

# Study reveals smoking is undertreated compared to other chronic conditions

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(Medical Xpress)—Yale School of Medicine researchers have found that smoking is drastically undertreated compared to chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, or asthma.

A recent Yale study reveals physicians are failing to treat tobacco use, despite the fact that it is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and that smokers are important candidates for treatment interventions, including behavioral counseling and medication.

Analysis of the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey data from 2005 to 2007 showed that only 4.4% of tobacco users were prescribed medication during their visit, compared to 57.4% of hypertensive patients, 46.2% of diabetics, and 42.6% of patients with asthma. Results of the study, conducted with researchers at Harvard University, will be published in the August Issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

"A compelling argument has been made that [tobacco use](#) should be reframed as a chronic disease and treated as other [chronic conditions](#) such as diabetes," said Dr. Steven L. Bernstein, associate professor of [emergency medicine](#) at Yale and lead author of the paper. "Our study suggests that this has not occurred."

Researchers point to opportunities for improvement that include more insurance coverage for cessation products and improved training for medical students and residents.

**More information:** [ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/ ... 105/AJPH.2012.301112](http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.1093/AJPH.2012.301112)

Provided by Yale University

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