



Talking to a Doctor about Smoking Makes Quitting Easier - New Survey Reveals

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(BUSINESS WIRE)--84 percent of ex-smokers who consulted with their doctor or another healthcare professional during their final successful quit attempt believe that giving up would have been more difficult if they had tried to quit alone - according to the results of a new European survey announced today.(1) The survey, which investigated the attitudes of nearly 1,000 ex-smokers on smoking and smoking cessation, revealed that 74 percent of those who consulted a healthcare professional would be likely to recommend this approach to others wanting to quit.

In addition, the survey revealed that those who consulted with their doctor or another healthcare professional during their successful quit attempt are significantly more likely to think they will not go back to regular smoking, compared to those who quit alone.

Only 13% of all ex-smokers contacted in the survey consulted with a healthcare professional to help influence their quit attempt. With healthcare professionals being the source of professional support and being able to advise on new ways for the individual to quit, this suggests that smokers aren't always seeking the support which is available to them when trying to give up.

“Smoking is an extremely powerful addiction,” explains Onno van Schayck, Professor General Practice, University of Maastricht, Netherlands. “What this survey highlights is how instrumental doctors can be in helping smokers quit. Because nicotine is so addictive, smokers really do face a difficult challenge when they try to give up on their own. These results reinforce that smokers who are serious about giving up should make a point of speaking to their doctor”.

The survey found that those who were heavy smokers or who had previously attempted to quit were more likely to find quitting difficult than those who smoked less and those who had not tried to quit previously. In addition, those smokers who found it more difficult to quit were more likely to seek their doctor's advice than to quit without support. "Based on my experience once smokers have realised the difficulty of quitting and have experienced the difficulties of quitting without support, they are more likely to seek help from a healthcare professional to increase chances of success" comments Professor van Schayck.

The survey also revealed ex-smokers' motivations to quit. Leading cited reasons to quit included concerns about potential health problems (45 percent), the cost of buying cigarettes (28 percent), the negative impact on family health (22 percent) and diagnosed health problems (22 percent).

Interestingly, the implementation of a national smoking ban was also a motivation to quit, with approximately a quarter of respondents (23%) citing it as having an impact. This was particularly true in Italy, one of the countries with the longest-standing nationwide smoking ban in place - 40 percent of Italian respondents agreed the ban had been influential.

The vast majority of ex-smokers say that since quitting smoking, they feel much better about themselves in a number of ways. Seventy-nine percent agreed that their sense of taste and smell had noticeably improved once they had quit. Although many of the ex-smokers surveyed recognised the harmful effects of cigarette smoking even before they quit, 86 percent agreed that quitting smoking has had a noticeable impact on their general wellbeing.

About the Quitters' Survey

The Quitters' Survey was conducted by Double Helix Development and sponsored by Pfizer. The survey investigated ex-smokers' attitudes to smoking and smoking cessation and nearly 1,000 ex-smokers, who have been abstinent for at least one year from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, participated in the survey.

References

1. Pfizer, Data on File, UK, November 2007.

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