

# First clear evidence of a link between smoking and prostate cancer

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Smoking is a known risk factor for the development of various forms of cancer. However, when it comes to the link between smoking and prostate cancer, the findings of previous studies have been contradictory. Now, for the first time, an international study led by MedUni Vienna and Basle University Hospital, has provided evidence of a clear link.

The study, which was recently published in *European Urology*, the world's leading journal in the field of urology and nephrology, shows that, following removal of the [prostate gland](#) due to [prostate cancer](#), smokers and ex-smokers have a much higher risk (specifically twice the

risk) of recurrence of prostate cancer (biochemical recurrence; BCR).

"Our study findings underline the importance of informing a prostate cancer patient about the negative effects of [smoking](#)," says Shahrokh F. Shariat, Principal of the University Clinic of Urology at MedUni Vienna, who set up the ground-breaking study together with Malte Rieken, University Clinic of Urology at Basle University Hospital.

## **It makes sense for prostate cancer patients to quit smoking**

However, according to the study findings, the negative impact of smoking on the risk of biochemical recurrence will have been offset within ten years of quitting. Hence, Shariat recommends: "It is never too late to quit smoking. On the contrary: as our study shows, it makes sense to quit, even if you are already suffering from prostate cancer."

## **International meta-study**

The present study combined data from six international cancer research centers. The study population comprised 7,191 patients, who had had their prostate glands removed between 2000 – 2011 (radical prostatectomy; RP). None of the patients had received preoperative radiotherapy, hormonal therapy or chemotherapy. Patients with known metastasis at the time of diagnosis were excluded. Various statistical methods were used to analyze the data.

## **Link between smoking and the development of prostate cancer still uncertain**

It is still not clear, in scientific terms, whether (and, if so, to what extent) smoking is associated with the development of prostate cancer. Older

studies indicate that there is a clear association but recent studies show the opposite. However, what is proven is that smoking increases the risk of dying from prostate cancer. Shariat: "Many questions about prostate cancer and smoking are still unanswered. Further studies are therefore required to produce satisfactory answers."

**More information:** "Association of Cigarette Smoking and Smoking Cessation with Biochemical Recurrence of Prostate Cancer in Patients Treated with Radical Prostatectomy." *Eur Urol.* 2015 Jun 3. [DOI: 10.1016/j.eururo.2015.05.038](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eururo.2015.05.038)

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