

Individual behavioural counselling helps people to quit smoking

Clinical Question

Compared to no treatment or brief advice, how effective is individual behavioural counselling in promoting smoking cessation?

Bottom Line

There was high-quality evidence that individually-delivered smoking cessation counselling assisted smokers to quit. Individual counselling increased the chances of quitting by between 40% and 80%, compared to minimal support. There was moderate-quality evidence of a smaller relative benefit when counselling was used in addition to pharmacotherapy compared to people using pharmacotherapy alone., There is a suggestion that intensive counselling compared to a brief counselling intervention maybe better . The few studies that compared different types of counselling did not show any differences between them.

Caveat

Almost half the trials recruited people in hospital settings, but there was no evidence of heterogeneity of results in different settings. There was a range of smoking cessation counsellors including health educators and psychologists.

Context

Individual counselling is commonly used to help people who are trying to quit smoking. The review looked at trials of counselling by a trained therapist providing one or more face-to-face sessions, separate from medical care. The outcome was being a non-smoker at least six months later.

Cochrane Systematic Review

[Lancaster T and Stead LF. Individual behavioural counselling for smoking cessation. Cochrane Reviews, 2017, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD001292.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD001292.pub3.](#) This review contains 49 studies involving around 19,000 participants.

PEARLS

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