

HOOKED ON CIGARETTES



I

This document is an advert produced by the British government. We know this because of the National Health Service Logo in the top right-hand corner. It is a photograph, but it has probably been computer-enhanced since I doubt they really put a hook through a girl's face.

D

The image is of a young woman being pulled by a hook through her cheek. There is also a tagline, in this case a health warning which uses a statistic: "The average smoker needs 5,000 cigarettes a year".

A

The makers of this advert were aiming to try and convince people to quit smoking and to portray smoking as a dangerous and destructive addiction. In order to achieve this aim, they used an image and a statistic that are designed to shock.

H

Images such as this are becoming more and more common in the modern world as people are becoming more aware of the health risks involved with smoking, especially lung cancer. In the UK, the increase in images like this used in advertising is also due to recent government policies aimed at discouraging smoking. These policies have definitely worked because there has been a decrease in the number of people who are "hooked" on cigarettes, and smoking has started to lose its "cool" image amongst young people.

O

Personally, I think that people can be made aware of the risks of smoking without needing to see such shocking images, and in general I don't think these types of adverts work on everyone, because a serious addiction can make you ignore things like statistics; or make you believe that bad consequences will not really happen to you. I also think that the image of the girl is quite dehumanising; frankly I think it is unnecessary to portray her as a fish. Whilst it is right to warn people of the dangers, it is still people's choice to smoke if they want to, and adverts shouldn't suggest that they are stupid or weak way because of it.

B

There is, however, one good argument for producing adverts like this. Because of the physical damage caused by smoking, people who need treatment for smoking – related diseases can go to public hospitals, which some people think is unfair on tax-payers who don't smoke. On the other hand, the same problem exists with people who are obese. For example, an obese person could have a heart operation funded by public money on the NHS. However, it would be considered very offensive to show an obese person in the same way the smoker is portrayed in this ad, no-one ever says that obese people are "hooked" on food!