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Long-term Follow-up of Smoking Cessation Program for Chinese Adults

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Abstract

One-year follow-up was conducted for all participants in the first two years of the Smoking Cessation Class of the Chinese Community Smoke-Free Project. Of 150 enrollees, 127 (85%) completed one of 19 classes. Behavioral modification was provided, including instruction on the hazards of smoking, the benefits of quitting, techniques of smoking cessation, and coping strategies. In the first year, all participants were offered nicotine polacrilex gum at no cost. In the second year, the transdermal nicotine patch was used instead. Only those who had remained smoke-free for the entire 12 months were considered successful quitters. Sixteen persons who were lost to follow up were considered smokers.

Of the 127 participants who completed a class, 68 remained smoke-free at one year, a 54% quit rate. When calculated for the 150 enrollees, the quit rate was 45%. These rates compare favorably with most major programs, whose published quit rates have been 20 to 40%.

In the first year, only 64% (43/67) elected to use the nicotine gum offered. In the next year, however, 84% (37/44) wore the nicotine patch. The patch was favored because of its ease of use, more reliable dosing regimen, and fewer side effects. 29 of 43 (67%) who used the gum had quit at one year, compared to 11 of 24 (45%) who did not use gum. 19 of 37 (51%) of patch users quit compared to 4 of 7 who did not use the patch. The total quit rate for users of Nicotine Replacement Therapy was 60% (34/48) but only 48% (15/31) without nicotine. Mean weight gain for quitters was only 5.5 pounds at one year and 4.5 pounds for smokers.

In conclusion, a smoking cessation program using behavioral modification resulted in relatively high one year quit rates for Chinese-speaking adults. Nicotine replacement therapy increased the success rates significantly. The health hazards of the minor average weight gain appeared trivial compared to the enormous health benefits of smoking cessation.