

Researchers call on physicians to urge newly diagnosed cancer patients to quit smoking

April 10 2013, by Helen Dodson



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Yale Cancer Center experts in collaboration with the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) are calling on physicians to routinely recommend that patients stop smoking after a diagnosis of cancer. Their call to action took place in a policy statement released at the AACR Annual Meeting 2013, in Washington, D.C.

A large body of research shows that continuing to smoke after a [cancer diagnosis](#) results in poorer outcomes and that stopping smoking can improve a patient's chance of survival. This is true not only for lung cancer but for many types of the disease.

According to the AACR, a survey of [National Cancer Institute](#)-designated cancer centers found that only 38% of the centers that responded even record patient smoking as a vital sign and less than half have staff dedicated to [smoking cessation](#) programs.

The AACR and Yale called for universal tobacco use assessment and documentation at every patient visit, whether it occurs in the community or in a clinical trial.

"We are extremely grateful to the AACR for taking a strong stand on this and urging all cancer physicians to do what we already do routinely at Yale—help cancer patients take back their lives and health from this destructive habit," said lung cancer expert Roy Herbst, M.D., chief of [medical oncology](#) at Yale Cancer Center, and chair of the AACR subcommittee on tobacco and cancer.

"It is crucial that all oncologists in any setting both assess tobacco use and take ownership of ensuring that their patients receive appropriate treatment for their tobacco use," said Benjamin Toll, associate professor of psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine, director of the [smoking cessation program](#) at Yale Cancer Center, and chair of the committee charged with writing the AACR policy statement.

Other authors of the policy statement are Thomas Brandon of the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Ellen Gritz of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Graham Warren of the Hollings [Cancer Center](#) at the Medical University of South Carolina.

For the full statement, visit the [website](#).

Provided by Yale University

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