

Avoid smoky environments to protect your heart

May 3 2019



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

If a room or car is smoky, stay away until it has cleared. That's the main message of research presented today at EuroHeartCare 2019, a scientific congress of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC).

"Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke regardless of whether the smoker is still in the room," said study author Professor Byung Jin Kim, of Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Republic of Korea. "Our study in non-smokers shows that the risk of [high blood pressure \(hypertension\)](#) is higher with longer duration of passive smoking – but even the lowest amounts are dangerous."

Passive smoking at home or work was linked with a 13 percent increased risk of hypertension. Living with a smoker after age 20 was associated with a 15 percent greater risk. Exposure to passive smoking for ten years or more was related to a 17 percent increased risk of hypertension. Men and women were equally affected.

Participants with hypertension were significantly more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work (27.9 percent) than those with normal blood pressure (22.6 percent). Hypertension was significantly more common in people exposed to [passive smoke](#) at home or work (7.2 percent) compared to no exposure (5.5 percent).

High blood pressure is the leading global cause of premature death, accounting for almost ten million deaths in 2015, and those affected are advised to quit smoking. Previous research has suggested a link between passive smoking and hypertension in non-smokers. But most studies were small, restricted to women, and used self-reported questionnaires in which respondents typically over-report never-smoking.

This is the first large study to assess the association between secondhand smoke and hypertension in never-smokers verified by urinary levels of cotinine, the principal metabolite of nicotine. It included 131,739 never-smokers, one-third men, and an average age of 35 years.

"The results suggest that it is necessary to keep completely away from secondhand smoke, not just reduce [exposure](#), to protect against

hypertension," said Professor Kim.

"While efforts have been made around the world to minimise the dangers of passive smoking by expanding no smoking areas in public places, our study shows that more than one in five never-smokers are still exposed to [secondhand smoke](#). Stricter [smoking](#) bans are needed, together with more help for smokers to kick the habit. Knowing that family members suffer should be extra motivation for [smokers](#) to quit," he said.

More information: Association between secondhand smoke exposure and hypertension in 131,739 Korean self-reported never-smokers verified by cotinine' will be presented during Moderated poster session – Public health and cardiac rehabilitation

Provided by European Society of Cardiology

Citation: Avoid smoky environments to protect your heart (2019, May 3) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-05-smoky-environments-heart.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--