This book comprehensively summarizes the adverse effects of tobacco smoking on human health. The current second edition has integrated a large set of new data that have been published in numerous scientific studies and meta-analyses over the past few years.

Unfortunately, the harmful sequelae of tobacco smoking are played down by the industry and politicians in many industrialized countries. However, about 800,000 people/year in the EU die from the immediate consequences of smoking. The particularly insidious feature of tobacco consumption is that smoking-attributable harmful effects on health do not generally become apparent until three or four decades after smoking initiation.

Although some positive changes in the legislative handling of tobacco have appeared in the past five years, we still need to form a pact, sealed by politicians, the medical professionals, teachers and the media, to target the problem across nations. In this respect, a minority of countries, including the US and the UK, have given positive examples.

There are four areas that need to be improved in future: (1) strict bans on tobacco advertisement on a global level, (2) better measures to protect against side-stream (passive) smoke exposure, (3) establishment of prevention programs, especially for children and (4) treatment of tobacco addiction.

While preparing the second edition of the German version of this book, the founding author Knut-Olaf Haustein deceased. After the fall of the Berlin wall, he was one of the first Germans to take an active part in the battle against tobacco in the united Germany and it is the author’s hope that the present edition continues the thoughts of Knut-Olaf Haustein on how to approach the numerous problems. As a comprehensive work, the book is intended to meet the needs of a large readership, including all medical professionals and scientists, as well as teachers, sociologists, the media and politicians.

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I trust that this book will meet with a good reception both within and outside the field of medicine.

Berlin, Germany
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