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## COVID and motivation to quit smoking – data from Polish National Quitline

**Magdalena Cedzyńska**

National Research Institute of Oncology, Poland

Smoking remains one of the biggest public health challenges worldwide. According to World Health Organization (WHO) data, about 8 million people die annually because of tobacco-related diseases. One of the pieces of information that has often appeared in the reports of scientists is the relationship between tobacco smoking and the course of SARS-CoV 2. Smoking any kind of tobacco reduces lung capacity and increases the risk of many respiratory infections and can increase the severity of respiratory diseases. COVID-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs. Smoking impairs lung function, making it harder for the body to fight off coronavirus and other respiratory diseases. Available research suggests that smokers are at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 outcomes and death. The aim of the present study was to assess whether and how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted decisions about quitting smoking. 4072 records of anonymized data were obtained between April 15, 2020 and May 31, 2021 from the Polish National Quit line operating at the Maria Skłodowska-Curie National Research Institute of Oncology in Warsaw, Poland. All callers, apart from standard questions, were asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on their decisions on smoking continuation or cessation. In our study, we found that the pandemic itself had no effect on the decision to quit smoking, although it did positively affect the speed of the decision to give up smoking in those who were already thinking about quitting. We also investigated that after the pandemic, a vast majority of heavy smokers, but not heavy smokers, want to maintain abstinence. Moreover, in case of failure, they want to make another attempt to quit. These results suggest once again that the health threat related to the pandemic has a far-reaching influence on making quitting decisions.

### Recent Publications

1. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Smoking Cessation—A Real-Time Data Analysis from the Polish National Quitline. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19, 2016.

2. Smoking and SARS-CoV-2: Are Polish health professionals at higher risk of infection? *Tobacco Induced Diseases*. 2020;18(June): 52
3. Time trends in tobacco-attributable cancer mortality in Poland -direct estimation method. *Nowotwory. Journal of Oncology* 2017; 67(4): 227-235.

### Speaker Biography

Magdalena Cedzynska is a psychologist, senior researcher and director of smoking cessation service at the National Research Institute of Oncology. She is engaged in cancer primary prevention through tobacco control, with special attention to the treatment of tobacco dependence. For more than 12 years, she took part as a researcher and coordinator in many national and international projects, clinical trials and observations. She coordinated the first "Open-label observation of effectiveness and safety of cytisine in smoking cessation", whose results were published in *Tobacco Control*. In the years 2007–2010, she was coordinator and investigator in the clinical trial "The effects of Tabex (cytisine) on the success of attempts to stop smoking", which resulted in a paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. She was also administrator of the "Randomized placebo controlled trial assessing the efficacy and safety of BP1.4979 in smoking cessation". In years 2009-2011 investigator in internal projects „Tobacco smoking and survivals in non-small cell lung carcinoma treated with radiochemiotherapy”, „Treatment of tobacco dependence of patients with diagnosed cancer of head or neck” , „Change in lifestyle and way of coping with stress and results of treatment of patients with diagnosed cancer of head or neck.” She contributed to the development of the Consensus of Medical Health Care Providers on the Diagnosis and Treatment of Tobacco Dependence. She has coordinated and lectured on over 50 courses on tobacco dependence treatment for health professionals all over Poland. As a member of the International Network of Women Against Tobacco (INWAT) Europe Advisory Board, she is interested and engaged, especially in women and tobacco control issues. She has co-authored over 20 peer-reviewed scientific publications, 7 books, chapters, monographs and educational programs. She gave many oral presentations at conferences and abstracts and posters.

e: magdalena.cedzynska@pib-nio.pl