

Key role proposed for pediatricians in curbing tobacco use

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Nicotine addiction usually begins during the critical teenage years, and pediatric healthcare professionals can play a prominent role in promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle among children and adolescents, as described in an article published online ahead of print in *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, & Pulmonology*.

Denormalization is a strategy for changing social norms and reinforcing a public perception of tobacco use as a health-compromising, socially unacceptable behavior. Karen Calabro, DrPH, Ramara Costello, and Alexander Prokhorov, MD, PhD, from M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (Houston, Texas), describe several ways pediatricians and other medical professionals can help their patients and their communities to see tobacco use as undesirable: through direct communication with patients and their families; by providing information and referrals for tobacco prevention and cessation programs; by setting personal examples of a tobacco-free lifestyle; and by advocating for stronger public policies aimed at reducing tobacco use and exposure. In the article entitled, "Denormalization of Tobacco Use and the Role of the Pediatric Health-Care Provider," the authors assert that healthcare professionals can have a significant, positive impact on children's health by working to denormalize tobacco use.

"For years big tobacco has promoted its toxic product as what popular, successful, glamorous, attractive, confident, athletic, and independent people do. It is time to start re-claiming the truth. Use of a product that hurts you and everyone around you is not something that should be

glamorized. Implementation of strategies to change public perceptions about tobacco have had substantial impact on reducing youth smoking—and have been vigorously fought by the tobacco industry. Pediatricians, as advocates for children's health, need to send strong messages to their patients and their communities to counter the [tobacco](#) industry deceptions," says Harold Farber, MD, MSPH, Editor of *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, & Pulmonology*, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Section of Pulmonology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

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