

Researchers find partner support is key to stubbing out smoking

March 9 2016, by Wendy Skene



Support from a partner after the quit date and refraining from nagging are important factors in successfully stopping smoking, according to a researcher at the University of Aberdeen.

Dr Gertraud Stadler tracked the behaviour of 100 couples with one smoker and one non-smoker while working with Dr Urte Scholz at the University of Zuerich.

The results of the study showed that those with partners who offered emotional encouragement and practical [support](#) were more likely to stop [smoking](#) than those with unsupportive or nagging partners. On particular days when partners helped out with practical tasks like shopping or looking after the children, [smokers](#) were more likely to cut down on smoking.

In the study, smokers and their partners were asked to use mobile phones to keep a record of the support the [partner](#) offered prior to and after their pre-set quit date. They were then followed up to monitor their progress in stopping smoking.

Dr Stadler said: "These results are really helpful when making a plan to stop smoking.

"According to this study, the smoker's chance of stopping smoking would increase if we can train the partners to give more tailored support according to the smokers' habits. "

"The whole idea behind these studies was to really understand what happens on a day to day basis when one partner quits smoking and importantly, what the other can do to help them.

"We asked couples to keep diaries ten days before the smoker tried to quit and for 21 days after. This meant we could look at whether quitting success differs whether the non-smoking partner provides support beforehand or after the quit date.

"We found that support was most beneficial when given after the quit

date, this makes sense given that this was when the help was really needed.

"We know that there are many things that are not helpful in stopping smoking – such as nagging or trying to control the situation. These results show that we should encourage the partner to offer emotional support as well as practical help like taking care of the kids. There are lots of things that partners can do to help their significant others quit."

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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