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CIGARETTES in the Malaysian market reportedly contain 1.5mg of nicotine per stick. At least this is what is printed on each pack.

Last month, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in the United States revealed that from 1998 through 2004, manufacturers had increased the amount of addictive nicotine delivered to the average smoker by 10 per cent. Of 179 cigarette brands tested in 2004, an astounding 166 brands fell in the highest nicotine yield range, including 59 brands that manufacturers had labelled as "light" and another 14 "ultra-light".

About five million Malaysians are smokers. Despite its proven devastating effects, they continue to pump nicotine into their system. This is not surprising since it is highly addictive, similar to heroin and cocaine. The manufacturers know this well, and the more nicotine added, the higher the likelihood of creating and sustaining addiction.

In Malaysia, nicotine in tobacco products is given full exemption from the Malaysian Poisons Act 1952 (Revised 1989) and Regulations. The government must either ban or at least regulate the selling of these packs of lies.