

Non-smokers put on less weight

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A new study links nicotine poisoning with weight gain, and concludes that active smokers, not only those who stop, put on more weight than non-smokers. After four years of analysis in the University of Navarra, those who put on least weight were those who had never smoked.

From now on we will have to question the myth that smoking makes you slimmer. Researchers from the Department of [Preventative Medicine](#) at the University of Navarra (UNAV) have evaluated the link between the two cardiovascular risk factors: the 'nicotine habit' and the increase in weight when [smokers](#) stop the habit and when they continue smoking.

The results, now published in the *Revista Española de Cardiología*, "are crucial for considering prevention programmes," Francisco Javier Basterra-Gortari, main author of the study and researcher at UNAV, explains to SINC.

The data, resulting from an analysis of 7565 people over 50 months, is based on age, sex, initial body mass index and lifestyles (sedentarism, changes in physical activity, energy/fibre intake, snacks between meals and consumption of fizzy drinks, fast food and alcohol).

[Weight gain](#) in people who stopped smoking during the study was higher the more cigarettes they smoked a day when the investigation began. Those who continued smoking also gained more weight during this period than the non-smokers.

The authors confirm that nicotine addiction is not an effective way of

preventing obesity. "In fact the increase is demonstrated, especially in ex-smokers and in smokers who continue," highlights Basterra-Gortari.

A dangerous connection

The association between being overweight and [nicotine addiction](#) is especially harmful for cardiovascular health. Therefore, abandoning the nicotine habit has been linked to a decrease in the risk of cardiovascular illnesses and cancer. However, experts argue that weight gain after stopping smoking is, often, a reason for not quitting the [nicotine](#) addiction, especially among women.

Most of the investigations that have studied this link have observed that, although there is an increase in weight after stopping [smoking](#), there are notable variations in weight gain.

"In Spain, there are very few studies on this link," concludes the researcher, who believes that "more extensive studies can confirm the results and extrapolate them to other sectors of the population."

More information: F. Javier Basterra-Gortari, Lluís Forga, Maira Bes-Rastrollo, Estefanía Toledo, J. Alfredo Martínez y Miguel A. Martínez-González. "Evolución de los cambios en el peso corporal según hábito tabáquico: análisis longitudinal de la cohorte SUN". *Revista Española de Cardiología*; 63(1):20-7, January 2010.

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