



Williams: Numbers prove high school recruiting lives

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Nicotine is the primary driver of tobacco addiction in the form of cigarettes, vapes and most other forms of commercial tobacco. The greatest health risks arise when tobacco is burned, which generates thousands of toxic substances.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Movement touts addictive drug as beneficial, but dangers persist

Hasmeena Kathuria
University of Wisconsin-Madison
THE CONVERSATION

An ironic development emerging alongside the “Make America Healthy Again” movement is the portrayal of nicotine as a wellness and performance-enhancing product. Across social media, podcasts, wellness communities and tech startups, prominent wellness personalities and other influencers are portraying nicotine as a misunderstood compound whose potential benefits have been overshadowed by its negative association with cigarette smoking.

As a result, nicotine is being repositioned from an addictive substance linked to tobacco use to a natural product that can be used for everything from improving focus to protecting against cognitive decline. This trend includes use of nicotine alone in noncombustible products such as nicotine pouches, or in combination with caffeine and nootropics, which are substances marketed to enhance cognition.

As a pulmonary physician-scientist who studies nicotine addiction and the health consequences of tobacco and nicotine products, I am concerned about claims that nicotine can enhance wellness, productivity and cognitive performance.

Distinguishing between nicotine and tobacco

Some of these claims stem from the observation that nicotine is a naturally occurring plant compound found primarily in tobacco and in night-shade vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes and eggplant in trace amounts. Proponents of nicotine use also draw on studies suggesting that nicotine can affect certain aspects of cognition and brain function.



Nicotine, in products such as nicotine pouches, is being repositioned from an addictive substance linked to tobacco use to a natural product that can be used for everything from improving focus to protecting against cognitive decline.

However, extending these findings to broad claims about productivity, brain health, longevity or wellness goes well beyond what has been shown in human studies.

Nicotine is the primary driver of tobacco addiction in the form of cigarettes, vapes and most other forms of commercial tobacco.

The greatest health risks arise when tobacco is burned, which generates thousands of toxic substances, including carcinogens, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter. Repeated exposure to these combustion products can cause cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cardiovascular disease and numerous other smoking-related illnesses.

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AI pricing suit raises antitrust questions

Plaintiff says McDonald’s used tech to set prices

Mike Scarcella
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – A federal antitrust lawsuit against McDonald’s filed last week claims the fast-food giant is using AI-powered tools to fix menu prices, marking the latest case to allege companies are relying on new technologies to collude and harm consumers.

Plaintiffs have sued companies in industries ranging from hotels and real estate to health insurance, and now, hamburgers. The claims are pending in class-action lawsuits around the country, with mixed outcomes so far.

The McDonald’s case hinges in part on the company’s franchise model, in which most of its 14,000 U.S. restaurants are independently owned. It says restaurant owners should be competing freely but are pressured by McDonald’s to use its “pricing engine” or risk losing their franchise status, driving up the cost of Big Macs, fries and other menu items for millions of customers.

McDonald’s told Reuters that its franchisees set prices individually, and that “AI does not set the price of a Big Mac or any other menu item.”

The lawsuit followed a Reuters report detailing how McDonald’s is using AI to guide menu prices. The proposed class action in Chicago federal court says the company leverages its technology “to nickel-and-dime consumers down to the last French fry.”

New technology, old laws

Courts are still grappling with how to apply decades-old antitrust laws to

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Clock fight pits science against politics

Disagreement persists on which time to adopt

Doyle Rice and Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

Daylight is already fading, and soon Americans will set back the clocks, too. But this year, political support is build-

ing for doing away with seasonal time changes by switching to permanent daylight saving time.

That would be a mistake, scientists say.

A new report echoes a chorus of scientific research saying that permanent standard time is the best solution for eliminating the dreaded twice-yearly clock change.

People might enjoy daylight saving time for its later sunsets throughout the year. But standard time’s earlier sunrises are more in line with our body clocks, leading to better sleep and mood, authors of the report said.

For now, most of the nation is scheduled to set the clocks back Nov. 1,

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