

# E-cigarettes: Mixing Research and Marketing

From TobaccoTactics

<http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php/E-cigarettes: Mixing Research and Marketing>

<http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php?title=E-cigarettes: Mixing Research and Marketing&action=edit>

In Italy, the lead scientist in a clinical trial on e-cigarettes was involved in marketing the brand of e-cigarettes that he researched himself.

A clinical trial at the University of Catania in Italy and published in *BioMedCentral* claimed that e-cigarettes are more effective for smoking cessation and for reducing daily cigarette consumption than nicotine replacement therapy. This was one of the first pieces of evidence showing that e-cigarettes can help smokers quit. The results sparked discussion between people who believe in the benefits of e-cigarettes, and those who advocate e-cigarette sales bans, as is explained on the page [E-cigarettes](#).

## Mixed Interests

The lead researcher in this trial was **Dr. [Riccardo Polosa](#)**, MD, PhD, Director of the Institute for Internal Medicine and Clinical Immunology of the University of Catania in Italy. He is also in charge of the University Centre for Tobacco Research (CPCT) and Honorary Professor of Medicine at Southampton University in the UK. On top of his academic work, he holds the post of director of Lega Italiana Anti Fumo (LIAF), the Italian Anti-Smoking League.

**LIAF COMMUNIQUE - the expert, Prof. Riccardo Polosa speaks**

**LIAF-Onlus**

Quitting smoking is not easy, but you can succeed. LIAF-Onlus, the Italian Anti-Smoking League, is committed to actually helping smokers quit and to protect those who suffer damage from secondhand smoke. The physical and psychological dependence on the smoke of cigarettes is a chronic relapsing disease. Smoke, including that which is passive, causes serious damage to the health of adults and children: pathological tumours, cardio-circulatory disturbances, respiratory, premature aging. Electronic cigarettes are a useful instrument, with lower exposure, to reduce or eliminate dependence on traditional cigarettes. If you choose to undertake a path to stop smoking, you can ask your own doctor or check with one of the hospital anti-smoking centres throughout the country, where medical experts will show how to recommend the course best suited to you to stop smoking.

**STUDY ON CATEGORIA™ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES™**

**In Site**

Consult the presentation and the study effected by Prof. Riccardo Polosa

**ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES IS DONE IN 2**

COMMERCIALIZZAZIONE AUTORIZZATA DALL'ISTITUTO SUPERIORI DI SANITA'  
PRODOTTORE: categoria - I&L - s.p.a./s.r.l.

## 2. Dr. Riccardo Polosa at the [Catagoria e-cigarette website](#) Screengrab Oct 2011

### Funzionamento delle sigarette elettroniche CATEGORIA

Il funzionamento della sigaretta elettronica CATEGORIA è estremamente semplice. L'aspirazione attraverso il filtro viene rilevata da un sensore che attiva la batteria, la quale, a sua volta, fornisce energia al vaporizzatore. Il vaporizzatore infine, riscaldandosi, nebulizza la soluzione contenuta nel filtro trasformandola in vapore acqueo. Per rendere ancora più verosimile l'effetto finale, oltre all'emissione di vapore acqueo che riproduce fedelmente il fumo derivante dalla combustione tradizionale, l'accensione del led rosso, in corrispondenza delle boccate, simula la brace delle normali sigarette.

È l'unica approvata dalla LIAF (Lega Italiana anti fumo) e la sola presentata dal Professor Riccardo Polosa al progetto clinico contro il tabagismo in Europa.

**FILTRO CATEGORIA**  
con nicotina  
senza nicotina

**VAPORIZZATORE**  
si attiva quando si aspira

**BATTERIA**  
ricaricabile

**LED**  
si accende quando si aspira

NINA SENICAR

**Liberi di fumare**

### [1. e-cigarette Categoria website](#), screengrab Oct 2011

The research into the e-cigarette was conducted at Polosa's Centre for Tobacco Research in cooperation with the Italian Anti Smoking League. On closer inspection, the trial focused on just one brand of e-cigarettes: 'Categoria'<sup>[1]</sup> (see its website at picture 1 on the left). The results of the research featured on the front page of the Anti-Smoking League's website.<sup>[2]</sup>

Moreover, Dr. Polosa appeared on the Categoria brand website to endorse the e-cigarette (see screenshot in picture 2 above) - and third, the Anti Smoking League granted Categoria its seal of approval (Picture 3).



### 3. LIAF Approved, screengrab Oct 2011

So, as a director of the Italian Anti-Smoking League, Polosa promoted the e-cigarettes he researched at the University, while as a honorary professor of medicine he endorsed the e-cigarettes on the brand's website. Polosa is open about his involvement with the producer of Categoria, the Arbi Group, and did not see it as a competing interest. In the journal that published his research, *BioMedCentral*, he declared that "from February 2011, he has been serving as a consultant for Arbi Group Srl. Arbi Group Srl (Milano, Italy), the manufacturer of the e-Cigarette supplied the product, and unrestricted technical and customer support. They were not involved in the study design, running of the study or analysis and presentation of the data."<sup>[1]</sup>

- For more detail on links with the Tobacco Industry, see [Riccardo Polosa](#)

## Notes

1. ↑ [Jump up to: 1.0 1.1](#) R. Polosa et al, [Effect of an Electronic Nicotine Delivery Device \(e-Cigarette\) on Smoking Reduction and Cessation: A Prospective 6-Month Pilot Study](#), *BMC Public Health*, 11 October 2011, accessed October 2011
2. [Jump up ↑](#) LIAF website, [Le sigarette elettroniche aiutano a ridurre la dipendenza tabagica](#), accessed October 2011

# Riccardo Polosa

From TobaccoTactics

[http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Riccardo\\_Polosa](http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Riccardo_Polosa)

[http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Harm\\_Reduction](http://www.tobaccotactics.org/index.php/Harm_Reduction)

<http://www.e-cigarette-summit.com/speaker/professor-riccardo-polosa/>

Dr. Riccardo Polosa, MD, PhD, is the Director of the Institute for Internal Medicine and Clinical Immunology of the [University of Catania](#) in Italy. He is also in charge of the University's Centre for Tobacco Research (CPCT), and Honorary Professor of Medicine at [Southampton University](#) (UK). An internationally recognized leader in the field of clinical bronchoprovocation (airway-challenge studies), he is author of more than 200 peer reviewed articles and books mainly covering respiratory medicine, clinical immunology, and tobacco addiction.<sup>[1]</sup>

After many years as the director of Lega Italiana Anti Fumo (LIAF), the [Italian Anti-Smoking League](#), he is now their Chief Scientific Advisor according to his bio for the E-cigarette Summit in November 2014<sup>[2]</sup> or its Director Science, as the website says in [report on Polosa's speech](#) at a FDA hearing on the regulation of e-cigarettes in Washington in the same month.

Polosa was the lead scientist in a clinical trial on e-cigarettes with positive outcomes. As a director of the Italian Anti-Smoking League, Polosa promotes the [e-cigarettes](#) he researched at the University, while as an honorary professor of medicine he endorsed the e-cigarettes on the brand's website. For more details see the page on [E-cigarettes: Mixing Research and Marketing](#).

## Business links

His profile at [Bloomberg Businessweek](#) says that his is:

- Cordex Pharma, Inc. - Member of Scientific Advisory Board,
- Aspirex™ - Clinical Director of the development program
- Duska Therapeutics Inc. - Member of Scientific Advisory Board

he is also:

- [NicotinePolicy.net](#) Correspondent

## Conflicting Interests

For the E-cigarette conference in November 2014, Polosa filed the following conflicted interests<sup>[2]</sup>:

- received lecture fees and research funding from GlaxoSmithKline and Pfizer, manufacturers of stop smoking medications.
- served as a consultant for Pfizer and Arbi Group Srl (Milano, Italy), the distributor of Categoria™ e-Cigarettes.

- His research on electronic cigarettes is currently supported by LIAF (Lega Italiana AntiFumo).

## Research funded by Philip Morris

In 2004, Polosa put out a press release in his function as the president of the Italian anti-smoking union LIAF, saying that his Institute would develop a research project on nicotine addiction [jointly with PMI](#). According to the LIAF website, Philip Morris invited Polosa to start a research project on the harm of smoking, and offered to pay for it. Polosa claimed he was awarded \$400,000 and two grants of \$15,000 for students at a yearly base.<sup>[3]</sup> The funding is the result of what LIAF calls "a paradoxical law in the USA" that requires an American manufacturer of tobacco to fund studies on the effects of both active and passive smoking on public health. The money is awarded through an independent committee. "Truly independent", according to Polosa (*Una commissione - sottolinea Polosa - che è veramente indipendente e che non ha mai subito pressioni dalla Philip Morris*), "it has never been pressured by Philip Morris."<sup>[3]</sup>

Internal correspondence in the Legacy Archive shows that PMI was not happy with Polosa's press release and thought about asking for a rectification.<sup>[4]</sup> However, further research confirmed that Polosa had applied for funding from the PM External Research Program<sup>[5]</sup>, which he was granted for a two year project starting 1 May 2003. (\$189,575 in the first year, and \$125,485 in the second, a total of \$316,060 and funding for two fellowships). The research aimed to identify smokers with greater risk of thrombosis using markers of active smokers at different times after smoking cessation.<sup>[6][7][8]</sup>

## Notes

1. [Jump up](#) ↑ Paul Bergen, [E Cigarette Interview with Professor Riccardo Polosa](#), The Ash Tray blog, October 2011, accessed October 2011
2. ↑ [Jump up to: 2.0 2.1](#) E-cigarette conference, [Professor Riccardo Polosa](#), website, November 2014, accessed December 2014
3. ↑ [Jump up to: 3.0 3.1](#) LIAF website, [Philip Morris finanzia ricerca tabagismo](#), accessed October 2011
4. [Jump up](#) ↑ Kevin Osborne [News appeared on Italian media, PM funding Italian Antismoking Association?](#), email trail, 9 April 2004
5. [Jump up](#) ↑ Philip Morris External Research Program, [Application for Research Grant](#), Riccardo Polosa, 26 August 2002, Legacy Archive
6. [Jump up](#) ↑ SHANNONHOUSE,D; WALK,RA. [ITALIAN MEDIA NEWS](#), 8 April 2004, Philip Morris. Official title of research: "Smoke and endothelial/platelet activation: evaluation of prothrombotic markers during smoking cessation"
7. [Jump up](#) ↑ Legacy Archive, [Philip Morris External Research Program Summary](#), Polosa, Riccardo, 15 April 2004
8. [Jump up](#) ↑ The following article is listed as [Peer reviewed publication acknowledging support from the Philip Morris External Research Program](#) PMI Cacciola, R.R.; Guarino, F.; Polosa, R.; "Relevance of endothelial-haemostatic dysfunction in cigarette smoking". *Current Medicinal Chemistry* 14:103-112, 2007.

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/13/54>

## Competing interests - Polosa

RP has received grant support from respiratory drug manufacturers including CV Therapeutics, NeuroSearch A/S, Sandoz, Merck Sharp & Dohme, and Boehringer-Ingelheim; he has served as a speaker for CV Therapeutics, Novartis, Merck Sharp & Dohme, and Roche and as a consultant for CV Therapeutics, Duska Therapeutics, Neuro-Search A/S, Boehringer-Ingelheim, and Forest Laboratories. He has received payment for developing educational presentations from Merck Sharp & Dohme, Novartis, and Almirall. RP has also received lecture fees and research funding from manufacturers of stop smoking medications including GlaxoSmithKline and Pfizer and served as a consultant for Pfizer, Global Health Alliance for treatment of tobacco dependence, Arbi Group Srl (an Italian e-cigarette distributor) and ECITA (Electronic Cigarette Industry Trade Association, in the UK).

### Delon Human / Riccardo Polosa / Kgiso Letlape – speakers at GTNF

another frequent speaker at the Big Tobacco Davis event - GTNF conferences each year is Dr Delon Human, a South African doctor based in Switzerland who was funded by BAT to write a book on nicotine.

Human's EuroSwiss Health company along with LIAF (Italian anti tobacco foundation)

<http://www.liaf-onlus.org/>

funded the recent Nutt report <https://www.karger.com/Article/FullText/360220> relied upon by PHE for its 'e-cigs 95% safer' report.

The chief scientific executive of LIAF is Dr Riccardo Polosa.

A search of Legacy tobacco documents online <https://industrydocuments.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/> reveals 134 links for 'Polosa' & shows his University department received Euro 400,000 study funding from PMI 12 years ago. Another regular GTNF panelist is South African ophthalmologist Kgiso Letlape with connections to Delon Human thru the African Medical Assn. [http://www.africama.net/about\\_afma.htm](http://www.africama.net/about_afma.htm) Polosa & Letlape are amongst the authors of the Nutt report **funded by Human /LIAF** and the writer rubs shoulders with them at the GTNF conferences.

Polosa fails to report the PMI funding and his repeat attendances at GTNF in his 'Competing Interest' declaration

Another **Nutt** report author, K Fagerstrom is shown as a recipient of industry funding.

<http://www.tobaccoreporter.com/gtnf-2013/>

<http://www.gtnf-2014.com/> (the Davos of Tobacco)

<http://gtnf-2015.com/look-whos-talking/>