

# RA-related issues impede smoking cessation

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(HealthDay)—Issues related to rheumatoid arthritis (RA), such as distraction from pain and frustration of living with RA, may impede smoking cessation in RA patients, according to a study published in the May issue of *Arthritis Care & Research*.

Pip Aimer, from the University of Otago in New Zealand, and colleagues conducted a qualitative mixed-methods study to examine disease-related issues that make [smoking cessation](#) challenging for RA patients. Participants attended a focus group or individual interview and completed standardized questionnaires. Thirty-six RA patients were included: 24 current smokers and 12 ex-smokers.

The researchers identified five key barriers to smoking cessation. Participants were unaware of the correlation between smoking and RA

and consequently did not feel that this was a reason to quit. They used smoking as a distraction from pain. Furthermore, because of difficulty exercising, participants did not use exercise as an alternative [distraction](#). Participants reported that smoking was used as a coping mechanism for the [frustration](#) associated with living with RA. Participants also reported feeling unsupported and isolated from other patients with RA.

"Disease-related issues may hinder smoking cessation for RA patients," the authors write. "Through an understanding of patients' perspectives there is an opportunity to plan an effective targeted intervention that may increase the chance of smoking cessation in RA patients where smoking may adversely influence disease progression and comorbidities."

One author disclosed financial ties to AstraZeneca.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
[Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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