On-line abuse and trolling by pro-tobacco and vaping activists

At the core of scientific enquiry is scepticism. The history of claims by the tobacco industry and its supporters about reduced harm tobacco and nicotine products provides a textbook series of cases about why scepticism is essential in assessing the claims being made.

I was awarded Australian Skeptic of the Year in 2013, and because I have worked in tobacco control for about 40 years, I have a close interest in the sceptical interrogation of reduced harm claims.

Claims for putative harm-reduced tobacco and nicotine products have been made for many decades and all have crashed and burned. Perhaps the most outrageous innovation in tobacco harm-reduction was Kent’s micronite filter, which used deadly blue asbestos (crocidolite) between 1952-56 in the United States. Between 1968 and 1980, the US National Cancer Institute invested more than $US50m into research on less hazardous cigarettes. But by 2001, it had concluded that there was no evidence that smokers switching to so-called less hazardous cigarettes (lights and milds) had a lower rates of disease or death.

We have also seen “reduced carcinogen” cigarettes like Omni, and market failures like the heat-not-burn Premier.

E-cigarettes are the latest kids on the tobacco harm-reduction block, although their users insist they are not tobacco or cigarettes and are not smoked, despite being called e-cigarettes. Like all their predecessors, many e-cigarette promoters have graduated from hype school. All good news is megaphoned, and any questioning attacked and pilloried as thousands of tiny highly motivated start-up manufacturers, retailers and their PR agencies try to catch the lucrative wave, along with all the major tobacco companies which are now selling and promoting both e-cigarettes and tobacco products.

E-cigarettes have only been in widespread use in early adopting nations for a few years. Respiratory and heart diseases and cancers caused by tobacco use generally take several decades to manifest, which is why the jury on putative reduced-risk cigarettes was out for so long before declaring them failures.

Those who insist e-cigarettes are “95%” less dangerous are therefore only making fingers-crossed predictions, much in the same way that the scientific colossus Ernst Wynder (who published the first case control study on smoking and lung cancer) did about his hopes for reduced-risk cigarettes. Wynder was wrong.

The failure of all previous tobacco harm-reduction efforts does not mean that all current or future efforts will also be failures, or worse, slow or reverse the 50-year fall in smoking prevalence. But this history should serve as a warning light to switch on the scientific bovine excrement detector and remain hyper-vigilant over the often gossamer-thin claims that abound about both their safety and how good they are at getting smokers to switch completely.
Trolling

Many who have ever questioned the evidence for the safety and effectiveness of e-cigarettes on social media like Twitter will have experienced rapid and sometimes widespread trolling, often from anonymous accounts. This suggests a network of connected accounts where trolls can pile-on anyone “not with the program”.

In a career in public health spanning 40 years, I have many times received abuse and occasionally threats from interest groups like the gun lobby, smokers’ rights advocates, anti-vaccinationists, WiFi and mobile phone phobics, climate change denialists and extreme, doctrinaire libertarians. But collectively, the collective abuse from these interest groups pales into insignificance compared to the volume of abuse I have received from vaping advocates.

This document provides a cross-section of examples of florid, vile, bizarre and sometimes wonderfully funny abuse I have received in the past eight or so years from activists opposed to tobacco control and/or aggressively promoting e-cigarettes and attacking e-cigarette sceptics. Most are from people I have never met, spoken to, or seen and wouldn’t know if I sat next to them on a bus. Many are brave, anonymous trolls and keyboard warriors, today’s equivalent of the anonymous poison pen letter writers and midnight callers from phone booths of the past.

Two examples of trolls limbering-up  (ANTZ=Anti Nicotine and Tobacco Zealots ie: anyone supporting or working in tobacco control)

In the early years of this trolling, I got into the habit of taking screenshots from Twitter and of notable examples I found on online vaping forums that I visited occasionally. Most below are linked, but those not are usually from accounts that I blocked. I have written on why I block accounts on Twitter here.

I hope this document will be useful to those following the continuing debate about e-cigarettes and the widespread white-knight posturing that is never far from the surface of pro-vaping rhetoric. The vehement, unctuous sanctimony and unswerving cult-like conviction that e-cigarettes are already entitled to be compared with vaccines and antibiotics is far too often accompanied by the sort of viciousness shown below.

My full CV can be found here. It contains links to everything I have published on e-cigarettes.

Simon Chapman AO PhD FASSA
Emeritus Professor, Public Health
1 I’m irrelevant

Vaping trolls expend the energy illustrated below on me because they know I am irrelevant to the inexorable onward march of e-cigarettes. Attack is what most of us do when we decide someone is irrelevant, because their irrelevancy makes them dangerous. Oh wait …

If my scepticism and concerns about e-cigarettes are irrelevant, I’m in very good company in Australia and the USA. Here is a list of agencies and companies in Australia which support strong or weak approaches to e-cigarette regulation. I’m a supporter of strong regulation on the basis of the knowledge we have at the moment on product safety and effectiveness in helping smokers quit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want strong e-cigarette regulation</th>
<th>Want weak e-cigarette regulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic Goods Administration</td>
<td>Philip Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Health &amp; Medical Research Council</td>
<td>British American Tobacco (Australia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health Association of Australia</td>
<td>Fontem Ventures (Imperial Tobacco subsidiary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Medical Association</td>
<td>Japan Tobacco International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoracic Society of Australia</td>
<td>Australian Retailers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Lung Foundation</td>
<td>Australasian Association of Convenience Stores</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Council on Smoking &amp; Health</td>
<td>Numerous e-cigarette manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer Councils</td>
<td>New Nicotine Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Foundation</td>
<td>ANZ College of Psychiatrists</td>
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<td>Royal Australasian College of Physicians</td>
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<td>Royal Australian College of General Practitioners</td>
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<td>Quit Victoria</td>
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<td>VicHealth</td>
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<td>Australian Dental Association</td>
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<td>Cancer Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian Association of Smoking Cessation Professionals</td>
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Similarly in the USA, there is a very long list of health agencies who have petitioned the Food and Drug Administration to regulate e-cigarettes.

2 I’ve killed many people

I started working in tobacco control in the late 1970s. Here’s a graph showing what’s happened to adult smoking in Australia in the years since. It looks a little to me like smoking has been falling steadily for over 40 years and is projected to continue downhill.

Figure 16.1: Projected male and female adult smoking rates in Australia

![Graph showing smoking rates](image)

Source: Projections based on prevalence surveys by Hill et al, Hill and White.

But these wise vaping trolls know differently. I have not worked with others to reduce tobacco use and the deaths it causes. I have in fact killed many smokers!

- **Carl V Phillips 3 Nov 2011**: “Sometimes I cannot help but wonder if a young Simon Chapman was considering becoming one of those diabolical serial killers like appear in literature/television, but realized he could be more clever and do more damage if he connived to become a "respected public health leader". In that role, he pretty likely has been personally responsible for a greater toll than any serial killer could have. (Or at least any serial killer that did not command a secret police force, and perhaps he did not think pursuing that role would be diabolical enough.)
3 Not content with causing all these extra deaths, I gloat and revel in them

4 So, just how evil am I?

- **“Jay” 7 April 2012**: “Like a vicious herpes infection, or a stinking, floating turd that just won’t be flushed, Simon Chapman won’t go away. To say Simon Chapman is a petty, hateful bastard is being way too kind. This man is quite possibly the root of all evil in modern society.

- **“Jay” April 15, 2012 at 13:57**: “He’s a tyrant, using health care issues as a guise to destroy everything he does not like. ... In the fullness of the time, the world will see him as one of the most hateful beings to have lived.”

- **“Lou” 15 April 2012**: “The similarities in reasoning between Simon Chapman and Anders Breivik* are terrifying. Both are convinced of their own "right" and thus their justification to take life. Simon Chapman only wants official sanction to do this and I have no doubt he would derive great pleasure in shooting smokers. Indeed I suspect he would spend many years doing little else. ...You guys are doing good by revealing the psychopath that is Simon Chapman. [*Breivik was the gunman who killed 77 people in Norway in July 2011]*

- **Simon Clark** *Taking Liberties* (18 April 2012): “Think twice before you believe a word this idiotic man says”

- **AlanP**: “Simon Chapman is the kind of vermin that now infest our society with a belligerence and manifest intolerance”; I believe he’s been involved in producing several studies which I would dearly love to boil down in fish oil and force feed him every rotten scrap.”

- **Pat Nurse**: “Simon Chapman is a dangerous sociopath and he scares me.”
SadButMadLad 19 Apr 2013 The Root of all Evil. The most evil fascist alive. He revels in being evil.

- Carl Philips 18 May 2011: “Chapman is probably the most aggressive proponent of anti-tobacco extremism in Australia. He claims credit for causing the premature deaths of more Australians than almost anyone else

Comment: Yup. I’m so extreme, I have often written at length opposing bans and R-ratings of smoking scenes in movies; opposing outdoor smoking bans; and being highly critical of the unnecessary medicalization of quitting, the dominant orthodoxy in tobacco control.

SO WHAT EXPLAINS ALL THIS?

5 I’m a geriatric retard who has lost his marbles. (Hope I die before I get old (The Who: My generation)

Vaping trolls are fond what they must believe is a self-evident focus of their abuse: the disgusting discovery that I am older than some of them. Yet sadly, there are several prominent tobacco harm reduction proponents who are all inconveniently even older than me: for example David Nutt, Martin Jarvis, Lars Ramstrom, Gerry Stimson, Alex Wodak. Some vapers apparently plan to die before they reach 40, is that it?

- “Dick Puddlecote” 31 July 2012: “Just ask arch-bansturbator Simon Chapman, the geriatric control freak who conned Australia into banning colours because of his personal prejudice.”
- “Dick Puddlecote” 23 May 2011: “His insane wibblings are worrying yes, but still bloody funny to read. It’s quite incredible that such a retard has achieved so high a profile since he must take 10 minutes every morning figuring out how his trouser zip works.”

The Therapeutic Goods Amendment (2016 Measures No. 1) Bill, introduced as a private member’s bill by pro-freedom Senators David Leyonhjelm and Malcolm Roberts, would remove nicotine-containing e-liquid from Australia’s draconian poisons laws and allow them to be legally sold to the country’s estimates one million vapers. It’s due for official discussion in the next parliamentary session, but is likely to face strong opposition from the Therapeutic Goods Administration and prominent activists; Simon Chapman, a Sydney pensioner, is a particularly fierce opponent of legalisation.


Comment: Yep, as retired tenured academic (for some 40 years) I’d be definitely eligible for an age pension in Australia ...

Christopher Snowdon “wrinkly rocker Simon Chapman”
“Coffin-dodging sociologist Simon Chapman”
6 I also use drugs!

7 And I suffer from sexual inadequacies

“accused of transvestite facts” ... oh no, anything but those sort of facts.
8 Game’s up!! I’m only interested in vaping because of the connection with children
9 You all need to understand I’m not medically trained

Comment: Errm .. best not go there. Neither are these prominent advocates for vaping medically trained: Clive Bates, Peter Hajek, Ann McNeill, Gerry Stimson, David Sweanor, Robert West and many, many more. Apparently it’s OK not to be medically trained if you are not skeptical about ecigs, but quite unacceptable if you are. Makes sense?

10 ... or qualified in any area of health

11 But most damning of all ... I’m a dreaded “sociologist” ... oh wait, just like prominent vaping advocate Gerry Stimson!

- Dick Puddlecoe 8 Mar 2012: “Swivel eyed loon ... a sociologist who has posed as health expert for the past 30 years.”
Christopher Snowden (various dates): “that sad old sociologist Simon Chapman”; “the creepy sociologist Simon Chapman”; “reptilian sociologist” “wizened quackademic Simon Chapman”

Comment: So lucky that sociologist Gerry Stimson and all other non-medical vaping advocates and researchers have Alex – a real doctor – to help them understand it all, eh?

12 I’m a religious nutjob (who oddly lists Bertrand Russell’s Why I am not a Christian as a personally influential book ...shhhh!)

- 3 Oct 2012: Mavinry4: “Simon Chapman does not care about people getting cancer. He does not care about public health. He has an ulterior agenda, and a moral conviction towards using stimulants. His views, I suspect, have deep religious roots and he simply cloaks his religious agenda with this whole “public health” image. But I assure you, he does not have the Public Interests in mind. ... I really think the guy is a fraud. I think he is a religious nutjob cloaked in a Public Health uniform, and he’s been circulating his religious views in disguise of Public Health Advocacy.”

13 A terrible researcher, hopeless academic who has damaged public health

- 26 Mar 2013: Carl V Phillips: “He has also done rather substantial damage to the scientific integrity of public health, and has contributed to a general feeling in the rest of the world (among those who are aware of "public health" and nanny state issues) that Australia might be better off being re-colonized. Influential nasty idiot is a bad combination. The only saving grace is that he does not have the self-discipline of a high-functioning sociopath, which would have allowed him to succeed in politics, else he might have done even more damage.”

- Carl V Phillips 28 Mar 2012: “For those who do not know, Chapman is the Worst "Public Health" Person In The World ... He is the perfect storm of a card-carrying "public health" person who is harmful to both public health science and the public's health.”

- Carl V Phillips 19 Apr 2012: “his ‘contributions’ to science and regarding tobacco are pretty much comical, and that he has undoubtedly done more harm than good for public health... Australia has among the lower rates of smoking in the world ... Nothing Chapman ever did made any substantial difference in the inexorable
flow.” “the person responsible for the most pointless deaths of his countrymen since the guy who ordered the army to Gallipoli” ...

“If he is influencing policy about IWTs [industrial wind turbines] by coasting on his reputation from tobacco, it might be useful to know that that reputation in that arena is as a junk scientist, a failed thinker, either a liar or incredibly clueless about what he claims expertise on (which is just another form of lying), and an international running joke.

- 27 Mar 2013: Anonymous “This individual has numerous articles published with his name on it. I haven’t done a full inventory but looking at his last 10 years or so, he hasn’t actually done research himself. He collates other people’s work, misrepresents the data and passes it off as novel findings. This is not research and shames science. I admit it is not just his wrong doing. It is actually the academic institution [sic] as a whole. A phd in epidemiology is a disgrace and passing it off as science is just plain wrong. Unfortunately this is the type of "science" lay people understand and make legislation by.”

Comment: In 10 years 2003-2012 prior to this comment, I published 2 books, 10 book chapters, 138 original articles, 27 editorials, and 52 letters and commentaries. I also don’t have a PhD in epidemiology.

- “Dick Puddlecote” 29 May 2012: “You have to remember that, since the early days, dinosaurs like Chapman are just self-centred people who dislike smoking, not experts in anything other than knowing how to hate tobacco. They’ve posed as health gurus for decades as it is easy to disguise, but they haven’t the first clue when it comes to business and economics.”

14 Yet in spite of all this, I’m paid a fortune!

- Pat Nurse @Patsynurse from someone paid $3million a year to spread misinformation and propaganda.

- Chapman may very well be anti-tobacco, however he has no clue about the real world. Academics rarely do. And he is extremely well-remunerated. In other words, he is paid very well by a body that is very heaviliy [sic] funded in the name of ‘public health’, which he has coopted as a bandwagon he can swing from and throw poo from like a gibbon.

Sally Richards

Comment: 40 years on, still looking for that big pay cheque from whomever it is who is “funded in the name of public health”. Here I am … waiting and ready!

- Juzm: 22 June 2013: “A 50 page CV goes in the bin, no one needs to read that much. … So much grant money, he must be able to fit several dicks in his mouth at the same time, his only talent.”

15 … and who even doesn’t know which university he works at ...

- 15 Aug 2012: “the biggest pro-nanny state person in Australia from the University of New South Wales, Simon Chapman
Comment: I can’t quite figure out how all this works. I’m “not allowed do to health research” yet I’ve had a lot of research grant money, and I’m paid $3m to spread misinformation in my job at the University of NSW where I’ve never worked?

16 And guess who pays me? You’ve got it! Big Tobacco and Big Pharma!

@Demotivapetion
Dick Puddlecoyte 11 June 2011: “Chapman is one of the world leaders in producing junk science and badgering his friends at the WHO to pass directives on behalf of his pharmaceutical paymasters

Comment: I have zero pharmaceutical industry funding or support of any kind and have often written about the poor track record of pharmaceutical smoking cessation products. That’s why they must pay me, get it?

Threthny @Threthny · Jan 4
@DaviMaree @Twigolet @CaeruleanSea Daube and Chapman hand in hand except Daube’s cancer council funded by pharma

Comment: Mike Daube does not work for the Cancer Council and the Cancer Council in any event takes no money from pharmaceutical companies selling smoking cessation products.

SO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT ALL THIS?

17 I should be criminally tried

18 … and dragged in front of the United Nations for genocide

19 … run over by a bus
20 ... urged to commit suicide

21 Violence is required

Edits found on my Wikipedia page.

Revision as of 07:13, 8 January 2012

For other uses, see Simon Chapman (disambiguation).

Simon Chapman (born 1951, Bonalbo, New South Wales) is an Australian academic and tobacco control activist.

He is Professor in Public Health at the University of Sydney. He has authored 17 books and major reports, 281 papers and 150 letters and commentaries in peer reviewed journals, and lived to nestle in the bursom of a totalitarian state.

dead

- he died after receiving a steak knife in the anus multiple times.

- Scott Wichall 29 May 2012: “As much as I abhor violence, it is getting past the time where Mr Chapman is quite plainly deserving of a fucking big smack in the mouth. He is really starting to get up my nose now.”

- Messalina 29 May 2012: “Yes! As much as I’m a peaceful person, I really feel this is a good time for an assassination! The media can dress it up as a 'lone gunman' or a 'conspiracy theory' whatever they wish. Just as long as he's off the planet.

6 Sep 2012: Soundasleep: “Personally I think Simon Chapman is the sort of "public health adviser" that should be taken out and shot. Publicly.”

http://forums.aussievapers.com/politics-media/6383-cyber-bully-simon-chapman-sooks-
25 Mar 2013: “Nisakiman” I would dearly love to see the smug smirk wiped of the charlatan Crapman’s face. Lord, he is such an odious, oleaginous smegmaball.

Finally, some names you can call me (last heard in the playground in primary school)

- **Christopher Snowdon** (various dates): “the irksome, omnipresent über-wowser Simon Chapman”; “Anti-smoking dinosaurs like Simon Chapman”; “wizened quackademic Simon Chapman” “scrotum-faced head-banger Simon Chapman” [my family’s favourite. Thanks Chris!]
- **Pat Nurse**, Jan 7 2012: “Simon Chapman is a smokerphobic liar who should be arrested for hate crime.”
- **Various contributors:**

  “Simeon Chapmen”
  “Simon Chimpmonk”
  “The Big C”
  “The Chimp”
  “Chimpman”
  “Chimpy”
  “Mr Scrotesackman”
  “He’s a complete gimp”
• @Dick_Puddlecote we do love @SimonChapman6 He ticks all the boxes 4 ur stereotypical overpaid, tax-eating, lifestyle-enforcing health zealot!!

• 12 Jun 2013: Mag01 [comment on Nannyning Tyrants blog] “The professional liar….. propagandist for Tobacco Control, Simple Simon Crapman, the snot-nosed antismoker who’s helped society regress over a hundred years to a destructive fanaticism, has been… err… recognized for his “services”. Some of the description is quite hilarious – “distinguished service to medical research” [AHHHHHH HAAA]….. “world-leading academic, researcher, writer, commentator and public health policy advocate” [HEE HEEEEE]. The problem is, it ain’t no joke! It gives a clear indication of the pitiful state of academia, Public Health, and the government health bureaucracy….. and not just in Australia….

“Awards” are a mainstay of the Tobacco Control racket: They keep the massive egos well massaged. It’s an opportunity to sip on a Chardonnay, delicately bite into some hors d’oeuvres, and admire your fellow fraudsters. There must be a number of awards nights each year. If you have no talent, ooze mediocrity, and deceptiveness is second-nature, come to TC. We have an award(s) for you.

Now, I don’t mind awarding an award as much as the next guy. The problem here is award category: They’ve got the category all wrong. I wouldn’t mind…. in fact, I’d enthusiastically applaud….. if Simple Simon was given the Crap Merchant of the Last 30 Years or the Prolific Crapper in Public Health award. There, that’s better.”
Source The deranged priesthood of tobacco control: Profs Simon Chapman, Stan Glantz, Martin McKee.

[BTW: I don’t want to ban e-cigarettes, I want them strongly regulated]
24 Dec 2013. Tweet posted by @TobaccoTacticss

Simon Clark Taking Liberties
I DON'T ALWAYS GET CALLED THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

BUT WHEN I DO, IT'S FUCKING TRUE

https://imgur.com/I3XUiiP
Three people who seem to have something of a preoccupation with me and feature often above are the following:

“Dick Puddlecote” aka Martin Cullip. Information [here](#)

Christopher Snowdon. See information [here](#)

Carl V Phillips. Information [here](#) and [here](#)