

Another nicotine patch study another failure

By ACSH Staff — February 13, 2012

Smokers using a nicotine patch to help them quit are more likely to be successful if, after a relapse, they continue to use the patch, [reports](#) [1] an Australian study just published in the journal [Addiction](#) [2]. However, as another study [recently documented](#) [3], success comes to only a small portion of those using a nicotine patch.

In this study of 509 smokers who relapsed in the third to fifth weeks of their quit attempt, just over 8 percent of those using a nicotine patch were off cigarettes again by the sixth to tenth week of treatment. While that rate is at least superior to the less than 1 percent success rate among those who had been given a placebo patch, it only demonstrates how terribly ineffective the method is, says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross.

Each year, 36 percent of U.S. smokers attempt to quit. Only 3 percent, however, are able to abstain from cigarettes for even six months. We've said it before, and we'll say it again: There is a better way.

Allow us to point you toward [documentation](#) [4] of the decrease in smoking and smoking-related diseases in countries that permit and promote smokeless tobacco products such as snus (finely milled tobacco contained in small sachets that are inserted between the lip and the gum), which suggests that this type of product may actually help smokers quit. Would-be quitters have also reported significant success with the electronic cigarette, which allows them to inhale a dose of nicotine without the carcinogenic products of tobacco combustion. Unfortunately, ACSH advisor Dr. Brad Rodu's 2011 study in the [Harm Reduction Journal](#) [4] reported that smokers remain largely misinformed about the relative safety of these products compared to cigarettes.

In our ongoing effort to let people know about the real benefits of tobacco harm reduction, we remind you of two ACSH publications on the topic: [Helping Smokers Quit: The Science Behind Tobacco Harm Reduction](#) [5] and [Cigarettes: What the Warning Label Doesn't Tell You](#) [6].

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Links

[1] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/09/us-nicotine-patch-idUSTRE8182DD20120209>

[2] <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2012.03801.x/abstract>

[3] <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jan/09/health/la-he-nicotine-replacement-therapy-20120110>

[4] <http://www.aaphp.org/Resources/Documents/20110729RoduReview.pdf>

[5] http://www.amazon.com/Helping-Smokers-Quit-Science-Reduction/dp/0972709452/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1329158670&sr=1-2

[6] <http://www.acsh.org/cigarettes-what-the-warning-label-doesnt-tell-you/>