

FDA says nicotine a drug, should be regulated -NYT

NEW YORK, July 13 (Reuters) - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has concluded for the first time that nicotine is a drug that should be regulated and it proposed limited steps for regulating tobacco products, the New York Times reported Thursday.

The newspaper said Administration officials described the proposed regulations on condition they not be identified and said the proposals involved only new limits on tobacco advertising and measures to curtail sales to young people.

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The agency was not using the authority it has to act on its own and was instead passing the proposed regulations on to President Clinton, a reflection of the delicacy of the issue and opposition in the Republican Congress to new curbs on smoking, the report said.

"There have been some preliminary discussions on the issue of protecting children from tobacco," White House spokesman Michael McCurry said. "It's at a very preliminary stage, and there are not any concrete recommendations to the President."

The FDA and its commissioner David Kessler declined comment on the proposals, which have not been made public, the New York Times said.

Tobacco regulation is currently limited to a ban on television advertising and the requirement that warning labels be printed on packages. The regulations are approved by Congress and administered by the Federal Trade Commission.

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