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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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How is smoking related to schizophrenia?

Tobacco smoking is very common among people with schizophrenia, who often have particularly heavy use. This poses considerable health risks, may interfere with antipsychotic medications, and may place a financial burden on the individual. Heavy cigarette use may contribute to the increased mortality and reduced life expectancy reported within the schizophrenia population. This topic considers the evidence for the prevalence and effects of smoking among people with schizophrenia.

What is the evidence for smoking?

Compared to the general population, moderate quality evidence finds higher rates of current smoking, heavy smoking, and lifetime smoking, and lower rates of smoking cessation in people with schizophrenia. People with first-episode psychosis, and those at ultra-high risk of psychosis also show higher rates of smoking, with rates of ~57% and ~33% respectively. There is also a medium-sized increased risk of psychotic disorders, and an earlier age of psychosis onset in smokers compared to non-smokers. Compared to people with other mental disorders, people with schizophrenia show a small to medium-sized effect of higher rates of current smoking, and lower rates of smoking cessation.

Moderate to high quality evidence found small effects of more severe positive symptoms but less severe extrapyramidal symptoms in smokers with schizophrenia compared to non-smokers with schizophrenia. There were no differences in negative symptoms, depression, anxiety, tardive dyskinesia, or parkinsonism.

Moderate quality evidence found the most commonly reported reasons for smoking were relaxation/stress reduction, dysphoria relief, sociability, and craving/addiction. The most commonly reported reasons for quitting were self-control, health concerns, and social influence.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.