

# Spine patients who quit smoking report diminished pain

March 19 2013

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Smoking is a known risk factor for back pain and disc disease. In a new study presented today at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), researchers reviewed smoking cessation rates and related pain in 6,779 patients undergoing treatment for spinal disorders with severe axial (spine) or radicular (leg) pain. Information on each patient's age, gender, weight, smoking history, assessment of pain, treatment type and co-morbid depression also were assessed.

Overall, 8.9 percent of patients over the age of 55 smoked compared with 23.9 percent of those aged 55 and younger. Twenty-five percent of the patients older than age 55 had quit smoking, as did 26.1 percent of those younger than age 55.

Current smokers in both age groups reported greater pain than those who had never smoked. Mean improvement in reported pain over the course of treatment was significantly different in non-smokers and current smokers in both age groups.

Those who quit smoking during the course of care reported greater pain improvement than those who continued to smoke. As a group, those who continued smoking during treatment had no clinically significant improvement in reported pain, regardless of age.

**More information:** [www.aaos.org/](http://www.aaos.org/)

Provided by American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Citation: Spine patients who quit smoking report diminished pain (2013, March 19) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-spine-patients-diminished-pain.html>

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