

Smokers take 2.7 extra sick days per year, research shows

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(Medical Xpress)—Smokers are costing the UK economy £1.4 billion by taking an average of two or three days more sick leave per year than their non-smoking colleagues, a new study has revealed.

Current smokers are 33 per cent more likely to miss work than non-smokers and were absent an average of 2.7 extra days per year, according to research conducted by Dr Jo Leonardi-Bee and Stephen Weng in the UK Centre for [Tobacco Control](#) Studies based at The University of Nottingham.

"[Quitting smoking](#) appears to reduce absenteeism and result in substantial cost savings for employers" said Dr Leonardi-Bee.

The findings emphasised the importance of encouraging smokers to quit; doing so could help to reverse some of the lost-work trends, as figures

showed that current smokers were still 19 per cent more likely to miss work than ex-smokers.

The report, published in the journal *Addiction*, analysed 29 separate studies conducted between 1960 and 2011 in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Japan, covering more than 71,000 public and private sector workers.

Researchers asked workers about their current and former smoking habits and used surveys or medical and employee records to track how often they were absent over an average of two years. The study showed that smoking was clearly tied to workers' short-term absences as well as leaves of four weeks or more.

The £1.4bn pounds lost in the UK due to smoking-related [absenteeism](#) was only one of the numerous costs of smoking in the workplace, according to Dr Leonardi-Bee and her colleagues. Others costs included productivity lost to smoking breaks and the cost of cigarette-related fire damage.

However, the researchers add, further study is needed to examine which interventions are cost-effective for employers to aid smokers to quit smoking in the workplace.

More information: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10...
1/add.12015/abstract](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.12015/abstract)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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