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MINNESOTA TOBACCO LITIGATION

The Statistics of Lung Cancer

In 1900, fewer than 4% of the 343,000 deaths in the United States were attributed to cancer. By 1970, over 300,000 cancer deaths accounted for 16% of all the deaths in this country. It is understandable, therefore, that in 1972 a concerned Congress authorized spending more than \$1.5 billion of federal funds for the study of this dread disease.

The rise in the proportion of deaths due to cancer over the past 70 years has been attributed to many factors, such as the reduction in infectious diseases, the reduction of infant and maternal deaths, and the introduction of medications such as antibiotics and other drugs, all of which have had the net effect of increasing life span in the United States. ("Life expectancy" of an infant born in 1900 was 47.3 years; the figure for today's baby is 71.3 years.)

Though some forms of cancer have decreased in prevalence during the past 50 years, vital statisticians have noted, with alarm, an apparent dramatic increase in lung cancer, especially among American men.

A popular view, reported repeatedly in newspapers, magazines, official publications and scientific periodicals is that lung cancer is caused by smoking. This opinion is so firmly held in some quarters that those who question it

TIMN 0017584
