

'Communicative fathers' help reduce teenage smoking

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Children who talk to their fathers about the issues that are important to them are less likely to take up smoking during early adolescence, a Cardiff University study has found.

Dr James White from Cardiff University's School of Medicine undertook a three-year-study, involving some 3,500 11 to 15 year-olds, as part of the British Youth Panel Survey - a self report survey of children in the British Household Panel survey.

Results indicated that one of the strongest protective factors for reducing the risk of experimenting with smoking in early adolescence was how often fathers talked with their children, both boys and girls, about 'things that mattered'.

Dr White, who presents his findings to the British Psychological Society's Annual Conference today (Thursday 15th April) said: "This study suggests that a greater awareness of parents' and especially fathers' potential impact upon their teenagers' choices about whether to smoke is needed. Fathers should be encouraged and supported to improve the quality and frequency of communication with their children during adolescence.

"The impact of teenager parenting is relatively un-researched and further research is very much needed."

Only children who had never smoked at the time the study began took

part. As well as their smoking, the children were also asked about the frequency of parental communication, arguments with family members and the frequency of family meals.

The frequency of family arguments and [family](#) meals did not have a significant effect.

After three years, the responses of [children](#) who had remained non [smokers](#) were compared to those who said they had experimented with smoking at some point.

Recognised risk factors for smoking, such as age, participant sex, [household income](#), parental monitoring and parental smoking, were all taken into account during analysis of the study's findings.

Provided by Cardiff University

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