substances is evident, but their applicability to human practices should be judged by separate criteria.

The interpretation of the first part of the clause as requiring instant action even if one animal is known to have developed a malignancy surely should be interpreted as meaning a *valid* observation of the causal relationship of the additive to cancer. Under such circumstances, both parts of the clause are congruent.

Last, in contrast to the few, if any, identifiable deaths from additives covered by the Delaney Clause, there have been more than 2 million premature cancer deaths since 1950 from tobacco products, which are excluded from regulation by the Delaney Clause. In addition to tobacco, the “natural” additives, such as aflatoxins and various radioactive elements in food plants, are also not covered by the Delaney Clause.

Carcinogen should be a biological appellation, not a legislative term.

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