

# China Pharmaceutical & Biotechnology Monthly

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## Smoking: What a Drag

China currently has the largest smoking population of any nation, with more than 300 million smokers lighting up nearly one-third of all cigarettes worldwide. The habit carries with it a disturbing mortality rate - 50% of all long-term smokers will die from their habit - and chronic diseases arising from smoking have become a significant burden on China's healthcare system. This health crisis is creating a growing demand for products and services directed at smoking cessation. In December, Pfizer announced that it has begun marketing its

smoking cessation product varenicline (Champix) in China.\* The market potential for the drug in China is enormous. In China, 46% of smokers attempt cessation each year, yet less than 3% are successful over the long term. These statistics should predict large sales for the drug; however varenicline's future success is not a certainty. China's smokers are a wide-ranging and heterogeneous population, and a reduction in the public's ap-

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