

Gentlemen. . . Start Your Engines

Marketing Medicine publishes selected images to illustrate how various tests and treatments are being marketed to the public. The goal of this section is to inform our clinician readers of the kinds of messages that their patients may be receiving. These messages may stimulate demand for various services and/or distort expectations about the benefits (and harms) of the services.

Here we feature an unusual form of direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising: Pfizer's "Tune-Up for Life" Program. According to Pfizer's marketer, the program, launched in 2000, features a specially equipped trailer that "travels to Winston Cup Series NASCAR races to increase brand awareness of Viagra and educate consumers on erectile dysfunction and cardiovascular health."¹ Race fans are invited into the trailer (**Figure 1**) where, at no cost, "certified medical technicians conduct sexual health evaluations and offer cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure screening."

Pfizer is also advertising Viagra through its sponsorship of NASCAR drivers. A variety of Viagra memorabilia are available (**Figure 2**). Other available Viagra items include an afghan, a wall clock, hat, key chain, T-shirt, and license tag.

Stock-car racing is America's second most popular spectator sport, with an estimated 100 million fans. The sport's biggest sponsor is RJR Reynolds, the tobacco company (hence the "Winston" Cup). About 1 million smokers visited the Winston promotional tents set up at race tracks during the year 2000 season where cigarettes are distributed free.² By comparison, about 35,000 men visited the "Tune-Up for



FIGURE 1 Two views of the Pfizer "Tune-Up for Life" trailer. Available at <http://www.jobs.gmmmarketing.com/mainevents.html>. Accessed on February 4, 2002.



FIGURE 2 Selected promotions. Available at www.racingusaonline.com/markmartin.html. Accessed January 11, 2002.

Life” trailers. Not surprisingly, smoking cessation is not a feature of the “Tune-Up” program; this is ironic, as smoking is perhaps the most important modifiable cardiovascular disease risk factor and a leading cause of erectile dysfunction.

References

1. GMR Marketing. GMR Main Events. Available at www.jobs.gmrmarketing.com/mainevents.html. Accessed February 4, 2002.
2. Campbell D. NASCAR: We’re sticking with RJR: Despite tobacco stains, race officials say RJR relationship is stable. Available at: <http://triad.bcentral.com/triad/stories/2000/05/01/story2.html>. Accessed February 4, 2002.