

Parental warning: second-hand smoke may trigger nicotine dependence symptoms in kids

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Parents who smoke cigarettes around their kids in cars and homes beware – second-hand smoke may trigger symptoms of nicotine dependence in children. The findings are published in the September edition of the journal *Addictive Behaviors* in a joint study from nine Canadian institutions.

"Increased exposure to second-hand smoke, both in cars and homes, was associated with an increased likelihood of children reporting nicotine dependence symptoms, even though these children had never smoked," says Dr. Jennifer O'Loughlin, senior author of the study, a professor at the Université de Montréal's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine and a researcher at the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal.

"These findings support the need for public health interventions that promote non-smoking in the presence of children, and uphold policies to restrict smoking in vehicles when children are present," adds Dr. O'Loughlin, who collaborated with researchers from the Université de Sherbrooke, the Université de Moncton, the University of British Columbia, McGill University, Concordia University and the Institut national de santé publique du Québec.

Study participants were recruited from 29 Quebec schools as part of AdoQuest, a cohort investigation that measures tobacco use and other health-compromising behaviours. Some 1,800 children aged 10 to 12 years old, from all socioeconomic levels, were asked to complete

questionnaires on their health and behaviours. Researchers also asked questions about symptoms of nicotine dependence and exposure to second-hand smoke.

"According to conventional understanding, a person who does not smoke cannot experience nicotine dependence," says Mathieu Bélanger, the study's lead author and the new research director of the Centre de Formation Médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick of the Université de Moncton and Université de Sherbrooke. "Our study found that 5 percent of children who had never smoked a cigarette, but who were exposed to secondhand smoke in cars or their homes, reported symptoms of nicotine dependence."

Dr. O'Loughlin added that this inter-university investigation builds on previous findings: "Exposure to second-hand smoke among non-smokers may cause symptoms that seem to reflect several nicotine withdrawal symptoms: depressed mood, trouble sleeping, irritability, anxiety, restlessness, trouble concentrating and increased appetite."

Source: University of Montreal

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