

Father's smoking prior to conception could increase asthma risk for baby

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

A baby has a greater risk of asthma if his or her father smoked prior to conception.

The research, presented at the European Respiratory Society (ERS) International Congress in Munich today (08 September 2014), is the first study in humans to analyse the link between a father's smoking habits

before conception and a child's [asthma](#). The findings add to growing evidence from animal studies which suggest that the father's exposures before parenthood can harm his child.

The study analysed the smoking habits of over 13,000 men and women via a questionnaire. The researchers analysed the link in both mothers and [fathers](#) and looked at the number of years a person had smoked prior to conception, the incidence of asthma in children and whether the parent had quit before the baby was conceived.

The results showed that non-allergic asthma (without hayfever) was significantly more common in children with a father who smoked prior to conception. This risk of asthma increased if a father smoked before the age of 15 and this risk grew the longer the duration of smoking. The researchers observed no link between the mother's smoking prior to conception and a child's asthma.

Dr Cecile Svanes, from the University of Bergen, Norway, said: "This study is important as it is the first study looking at how a father's smoking habit pre-conception can affect the [respiratory health](#) of his children. Given these results, we can presume that exposure to any type of [air pollution](#), from [occupational exposures](#) to chemical exposures, could also have an effect. It is important for policymakers to focus on interventions targeting young men and warning them of the dangers of smoking and other exposures to their unborn children in the future."

Provided by European Lung Foundation

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