

The use of cessation assistance among smokers from China: Findings from the ITC China Survey

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Abstract

Background: Stop smoking medications significantly increase the likelihood of smoking cessation. However, there are no population-based studies of stop-smoking medication use in China, the largest tobacco market in the world. This study examined stop-smoking medication use and its association with quitting behavior among a population based sample of Chinese smokers.

Methods: Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 4,627 smokers from six cities in the ITC China cohort survey. Longitudinal analyses were conducted using Wave 1 (April to August, 2006) and Wave 2 (November 2007 to January 2008).

Results: Approximately 26% of smokers had attempted to quit between Waves 1 and 2, and 6% were abstinent at 18-month follow-up. Only 5.8% of those attempting to quit reported NRT use and NRT was associated with lower odds of abstinence at Wave 2 (OR = 0.11; 95%CI = 0.03-0.46). Visiting a doctor/health professional was associated with greater attempts to quit smoking (OR = 1.60 and 2.78; 95%CI = 1.22-2.10 and 2.21-3.49 respectively) and being abstinent (OR = 1.77 and 1.85; 95%CI = 1.18-2.66 and 1.13-3.04 respectively) at 18-month follow-up relative to the smokers who did not visit doctor/health professional.

Conclusions: The use of formal help for smoking cessation is low in China. There is an urgent need to explore the use and effectiveness of stop-smoking medications in China and in other non-Western markets.

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