Review of: "Successful Cessation Programs that Reduce Comorbidity may Explain Surprisingly Low Smoking Rates among Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients"

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I read your paper with great interest, for two reasons; it is a commentary, and it is concerned with COVID-19. An underestimated combination that can deliver the most recent findings in less words, inciting further research and discussion on the issue being addressed. Having published a commentary myself on COVID-19, I could not help but welcome myself to write a brief review regarding the present commentary.

Title, Abstract, and References

- a) The title is informative, concise and relevant, representing the primary context of the manuscript quite well.

- b) It would have been better if the authors opted not to include an abstract, since commentaries usually do not require an abstract. Even if the inclusion of an abstract was mandatory on Qeios, it would have been better to adopt a "key points" or "highlight" format, rather than an abstract, which is a little too long for a commentary.

- c) The article is well-referenced in general, with most of the references having been published in the recent years, however, some date back to the last century; which does not seem appropriate, when the authors could have simply chose more recently published relevant papers that cited these references. It is also commendable that the authors have cited a few pre-prints, too.

Introduction/Background

Despite not requiring an abstract, commentaries can be improved to offer better readability by including pertinent subheadings to divide the manuscript into smaller sections. "Introduction" itself would have made a good opening subheading, however, the authors seem to have rushed to address the recent meta-analyses and controversies regarding the peculiar prevalence of smoking in hospitalized patients with COVID-19. It would have been better if there were an introduction that would discuss potential protective effects of smoking against SARS-CoV-2 infection. Nonetheless, the manuscript still does not fall short of consistency, and manages to captivate the reader with a rather rigorous opening.

Discussion and Conclusions

The authors should be congratulated on their work, for providing a seamlessly fluent discussion on the "Smoking Cessation" and "Protection" hypotheses. The main body of the manuscript is written in plain and appreciably balanced language, and manages to provide a brief account on the then-current evidence, without perplexing the subject matter. Again, the manuscript could have enjoyed a better readability with more subheadings. It is commendable that the authors have decided to keep the paragraphs as short as possible. It would be nice to see the authors update their paper by addressing the recent clinical trials on nicotine for the treatment of COVID-19; that would perfectly supplement the paper.

Verdict

Overall, the present commentary offers an informative and concise account of the less-explained controversial prevalence of smoking in the population of COVID-19 patients who needed hospitalization. Except a few measures that could have been taken to improve the readability of the manuscript, this commentary still successfully delivers its point.

Pros	- Provides an intelligible explanation regarding the "Smoking Cessation" and "Protection" hypotheses - Outstanding fluency throughout the manuscript - Citation of pre-prints	
Cons	- The manuscript could have been divided into smaller sections with distinct subheadings - The abstract is unnecessary, and can be tedious to some - Dated references can be spotted occasionally	