

# Smoking linked to premature death

June 2 2006

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A Japanese doctor has found that smoking is more dangerous to people's health than high levels of cholesterol, sugar and high blood pressure.

Doctor Michiyuki Matsuzaki of the Municipal Fukagawa Hospital in Japan's northern island of Hokkaido analyzed data from health examinations on some 98,000 people aged between 40 and 79 from 1993 to 2003 and compared people's lifestyles and other data with their cause of death, the Mainichi Shimbun reported Friday.

Matsuzaki concluded that the premature death rate of men who smoked was 60 percent higher than those who didn't and the rate stood at 90 percent higher for female smokers.

In particular, the death rate of male smokers under 64 years of age was 2.1 times that of non-smoking men.

The death rate of those who suffered high blood pressure was only 30 percent higher than normal, healthy people and those who suffered high blood-sugar levels was 50 percent higher, the research found.

"I think 24 percent of men's deaths could have been prevented if they did not smoke ... Smoking is the biggest cause of premature death for men," said Matsuzaki, the newspaper reported.

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Citation: Smoking linked to premature death (2006, June 2) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-06-linked-premature-death.html>

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