

Polosa Riccardo: Numerous tobacco and vape industry ties, including the following: "Lecture fees from a number of European EC industry and trade associations (including FIVAPE in France and FIESEL in Italy) were directly donated to vaper advocacy nonprofit organizations... RP is also founder of the Center for Tobacco prevention and treatment (CPCT) at the University of Catania and of the Center of Excellence for the acceleration of HArm Reduction (CoEHAR) at the same University, which has received support from [the Philip Morris International-funded] Foundation for a Smoke Free World to conduct 8 independent investigator-initiated research projects on harm reduction."

Declared and non-declared **conflicts of interests** of Polosa R, et al.:

Health, Science, and Technology (Research, Education, and Awareness).

General support to INNCO to assist the organization in its work as an advocate for tobacco harm reduction

International Network Of Nicotine Consumer Organisations Denmark

INTL FCStone Financial Inc. USA

Agriculture and Livelihoods Sponsorship for the Southern Africa Structured Trade Seminar, Just Managing Consulting Report on government ownership in the tobacco industry, conflicts of interest, FCTC reporting, and public health policies

In-depth analysis of areas identified whilst gathering data about government ownership in tobacco companies

Contribute to the development of a theory of change model for state-owned tobacco companies

Knowledge Action Change Limited, UK

Produce the first edition of the Global State of Tobacco Harm Reduction (GSTHR) report

Increase capacity for conducting and understanding research related to tobacco harm reduction

Translation of the executive summary of GSTHR report from English to Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish

Increase the profile and extend dissemination of the GSTHR report

Develop and disseminate Global State of Tobacco Harm Reduction report to increase awareness about national THR and cessation

Land O'Lakes Venture37, Malawi, Agriculture and Livelihoods

Establishment of a Center of Excellence for Agricultural Transformation (CAT) in Malawi

Law Enforcement Action Partners (Filter Magazine) USA

Build capacity to share stories that present facts about tobacco harm reduction and nicotine use to all stakeholders

Lumos Diagnostics Pty Ltd USA

Health, Science, and Technology (Research, Education, and Awareness)

Scoping work for research concerning biomarkers of nicotine product exposure (development of a rapid point of care assay)

Lumos Diagnostics Pty Ltd USA

Agriculture and Livelihoods, Support agricultural productivity and diversification through better management of natural resources to

prepare Malawi for a time when there is less demand for leaf tobacco

Patras Science Park S.A. – Biohealth Hub, Greece

Scoping work for development of an Institute for Research and Innovation on THR

QBal (Quality Belligerence) Pakistan, Agriculture and Livelihoods

Development of tobacco control farmers focused tobacco control policy in Pakistan

Identify best practice evaluation methods for readily available tobacco and nicotine consumer products

Building an economic argument for tobacco harm reduction as one route to cessation in Pakistan

To build evidence for a supportive HRP regulatory environment in Pakistan

Rose Research Center, LLC USA, Health, Science, and Technology (Research, Education, and Awareness)

RICONOSCIMENTI

Start Cup Catania 2018

Nel primo anno di attività, ECLAT ha partecipato al Premio "Start Cup Catania 2018", la business plan, competition promossa dall'Università di Catania, classificandosi al secondo posto con un premio per l'avvio delle prime attività. Ammessa alla "Start Cup Sicilia 2018" a Palermo, ECLAT ha superato la fase regionale ed è stata infine ammessa alla finale del Premio Nazionale per l'Innovazione, a Verona nel novembre 2018.

Nel novembre 2019, a Roma, ECLAT ha partecipato a “Università, imprese, innovazione”, un evento organizzato da Intesa Sanpaolo, Università di Cagliari, Catania, Palermo, Sassari e della Toscana, e imprenditori del territorio, per valorizzare e premiare le migliori 15 start-up sorte in seno alle Università. In questa occasione ECLAT è stata premiata con una targa al merito. Vai all'articolo dedicato ECLAT è parte integrante di quello che è stato definito come il consorzio CoEHAR Partnership

ECLAT si avvale della preziosa collaborazione di numerosi partner nazionali e internazionali. Partner privilegiato è il CoEHAR, Centro di Eccellenza per la Riduzione del Danno da Fumo, istituito all'interno del Dipartimento di Medicina Clinica e Sperimentale dell'Università degli Studi di Catania. Altri partner di

Centre of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction (CoEHAR)

tobaccotactics.org/wiki/coehar

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The Center of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction (CoEHAR), an interdepartmental Research Centre, was founded in March 2018 by Riccardo Polosa at the University of Catania, Italy. CoEHAR is one of the multiple “Centres of Excellence” set up with Foundation funding as hubs for research on tobacco harm reduction.

For more information on the Foundation, see our pages on the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World and its Centres of Excellence.

Relationship with the tobacco industry

Both CoEHAR and its founder Polosa have significant links to the tobacco industry. Polosa has disclosed that he has worked as a consultant to British American Tobacco. He has also previously received funding from Philip Morris International, Philip Morris USA, JUUL Labs Inc. and collaborated with tobacco industry scientists. More information can be found on our page on Riccardo Polosa.

CoEHAR funded by Foundation for a Smoke-Free World

In 2018, CoEHAR was given two grants worth US\$205,805 in total from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (FSFW), an ostensibly independent scientific organisation aimed at “accelerating the end of smoking”, which is solely funded by Philip Morris International (PMI). The official grantee named in FSFW’s 2018 tax return was ECLAT SRL, “a spin off of the University of Catania”. The purpose of the first grant was to set up the Centre of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction (COEHAR), and the other was to

“accelerate and improve smoking precision and detection rate of monitoring the smoking episodes by using the smokebeat technology”. The first grant was awarded on 30 May 2018 to the value of US\$130,559 and the second grant was awarded on 28 September 2018 and worth US\$75,246. The tax return also shows that at the end of 2018, US\$22,810 in grant money was still to be paid to the Centre.

In 2019, CoEHAR received an additional US\$8,036,493 from FSFW to: “act as a hub for the global coordination of scientific research projects for advancing the science of tobacco cessation and harm reduction.”

Other details of ECLAT projects were given on the FSFW tax return: ECLAT executes 5 primary project types (1) cohort and clinical studies; (2) product characterisation ; (3) wellness studies; (4) technological innovation and (5) knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening”. The FSFW 2019 tax return also showed that it had committed a further US\$22,928,186 in funding to CoEHAR in the future.

As of February 2021, the University of Catania and CoEHAR have not disclosed the FSFW funding for CoEHAR on their respective websites.

CoEHAR describes itself as a consortium with partners including Eclat (the organisation through which CoEHAR receives its grant funds from FSFW) , the ‘Center for Tobacco Prevention and Treatment’ (CPCT) and the Italian Anti-Smoking League (LIAF). CoEHAR also lists seventeen ‘international partners’ which include other FSFW grantees COREISS and the NOSMOKE Institute at Patras Science Park, and universities in Iran, Morocco, Serbia, Romania, Bangladesh, USA, Oman, Poland, Russia, India and the UK.

People

The CoEHAR staff page states it employs a group of researchers and administration staff from the University of Catania. The staff at CoEHAR work in a variety of departments at the university such as Clinical and Experimental Medicine, Legal Sciences, Biomedical

and Biotechnological Sciences and the Centre for Tobacco Prevention and Treatment. Riccardo Polosa is the founder of CoEHAR. Polosa was also the Director of CoEHAR up until January 2020 when he was replaced by Giovanni Li Volti, who signed a four year contract with the Centre. Giovanni Li Volti is also a professor at the University of Catania in the Department of Biomedical and Biotechnological Sciences.

Outputs

CoEHAR have launched some of their Foundation-funded research projects, including: CoEHAR launched ‘Catania Conversation’, a project which aims to connect journalists, scientists and opinion leaders to work together and fill the “communication gaps” around tobacco harm reduction.

In November 2019, CoEHAR launched “REPLICA”, an initiative looking to replicate studies on e-cig and HTP to independently validate industry results. At the first international training Rector Professor Francesco Prioli, head of the Physics & Astronomy Department at the University of Catania, outlined the study’s aim: “Replica will validate the independence of the results of science from any type of external influence”. In February 2020, Serbian national television broadcast a tour of CoEHAR’s research laboratory at the University of Kragujevac with Giovanni Li Volti. Serbia is one of the six partner countries participating in the Replica project which aims to research the damage caused by conventional cigarette smoke. In addition to Italy and Serbia, the other countries participating are the US, Russia, Oman and Indonesia.

In October 2019, CoEHAR launched the International Summer School on Project Management (ISPM) which aimed to support project management skills of young professionals and students. Riccardo Polosa and Francesco Purrello, the Director of the Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine at the University of Catania, are on the ISPM Committee board. Polosa has published a huge volume of research papers, some in collaboration with colleagues from CoEHAR. Some fail to disclose the links between CoEHAR, FSFW and PMI. The following are several

examples of research publications in which Polosa **failed to disclose** that he is funded by FSFW.

A 2020 article titled Smoking and SARS-CoV-2 Disease (COVID-19): Dangerous Liaisons or Confusing Relationships? critiques a study conducted by Brake and colleagues concerning the relationship between smoking and COVID-19. Polosa and his colleagues argue the original study is highly inaccurate in stating that e-cigarettes are not “safer” than traditional cigarettes.

Another article published in 2020 critiques a study conducted by Reynales-Shigematsu and colleagues concerning the public health impact in Mexico of combustion-free electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS). Polosa and his colleagues argue that the original study does not recognise the utility of e-cigarettes as a harm reduction alternative for improving smoking cessation.

A 2019 paper identified as an issue the lack of anti-smoking treatments for e-cigarette or dual users. The article outlines the trial steps to test the efficacy of varenicline, combined with 12 weeks of counselling, on e-cigarette users willing to quit. As of the article publication date, the study proposed in the article had not taken place.

A study published in 2019 evaluated different smoking cessation treatments to estimate their efficacy. Its findings include that different strategies, such as using e-cigarettes, improves the success of smoking cessation.

In 2018, a CoEHAR-affiliated article promoted research on how virtual reality can increase smoking cessation in young adults.

The conflict of interest statement in the following articles, which are co-authored by Polosa, do state that the CoEHAR has received a grant from the FSFW to develop research projects. A 2020 article, titled “A Report on Smoking Detection and Quitting Technologies”, evaluated the usability and effectiveness of different available smoking detection and quitting technologies designed to encourage smoking cessation and included the following statement: “Produced with the help of a grant from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, Inc”. In 2019, Polosa and colleagues published an editorial piece entitled “Health Impact of electronic cigarettes and heated

tobacco systems“ and a narrative review of e-cigarette aerosol emissions and respiratory health, which both promote the relative safety and reduced public health impacts of using tobacco harm reduction products such as e-cigarettes in comparison to conventional cigarettes.

Events

The CoEHAR Catania Conversation initiative hosts an online masterclass webinar on 29 May 2020, which is World No Tobacco Day. On 3 March 2020, CoEHAR partnered with the Italian Anti-Smoking League (LIAF) to participate in a seminar during ‘Scientific Culture Week’ at the University of Catania. After many years as President of LIAF, Polosa now serves as LIAF’s Chief Scientific Advisor. In September 2019, the winners of the Conrad Challenge, which is funded by FSFW, travelled to CoEHAR as part of their grand prize. The group of students from the US were guests at CoEHAR for three days and followed a structured visitor programme learning about innovation, technology and excellence at the centre. On 24 June 2019, a conference, led by Riccardo Polosa, announced the CoEHAR’s nine new smoking cessation and harm reduction research projects. These were: Smoke Free Sicily, Food Recognition Tech, Smile Study, EU-PATH, International Summer School on Project Management, Replication Studies, Long-Term Health Effect Study, Diasmoke 2.0 and In Silico Science. Speakers at the event included Dr Derek Yach, the President of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. The nine CoEHAR initiatives are being funded by a grant from the Foundation.

Lobbying

In September 2019, Riccardo Polosa coordinated the first CEN European Standards Committee round table meeting in Catania. Polosa lobbied for tight quality and safety standards for additions to e-cigarette liquids and their design to ensure the safety of the European Vaping Products Market.

In August 2019, Riccardo Polosa travelled to New Delhi to urge the Indian Ministry of Health to reconsider the recommendation of a ban on e-cigarettes in all states. A team of scientists, led by Polosa,

explained that the government should instead integrate the promotion of “reduced harm” products alongside tobacco control measures and withdraw their recommendation to ban e-cigarettes.

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FSFW funded Patras University. Konstantinos Farsalinos is on the Scientific Panel of LIAF with Polosa and Nutt and Bauld etc.

Milton was on the NUTT Panel and a GTNF attendee

<https://www.pharmacielo.com/leadership/>

Nadia Crosignani, PhD, Uruguay Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Board

<http://en.expocannabis.uy/speaker/nadia-crosignani/>

Konstantinos Farsalinos, MD, MPH, Greece Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Board

Gerard Madlambayan, PhD, United States Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Board

Anders Milton, MD, PhD, Sweden Member, Medical & Scientific Advisory Board

Nutt Report GTNF

Riccardo Polosa, MD, PhD, Italy Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Board

Nutt Report GTNF GFN etc LIAF FSFW Eclat CoEhar- Catania

Solomon Tshimong Rataemane, MD, South Africa Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Board

<https://gfn.net.co/archive/2017-speakers-bios/363-rataemane-solomon-2017>

<http://www.nosmokesummit.org/speakers/solomon-tshimong-rataemane/>

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<https://www.pharmacielo.com/team-member/david-richardson-bsc-msc-phd-fifst-frsm-united-kingdom/>

Since 2019 Polosa has served on the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board (MSAB) of PharmaCielo, a Canadian company which sells [cannabis](#) oil.