

MDS Alert

Clinical Round Up: Educate Your Staff, Patients About Additional Smoking Hazards

Smoking is not simply injurious to health -- it can impair your memory, the researchers of the **Collaboration for Drug and Alcohol Research Group at Northumbria University** found, Northumbria University announced in a September 11 press release. The study was published recently in the online journal *Addiction*.

The World Health Organization had reported that there could be grave health consequences for even non-smokers who were exposed to smoke for a period. Earlier it was recognized that loss of memory, even dementia, could occur. Now, researchers are discovering "that the deficits associated with secondhand smoke exposure extend to everyday cognitive function," said **Dr. Tom Heffernan**, a researcher of the research group in the release.

Second hand smoking is when an individual is exposed to the smoke exhaled by another in the home or in 'smoking areas' on a regular basis. The study compared one set of smokers and two sets of non-smokers of which one group was exposed to smoke at least 25 hours in a week for a period of four and a half years; while the other group did not face any such exposure.

Rider: While the study did establish links between smoking, even second hand smoking, and deteriorating memory function, no causal relationship could be established.

In another finding, researchers at **Washington University School of Medicine** in St. Louis found that even though lung cancer can occur in non-smokers, the smokers were affected more. "The mutation frequency was ten-fold higher in smokers compared to never-smokers," researcher **Ramaswamy Govindan** was quoted as saying in the journal *Cell*.