

Hello Eric,

I want to compliment you for doing what any self respecting writer should do...present a balanced report without editorializing. I only noticed your article in the first place, and its evenhandedness because I have been chasing after another article which does exactly the opposite.

I work in tobacco harm reduction which is all about finding safer alternatives for people who can't or won't quit nicotine, and one of those alternatives is smokeless tobacco (which is about 99% less harmful than smoking). One of our greatest concerns is that there is so much information out there discouraging smokers from trying this, We are not in the business of increasing smokeless tobacco sales but it doesn't bother us if that happens as a consequence of people switching to smokeless to avoid the death and disease associated with smoking.

Anyway the new big piece of misinformation out there is a recent article on this same issue by Vicki Smith at ap.com. [Article at:<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/24/AR2008112400821.html>].

I am trying but have not been able to write to her directly to let her know about the many actual falsehoods in her article. It is possible she is simply unaware of all the work that has gone on in this area but as a reporter she should have really dug a little deeper. It ended up being a simple scare piece which could easily result in smokers being warned off one thing that might just save their lives. (And being a scare piece it is getting reprinted more than a balanced one would.)

Again, thank you,

Paul