

## Women more vulnerable to tobacco carcinogens, new results show

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Women may be more vulnerable than men to the cancer-causing effects of smoking tobacco, according to new results reported this week at the European Multidisciplinary Conference in Thoracic Oncology (EMCTO), Lugano, Switzerland.

Swiss researchers studied 683 lung cancer patients who were referred to a cancer centre in St Gallen between 2000 and 2005 and found women tended to be younger when they developed the cancer, despite having smoked on average significantly less than men.

"Our findings suggest that women may have an increased susceptibility to tobacco carcinogens," report Dr Martin Frueh and colleagues.

Dr Enriqueta Felip from Val d'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona, Spain, conference co-chair, notes that the results support a growing awareness that smoking presents greater risks to women than men.

"In the early 1900s lung cancer was reported to be rare in women, but since the 1960s it has progressively reached epidemic proportions, becoming the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States," Dr Felip said.

"Lung cancer is not only a man's disease, but women tend to be much more aware of other cancers, such as breast cancer," she said. "Several case-control studies seem to suggest that women are more vulnerable to tobacco carcinogens than men."

On the positive side, other research presented at the conference suggests that women tend to do better than men after surgery to remove lung tumors.

Irish researchers led by Dr Bassel Al-Alao studied 640 patients whose non-small-cell [lung cancer](#) was surgically removed over a 10-year period, 239 of whom were women.

They found that median survival after surgery was 2.1 years for men, and 4.7 years for [women](#).

Source: European Society for Medical Oncology

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