

New study shows smoking increases risk of psoriasis

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Another disease can be added to the list of smoking-related disorders -- psoriasis. Researchers have found that smoking increases the risk of developing psoriasis, heavier smoking increases the risk further, and the risk decreases only slowly after quitting.

Investigators from the Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, the Harvard School of Public Health, all in Boston, USA, and Vancouver General Hospital, Vancouver, BC, Canada, have published the results in the November 2007 issue of *The American Journal of Medicine*.

This study is the largest prospective assessment of multiple markers of smoking status, duration, and intensity in relation to the risk of psoriasis. Using data from the Nurses Health Study II (NHS II), an ongoing longitudinal study of 116,608 female registered nurses from 15 states between the ages of 25 and 42 years at baseline who completed and returned an initial questionnaire in 1989, the researchers documented 887 incident cases of psoriasis during the 14 years of follow-up. Lifetime smoking exposure was measured in pack-years, equal to smoking 20 cigarettes per day for one year.

Compared with women who never smoked, the risk of psoriasis was 37% higher among past smokers and 78% higher among current smokers. Pack-years were associated with a graded increase in the risk for psoriasis. Compared with never smokers; the risk was 20% higher for 1-10 pack-years, 60% higher for 11-20 pack-years, and more than

two times higher for +21 pack-years. The significant trends persisted with smoking duration in both current and past smokers. Furthermore, exposure to passive smoke during pregnancy or childhood was associated with an increased risk of psoriasis. The risk of psoriasis among former smokers decreases nearly to that of never smokers 20 years after cessation.

Writing in the article, Hyon K. Choi, MD, DrPH, states, "These findings, along with well-established hazardous health effects of smoking, provide clear incentives for smoking cessation in those at risk for and suffering from psoriasis. Beyond the potential effect on psoriasis, smoking cessation would lead to a better overall clinical outcome in psoriasis patients, who often suffer co-morbidities related to smoking."

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