

Light smokers benefit from nicotine-replacement medications

11 April 2013

(Medical Xpress)—Light daily smokers, those who smoke fewer than 10 cigarettes per day, have greater success quitting when provided stop-smoking medications and assisted by counselors. Those are the key conclusions of research conducted by scientists at Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) and the Medical University of South Carolina and published in the latest issue of *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*.

While the number of light [smokers](#) is increasing, most studies have focused on the benefits of counseling and [nicotine-replacement therapy](#) (NRT) for moderate and [heavy smokers](#). This study found that light smokers who contacted a telephone quitline are typically interested in using NRT and achieve higher quit rates than those who were not offered NRT.

"While many studies have demonstrated the efficacy of nicotine medications for [smoking cessation](#), very few have examined these questions in lighter smokers, as we have done," says Martin Mahoney, PhD, MD, Associate Professor in the departments of [Health Behavior](#) and Medicine at RPCI and senior study author. "A unique strength of this study is the use of an [experimental design](#) implemented in a real world community setting of a state quitline."

The study evaluated long-term quitting success among 1,365 adult [tobacco users](#) who smoked less than 10 cigarettes daily and who contacted the [New York State Smokers' Quitline](#) for assistance between January and July 2010. All smokers received two calls from trained stop-smoking counselors, and about half of the smokers were provided with stop-smoking medications.

Nearly all the light smokers offered the free nicotine medications wanted the medications, and 75% of smokers rated the offer of a free supply of NRT as very important to their quit effort. The quit rates measured at seven months were 20% higher

in the group offered the NRT (33%) compared with those who received only counseling (27.2%).

"These findings demonstrate that low-level daily smokers are interested in and benefit from using NRT when they make a quit attempt," said Laurie Krupski, first author on the study and a Training and Development Coordinator in the Department of Health Behavior at RPCI.

"Smoking cessation is a highly cost-effective intervention because the health consequences of smoking are enormously expensive and compound over time. This study demonstrates that quitline counseling in combination with NRT is a good return on investment," said K. Michael Cummings, PhD, MPH, Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavior Sciences, Medical University of South Carolina.

This work was supported in part by the New York State Department of Health and by the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Center Support Grant to RPCI (P30CA016056).

More information: The study, "Nicotine Replacement Therapy Distribution to Light Daily Smokers Calling a Quitline," is available at goo.gl/dUiio.

Provided by Roswell Park Cancer Institute

APA citation: Light smokers benefit from nicotine-replacement medications (2013, April 11) retrieved 17 August 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-04-smokers-benefit-nicotine-replacement-medications.html>

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