

# Study links smoking with most male cancer deaths

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The association between tobacco smoke and cancer deaths — beyond lung cancer deaths — has been strengthened by a recent study from a UC Davis researcher, suggesting that increased tobacco control efforts could save more lives than previously estimated. smokers and nonsmokers alike should do what they can to avoid tobacco smoke. It also suggests that increased attention should be paid to smoking prevention in health care reforms and health promotion campaigns."

The epidemiological analysis, published online in *BMC Cancer*, linked smoking to more than 70 percent of the cancer death burden among Massachusetts men in 2003. This percentage is much higher than the previous estimate of 34 percent in 2001.

The current study can be downloaded at [www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2407/8/341](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2407/8/341) .

Source: University of California - Davis

"This study provides support for the growing understanding among researchers that smoking is a cause of many more cancer deaths besides lung cancer," said lead author Bruce Leistikow, a UC Davis associate adjunct professor of public health sciences. "The full impacts of tobacco smoke, including secondhand smoke, have been overlooked in the rush to examine such potential cancer factors as diet and environmental contaminants. As it turns out, much of the answer was probably smoking all along."

Leistikow used National Center for Health Statistics data to compare death rates from lung cancer to death rates from all other cancers among Massachusetts males. The assessment revealed that the two rates changed in tandem year-by-year from 1979 to 2003, with the strongest association among males aged 30-to-74 years.

Smoking is a known cause of most lung cancers, and the study authors concluded that the very close relationship over twenty-five years between lung and other cancer death rates suggests a single cause for both: tobacco smoke.

Leistikow, whose research is dedicated to uncovering the causes of premature mortality, said, "The fact that lung and non-lung cancer death rates are almost perfectly associated means that

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