

Predictors of attempts to stop smoking and their success in adult general population samples: a systematic review

Eleni Vangeli, John Stapleton, Eline Suzanne Smit, Ron Borland & Robert West

Abstract

Aims To identify the predictors of attempts to stop smoking and the predictors of quit attempt success in adult general population samples.

Methods We performed an electronic search of EMBASE, Pubmed, Web of Science, PsychINFO and the Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group specialized register for articles that examined, in prospective adult general population samples, predictors of quit attempts and the success of quit attempts. Experts were contacted for knowledge of other relevant studies. Eight studies met the inclusion criteria and results were extracted independently by two researchers.

Results There was considerable methodological heterogeneity between studies. Motivational factors dominated the prediction of quit attempts, whereas only cigarette dependence consistently predicted success after an attempt had been made. Social grade also appeared to predict success but was only examined in two studies. None of the other socio-demographic factors consistently predicted making a quit attempt or success.

Conclusions Population-level studies from a number of countries show that past quit attempts and measures of motivation to stop are highly predictive of quit attempts, whereas only measures of dependence are consistently predictive of success of those attempts. Gender, age and marital status and educational level are not related consistently to quit attempts or quit success across countries.

Keywords General population, predictors, quit attempts, quit attempt success, review of observational studies, smoking.

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