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Outcomes of a Smoking Cessation Clinic in Cardiology Services, Vancouver, Canada

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Background

- Smoking is a modifiable risk factor for cardiac diseases and also worsens the natural history of these conditions.
- As a result of the addictive nature of tobacco, populations with cardiac conditions often continue to smoke at high rates (up to 62%), even after experiencing life-threatening cardiac events.
- Continued smoking by patients with prior or existing cardiac conditions is associated with increased risk for subsequent fatal cardiac events.
- Treating tobacco dependence in these patient populations can significantly reduce the excess mortality currently observed.
- However, few studies in Canada have examined smoking cessation in patients with prior or existing cardiac conditions often continue to smoke at high rates (up to 62%), even after experiencing life-threatening cardiac events.
- Continued smoking by patients with prior or existing cardiac conditions is associated with increased risk for subsequent fatal cardiac events.
- Treating tobacco dependence in these patient populations can significantly reduce the excess mortality currently observed.

Methods

- This study is based on a retrospective review of the charts of 145 participants of the SCC (between Sept 2010 and May 2012).
- 117 participants engaged in the program (i.e., attended at least one follow-up visit beyond the initial visit, see figure 1).
- Data on demographics, smoking and cessation attempt history, medical history (including screening for psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, hypertension, high-cholesterol, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, COPD, eating disorder, seizure disorder, obesity, kidney disease, asthma, HIV, HCV, and cancer), nicotine dependence scores, smoking cessation pharmacotherapy, and number of visits to the program (see table 1).
- The main outcomes of interest were: 1) self-reported 7-day point-prevalence of smoking abstinence verified by expired CO level, and 2) smoking reduction (defined by a 50% or more reduction in average number of cigarettes smoked per day compared to baseline).

Brief Program Description

Treatment: The SCC takes a ‘longitudinal’ tobacco treatment approach (a process which has no set end-point) in recognition of tobacco dependence as a chronic, relapsing medical condition whereby smoking cessation is considered “a process and not an event.” The clinic runs 3 full days a week and is staffed by a team of specialists in tobacco dependence treatment comprising of two nurses and a physician.

Results

- Participants were primarily male (66.4%) and on average were 58.5 years (SD = 10.5) of age. A greater proportion of individuals referred from Respirology had both hypertension, high-cholesterol, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, COPD, eating disorder, seizure disorder, obesity, kidney disease, asthma, HIV, HCV, and cancer, nicotine dependence scores, smoking cessation pharmacotherapy, and number of visits to the program.

Conclusions

- Providing longitudinal, individualized, evidence-based approaches to tobacco treatment within Cardiology Services is feasible.
- The modest outcomes from this pilot study support the need for smoking cessation treatment provision in hospital Cardiology settings.
- Such interventions reduce the disproportionate burden of tobacco use and related disease among populations with medical co-morbidity.