

Tobacco cessation programs may up quit rates in cancer patients

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(HealthDay)—Enrolling actively-smoking oncology patients into a

comprehensive tobacco cessation program may help patients sustain long-term abstinence from smoking and improve their cancer treatment outcomes, according to a study recently published in *JAMA Network Open*.

Paul M. Cinciripini, Ph.D., of the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, and colleagues examined data from a prospective cohort of 3,245 smokers participating in a [tobacco treatment program](#) from Jan. 1, 2006, through Aug. 31, 2015 (2,343 patients with both smoking-related and nonsmoking-related cancers; 309 patients who had previously had cancer; and 593 patients without any cancer history). The tobacco treatment program consisted of an in-person consultation, followed by six to eight in-person and telephone follow-up counseling sessions, paired with 10 to 12 weeks of pharmacotherapy.

The researchers found that the mean smoking [abstinence](#) rates at three-month, six-month, and nine-month follow-up were 45.1, 45.8, and 43.7 percent, respectively. Abstinence rates did not differ regardless of whether the patient had cancer or not. The highest rates of abstinence were found at nine months in patients with head and [neck cancer](#) (relative risk, 1.31).

"Investment in a comprehensive program within cancer centers may be justified by the potential savings in treatment costs (reduced mortality, second primary cancers, progression, recurrence), and by the improvements in treatment response and quality of life," the authors write. "Patients with [cancer](#) should be given the best opportunity to achieve cessation, just as we select the most effective medical treatments to increase their likelihood of survival."

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