

Quitting smoking tied to better survival in head, neck squamous cell carcinoma

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Smoking cessation for >10 years is significantly associated with reduced

overall mortality and head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC)-specific mortality, according to a study published online Jan. 18 in *Cancer*.

John J.W. Lee, M.D., from University of Toronto, and colleagues assessed whether smoking cessation and increased duration of abstinence were associated with improved overall and HNSCC-specific survival. The analysis included prospective data from 2,482 patients with HNSCC (2006 to 2019).

The researchers found that former smokers had a lower risk for overall mortality versus current smokers (adjusted hazard ratio, 0.71). Former smokers who quit >10 years before diagnosis (long-term abstinence) had the most improved overall survival (adjusted hazard ratio, 0.72) compared with current smokers. While former smokers had reduced HNSCC-specific mortality versus current smokers (adjusted hazard ratio, 0.71), there was no difference seen for noncancer [mortality](#). Similarly, abstinence for >10 years was associated with lower HNSCC-specific death versus current smoking (adjusted hazard ratio, 0.64).

"These findings contribute to the importance and urgency of smoking-[cessation](#) interventions, with an emphasis to encourage quitting even if it feels too late," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to the [pharmaceutical industry](#).

More information: John J. W. Lee et al, Cigarette smoking cessation, duration of smoking abstinence, and head and neck squamous cell carcinoma prognosis, *Cancer* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/cncr.34620](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.34620)

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