

New research shows that the smell of smoke does not trigger relapse in quitters

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Research into tobacco dependence published online today in the November issue of *Addiction*, has shown that recent ex-smokers who find exposure to other people's cigarette smoke pleasant are not any more likely to relapse than those who find it unpleasant.

Led by Dr Hayden McRobbie and Professor Peter Hajek of the Tobacco Dependence Research Unit at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, researchers examined the hypothesis that those who find the smell of smoke pleasant are more likely to relapse than those who have a neutral or negative reaction to it. Surprisingly, they concluded that finding the smell of other people's cigarettes pleasant does not make abstaining smokers any more likely to relapse.

The researchers studied a group of over a thousand smokers receiving smoking cessation treatment at the East London Smokers Clinic. During their six weeks of treatment (two weeks prior to quitting and four weeks afterwards) the smokers completed a weekly questionnaire that measured the severity of their withdrawal discomfort, and also asked them to rate how pleasant they found the smell of other people's cigarettes during the past week.

The results showed that during their first week of abstinence, 23 per cent of respondents found the smell of other people's cigarette smoke pleasant. Finding the cigarette smoke pleasant was not related to smoking status in the following week.

Lead author Dr Hayden McRobbie says, "Recent quitters can be reassured that finding the smell of cigarette smoke pleasant is not likely to lead them back to smoking."

Source: Queen Mary, University of London

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