

Sights set on solving problem smoking

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A new approach to support long-term smokers to quit will be trialled in South Australia this year, building on a decade of research into finding solutions to tobacco addiction.

The program, funded by Cancer Australia, will focus on low socio-[economic status](#) (SES) areas where [smoking](#) rates have not decreasing as they have in other parts of society.

With the high cost of cigarettes affecting low income earners more than others, Flinders University researchers have developed an evidence-based solution for those in the community who require extra help.

Community-led peer support groups, using mindfulness and other behavioral interventions to build resilience, will work with smokers for up to six months in full randomized, controlled clinical trials across metropolitan Adelaide.

The results will help inform future programs to "break the cycle."

"This will be the world's first study to test the effectiveness of the resilience interventions on smoking cessation in low SES groups," says project leader and sociologist Professor Paul Ward from Flinders University.

Smoking continues to be stubbornly and significantly more prevalent in lower compared to higher socio-economic areas, despite long-running efforts to reduce this inequity, he says.

"Our previous research has established a number of strategies that are most feasible in breaking bad habits to help people most at risk to quit. Now we're going to measure the success of these methods in a real-world situation."

Addiction to smoking is fueled and perpetrated by complex and interwoven social, economic, emotional and psychological factors, he says, pointing to higher levels among prisoners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those diagnosed with mental health issues as examples.

The federal Cancer Australia "Priority-driven Collaborative Cancer Research Scheme' project, entitled Increasing resilience and reducing smoking for lower socio-economic groups, will receive more than \$550,000 over three years.

A previous study ("Economic benefits of achieving realistic smoking

cessation targets in Australia," 2008) estimated an 8% drop in smoking led to 58,000 fewer cases of disease, 2.2 million fewer lost working days, an increase in leisure time of 23,000 days, and a decrease in health sector costs of \$500 million in Australia.

People can sign up for the SA trials when they are announced and promoted locally in coming weeks.

The latest article, "Using a nominal group technique to approach consensus on a resilience intervention for smoking cessation in a lower socioeconomic population," has been published in *BMC Public Health*.

More information: George Tsourtos et al. Using a nominal group technique to approach consensus on a resilience intervention for smoking cessation in a lower socioeconomic population, *BMC Public Health* (2019). [DOI: 10.1186/s12889-019-7939-y](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7939-y)

Provided by Flinders University

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