

Smoke-free workplaces spur smokers to kick habit

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NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Banning [smoking](#) in the workplace not only gives workers healthier air, it appears to encourage [smokers](#) to either cut down or kick their habit, a review of previous studies suggests.

"Totally smoke-free workplaces are associated with reductions in prevalence of smoking of 3.8%, and 3.1 fewer cigarettes smoked per day per continuing [smoker](#)," according to the report in the July 27th issue of the British Medical Journal.

In the study, co-authors Caroline M. Fichtenberg and Stanton A. Glantz of the University of California, San Francisco, evaluated 26 previously published studies on smoke-free workplaces. They compared how smoking rates changed after businesses became smoke-free with the changes in smoking after the cost of cigarettes went up due to taxation.

Banning smoking in the workplace reduced smoking overall by an average of 1.4 cigarettes per day per employee, "which corresponds to a relative reduction of 29%."

To achieve similar reductions through taxation, the authors point out, the tax on a pack of cigarettes would need to be increased from the current rate of \$0.75 cents to \$3.05 in the US and £3.44 to £6.59 in the UK.

Moreover, if all workplaces declared themselves smoke-free, consumption per capita in the entire population would decrease by 4.5% in the US and 7.6% in the UK, costing the tobacco industry \$1.7 billion and £310 million every year in lost sales.

"While producing benefits for nonsmokers by eliminating passive smoking, smoke-free workplaces make it easier for smokers to reduce or stop smoking and substantially reduce tobacco industry sales," the researchers report.

"This loss in revenues explains why the industry fights so hard against legislation to ensure that workplaces become smoke-free," Fichtenberg and Glantz conclude.

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