

Ex-convicts from tobacco-free prisons need help to stay off smokes

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Study found they're less likely to resume habit with pre-release counseling.

(HealthDay)—Inmates who quit smoking while in smoke-free prisons are more likely to stay tobacco free if they receive special counseling before they're released, new research suggests.

Interventions based on motivational interviewing and behavioral therapy improve smoking cessation rates among ex-convicts, according to a study published April 8 in the journal *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

The study, led by Dr. Jennifer Clarke, of Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island, involved nearly 300 inmates scheduled for release from a smoke-free prison in roughly eight weeks. Of the participants, 35 percent were women.

Each participant was randomly assigned to receive six weekly sessions of education videos or a [behavioral intervention](#) known as the WISE intervention (Working Inside for Smoking Elimination).

Three weeks after they were released from prison, 25 percent of the inmates assigned to the WISE [intervention group](#) remained tobacco free. In contrast, only 7 percent of those in the educational video group continued their [smoking cessation](#), according to a journal news release.

The inmates who were smoke-free early on were reassessed at three months. By this point, 12 percent of the inmates from the WISE group and 2 percent of the [educational video](#) group remained tobacco-free.

[Inmates](#) who were Hispanic, who had a plan to avoid smoking and who had been in prison for more than six months were more likely to succeed in their attempt to stop smoking.

The study received funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health/National Institute on Drug Abuse.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [tobacco use and smoking](#).

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