

Doctors deny surgery to longtime smoker

September 14 2007

Doctors in Britain say they won't operate on a 57-year-old builder's broken ankle because he is a smoker.

Hospital officials say John Nuttall has to give up his 20 cigarette-a-day habit to be eligible for an operation, The (London) Daily Mail said Thursday.

Nuttall, who broke his ankle in three places in 2005, has smoked for 40 years.

The newspaper said Nuttall is off work and taking prescribed daily doses of morphine to dull the pain. He said he has been trying to quit but the best he can do is cut back to 10 cigarettes a week.

A spokesman for the Royal Cornwall Hospital confirmed Nuttall's operation had been postponed because of "issues relating to nicotine."

Britain's health secretary ruled this year that doctors could deny smokers operations unless they give up smoking for at least four weeks.

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Citation: Doctors deny surgery to longtime smoker (2007, September 14) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-09-doctors-deny-surgery-longtime-smoker.html>

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