

Bar workers who smoke also benefit from smoking ban

February 10 2009

The health of bar workers, who actively smoke cigarettes, significantly improves after the introduction of a smoking ban, reveals research published ahead of print in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

The findings are based on 371 bar workers from 72 Scottish bars, whose symptoms and lung function were assessed before the implementation of the ban on smoking in enclosed public places, and then two and 12 months afterwards.

In all, 191 workers underwent all three assessments, and the proportion reporting any respiratory symptoms fell from 69% to 57% after one year. The proportion of those with sensory symptoms (runny nose, red eyes, sore throat) also fell from 75% to 64%.

Among non-smokers the proportion of those with phlegm and red eyes fell, respectively, from 32% to 14%, and from 44% to 18%.

But the effects were also seen among those who continued to smoke themselves. The proportions of smokers reporting wheeze fell from almost half (48%) to one in three (31%), and those reporting breathlessness fell from 42% to 29%.

The authors conclude that their findings reinforce the benefits on health of a smoking ban in public places, but they also show that those who continue to smoke also stand to gain.

It is thought that the ban may have boosted the numbers of smokers indulging their habit at home, so exposing their children to greater levels of environmental tobacco smoke. More attention now needs to be paid to this, the authors warn.

Source: British Medical Journal

Citation: Bar workers who smoke also benefit from smoking ban (2009, February 10) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-02-bar-workers-benefit.html>

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