

Arizona's smoking ban reduced hospital visits, study finds

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Two University of Arizona researchers have studied the relationship between Arizona's 2007 law that bans smoking in public places and hospitalization rates for a range of ailments related to secondhand smoke exposure.

Their results: Admissions for acute [myocardial infarction](#) or AMI, stroke, asthma and angina decreased following the implementation of the ban.

Reductions in hospital charges are estimated to total more than \$16 million in the first 13 months after the ban.

Patricia M. Herman and Michele E. Walsh, both researchers in the UA psychology department, used public data on monthly [hospital admissions](#) in Arizona from January 2004 through May 2008 for their analyses.

To control for other reasons why hospital admissions change over time, they compared admissions for those primary diagnoses before and after May 1, 2007 - the start date of the [smoking ban](#) - to admissions for four diagnoses not associated with [secondhand smoke](#): appendicitis, [kidney stones](#), acute cholecystitis and ulcers.

They also compared admissions in Arizona counties with preexisting county or municipal smoking bans - which would be expected to show little effect from the statewide ban - to counties with no previous bans.

Their results showed statistically significant reductions in hospital admissions of 13 percent for AMI, 33 percent for unstable angina, 14 percent for acute stroke and 22 percent for asthma in counties with no previous bans over what was seen in counties with previous bans.

There were no statistically significant changes seen for diagnoses not associated with secondhand smoke.

More information: Their findings are published in the current issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

Provided by University of Arizona

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