

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a working Doctor in the field of Respiratory Medicine. As such I see the devastating effects of tobacco on the health of the population. In my particular speciality I see hundreds of people with lung cancer, emphysema, asthma, pneumonia and a variety of other diseases that are all fully or partly directly due to smoking. Unfortunately many of the patients started smoking many years ago and became addicted due to the nicotine content of cigarettes. Wales like other part of the United Kingdom continues to have a large burden of tobacco related disease and the drive to reduce smoking rates remains of paramount importance to the health of the nation.

Smokefree legislation introduced around the world, including Wales has gone some distance in reducing the uptake of smoking, helping current smokers to quit and reducing the serious diseases caused by second hand smoke.

The recent suggestion that the laws in Wales be changed with respect to smoking within the entertainment industry is unnecessary and dangerous and should be dismissed for the following reasons:

1. Workers in entertainment industry should not be exposed to secondhand smoke as this will lead to smoking related disease including deadly cancers. Ninety per cent of second hand smoke is not visible but the harm remains.
2. Smoking in the media is well known to raise the likelihood that children and adults watching these productions are more likely to smoke and thus develop smoking related illness, including deadly cancers. As a society we should be working towards removing media depictions of smoking, not encouraging it or making it look more realistic.
3. There are many alternatives to cigarettes ie e-cigarettes type products if scenes with smoking are deemed essential and appropriate.

I hope the Welsh Assembly Government put the health of the nation before the interests of the tobacco companies and entertainment industries, who do not have to treat the public for preventable smoking related distressing illness.

I am happy to arrange for members of the committee considering this amendment to visit my hospital or the local hospice if it helps to understand the impact of there decision.

With best wishes

Sanjay Agarwal