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Smoking has been portrayed by its sellers as a manly, masculine habit, linked to health, happiness, fitness, wealth, power and sexual success. In reality, it leads to sickness, premature death and sexual problems.

Almost one billion men in the world smoke – about 35 percent of men in developed countries and 50 percent of men in developing countries. Trends in both developed and developing countries show that male smoking rates have now peaked and, slowly but surely, are declining. However, this is an extremely slow trend over decades, and in the meantime men are dying in their millions from tobacco. In general, the educated man is giving up the habit first, so that smoking is becoming a habit of poorer, less educated males.

China deserves special mention because of the enormity of the problem. Comprising over 300 million male smokers, this huge market is, according to Philip Morris, "the most important feature on the landscape."

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are smokers

