Mortality rate of patients with *C. difficile* in Quebec, 2000–2003

| Year | No. of deaths | No. of cases | % of deaths |
|------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2000 | 398           | 3262         | 12          |
| 2001 | 562           | 3675         | 15          |
| 2002 | 661           | 4097         | 16          |
| 2003 | 1270          | 7004         | 18          |

**Medical schools accept tobacco dollars**

Respondents to a survey of Canada’s 16 medical schools say they have no policy about accepting funding or donations from tobacco companies (Canadian Journal of Public Health 2004;95[3]:205–7).

Study author Dr. Joanna Cohen said she wasn’t surprised that some faculties took money, “but I thought some would have had policies.”

The study, conducted by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit and funded by the National Cancer Institute of Canada (NCIC), asked 16 faculties of medicine if they had accepted tobacco company money between 1996 and 1999. Only 11 schools agreed to respond. Of those, 6 had received research funding (average award value $160 592) or donations (average value $18 415) from tobacco companies or tobacco industry associations. The contributions represented about 1% of total research and donation monies received.

The lack of information from other institutions left the researchers to conclude that “these findings likely underestimate actual links between Canadian faculties of medicine and the tobacco industry.”

Cohen, a University of Toronto professor in public health science, hopes the study triggers debate that will lead medical schools to reject such funding. She’d like the NCIC to follow the lead of Australian cancer councils, which won’t fund researchers if anyone in their institutions receives tobacco industry support.

“The NCIC commends any university or research institution that supports tobacco control by refusing support from tobacco industry sources,” said Dr. Stuart Edmonds, acting director of research programs for NCIC. “While we encourage institutions to implement such policies, our current policy is to only hold back funds for individual applicants who have support from the tobacco industry.” — Pauline Comeau, Ottawa