

# Air quality device helps reduce children's exposure to smoke in the home

7 September 2012

Providing parents who smoke with measurements of their homes indoor air quality (IAQ), in addition to usual smoking advice, leads to better IAQ and reduces children's exposure to second hand smoke.

The study discussed at the British Science Festival today, carried out by University of Aberdeen scientists in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and ASH Scotland, aimed to establish whether measurements of IAQ would provide an incentive for parents who smoke to change their habits.

The study which involved 40 families and took place over 1 month was not aimed at getting parents to quit; instead to change their [smoking](#) patterns to ensure that the child was not exposed. This included encouraging them to smoke outside of the home and asking visitors not to smoke in their home.

Dr Steve Turner, Senior Clinical Lecturer in Child Health at the University of Aberdeen said: "Smoking is one of the most harmful, but potentially modifiable, lifestyle activities in modern Britain. We have previously observed how parents who smoke find it very hard to quit despite understanding the harmful effects of [second hand smoke](#) on children."

Dr Turner continued: "We measured IAQ over a 24 hour period and in half of the homes studied we showed parents the IAQ levels (which reflect smoke concentration in the air in their homes) to improve understanding of the harm done to the children. In the remainder of the houses we gave the IAQ measurement results back at the end of the month long study. In homes where the IAQ information was provided at the start of the study, [air quality](#) improved by one third over the month long study.

[Parents](#) reported they found getting a number

which described how high their [indoor air](#) quality was provided extra motivation to change their [smoking behaviour](#). Based on the results of the study, the researchers hope to use indoor air quality measurements as part of smoking interventions in different settings – for example maternity hospitals and occupational health.

Dr Turner concluded "We hope that in the future [indoor air quality](#) information will be a useful part of routine practice in smoking cessation practice across the UK both within and outside the NHS".

Provided by University of Aberdeen

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