

The Facts on Nurses and Smoking

NURSES HELPING OTHERS TO QUIT

- Nurses make a difference in smoking cessation, increasing quitting success rates in both hospital and non-hospital settings.⁴
- Nursing-led interventions for smoking cessation increases by 50% the chances of successfully quitting.⁴
- In an outpatient setting, nurse-assisted counseling nearly doubled quit rates compared to physician advice alone.⁵
- 25% to 30% of nurses provide smoking cessation intervention to their patients.³
- Before nurses can fully realize their cessation intervention potential, tobacco cessation content and clinical skills in schools of nursing must be enhanced. A recent study found that less than 50% of undergraduate nursing programs in the U.S. provide clinical practice in this area, and less than 50% of undergraduate and graduate nursing programs use the Public Health Service guideline as a teaching tool.⁶

NURSES WHO SMOKE

- 15% of Registered Nurses (RNs) smoke.⁷ That's about 388,960 of the 2.6 million RNs in the U.S.
- Smoking among RNs is declining but is higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 12% sought for the general population. In 2002, 25% of men and 20% of women in the U.S. smoked.¹
- 28% of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) smoke.⁷ Unlike RNs, smoking prevalence among LPNs has remained high.

- As in the general population, tobacco use among nurses varies by educational and socioeconomic background. Smoking is more prevalent in lower income strata and among those with fewer years of formal education.¹
- Smoking varies by nursing specialty. Psychiatric (23%), Gerontology (18%) and Emergency nurses (18%) smoke more while Pediatric critical care nurses (8%) smoke less.⁸ Seven percent of Oncology nurses smoke.⁹
- Some nurses are entering the profession as smokers. Reports of prevalence of smoking among nursing students vary from 6%¹⁰ to 14%¹¹ to 24%.¹²

NURSES AND SMOKING CESSATION

- Through participation in the Nurses Health Study, nurses have played a critical role in contributing to our knowledge of the morbidity and mortality caused by tobacco use among women.¹³ However, efforts focused on assisting nurses with their own cessation have been limited.
- In the Nurses' Health Study, of the 24,326 nurses who were smokers in 1986, (and were still alive and provided smoking data in 1998), 52% had quit; 49% were still smoking.¹⁴
- Studies indicate that lack of support from coworkers has been associated with fewer quit attempts.^{15, 16, 17, 18} Conversely, strong support for quitting has a positive impact.^{19, 20}

Fact: In 2002, 22.5% of adults in the United States smoked.¹

Fact: Smoking among adolescents remains high, with more than 4,000 children and adolescents becoming regular users of tobacco every day.²

Fact: If 100,000 clinicians were to help 10% of their patients who smoke to stop each year, the number of smokers in the United States would drop by an additional 2 million people annually.³

Fact: Smoking cessation interventions delivered by a variety of providers markedly increase cessation rates.³

Fact: 15.4 million people a year make a serious quit attempt.¹ If half of the current working population of 2.3 million registered nurses were to assist one patient per week to make a quit attempt, the number of quit attempts in the U.S. would increase by more than 59 million quit attempts per year.

Fact: Tobacco Free Nurses is the first national initiative to help nurses stop smoking and to empower them to engage in tobacco use prevention and cessation.

OVER ▶

TOBACCO
free
NURSES

The Facts on Nurses and Smoking, continued

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