

Review of: "Barriers to quitting smoking – a survey among 1000 adult cigarette smokers in Germany"

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Authors Neubert et al. have undertaken research on one of the globally relevant topics to understand the obstacles of smoking cessation among adults in a world today where ironically increasingly more people are aware of the ill effects of smoking on health. Germany, where the research was conducted, is no exception. They find that majority of adult smokers remain demotivated, especially those belonging to economically weaker and socially disadvantaged strata of the society, to cessation. Less than one third of them intended cessation and only about 3% of them planned to start it in the following month. In that sense, this research paper reconfirms the diversity among smokers and, therefore, the need to have a basket of options for smokers to choose in order to succeed in their attempt to quit smoking. They find younger, well-educated and full-time, high-income group of responders more motivated to cessation attempt than 50+ and low-earning pullulation group. Top reasons for continuing to smoke include joy of smoking, nicotine craving, and habit. They recommend inclusive intervention strategy based on THR principles for adult smokers to help them quit smoking. The study was designed and conducted well with statistically significant number of age-, gender- and income-matched cohorts to the population.

Nicotine-illiteracy and related misconceptions, especially among healthcare professionals (but also among smokers), though apparent in this study too, in my opinion, is one of the most important barriers to overall success of tobacco cessation with cascading impact. This aspect is not adequately highlighted in this study. Unless we have nicotine-literate healthcare professionals hand-holding smokers in their tobacco cessation attempt(s), supported adequately (a) with or without a basket of NRT options on case-to-case basis and (b) follow-up, desired level of smoking cessation in the population would be a far-fetched dream. I recommend furthering research in this direction.