

# Poor people smoke more

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Social status is intimately linked with health-related risk factors. In the current issue of *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International*, Thomas Lampert, of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) in Berlin, inquires to what extent smoking, physical inactivity, and obesity are associated with social status.

The data for his investigation of social status-specific differences stemmed from the RKI's Telephone Health Survey. In interviews conducted with a total of 8318 individuals over a period of 18 years the RKI recorded interviewees' responses to questions regarding current smoking status, degree of physical activity, height, and weight. The subjects' [social status](#) was determined from their statements on education, occupation, and net household income. The analyses were also intended to reveal any age- and sex-specific variations.

Evaluation of the data showed that men of low social status are more likely to be smokers, to be physically inactive, and to be obese. The same goes for women, with an even stronger link with obesity.

Given that the risk factors [smoking](#), physical inactivity, and obesity are connected with many chronic diseases, Lampert sees considerable potential for prevention and cost reduction.

**More information:** *Dtsch Arztebl Int* 2010; 107(1-2): 1-7;  
[www.aerzteblatt.de/v4/archiv/pdf.asp?id=67256](http://www.aerzteblatt.de/v4/archiv/pdf.asp?id=67256)

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