

# Study compares effectiveness of phone-based and web-based smoking cessation programs in four states

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Credit: Vera Kratochvil/public domain

A new analysis indicates that states' Web-based and phone-based tobacco cessation programs can help people quit smoking, but certain personal characteristics may lead individuals to prefer one type of program over the other. Published early online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, the findings may help states optimize their tobacco cessation and cancer control programs.

Quitline (telephone-based counseling) programs are effective tools for people who are trying to give up smoking, and the evidence for Web-based cessation services is building. Research has found that only one percent to two percent of adult tobacco users in the United States access state quitlines each year, however. Also, sustained use of Web-based interventions is low, with most users visiting some cessation websites fewer than three times.

To compare telephone-based quitline and Web-

based cessation programs, Antonio Neri, MD, MPH, of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and his colleagues conducted one of the largest studies to date on the effectiveness of different state [tobacco cessation](#) interventions. The researchers provided standardized questionnaires to 4086 cigarette smokers who enrolled exclusively in either telephone-based quitline counseling or Web-based tobacco cessation services in four states in 2011 to 2012. Seven months after enrollment, the team evaluated which individuals achieved 30-day abstinence rates and which program was used.

The questionnaires revealed that telephone-based quitline counseling users were significantly older, more varied in terms of race and ethnicity, less educated, less likely to be employed, and more often single than users of Web-based cessation services. People who used state Web-based programs were almost as successful at quitting compared with those who used telephone-based quitline programs: the prevalence of 30-day abstinence after seven months was 32 percent for telephone-based quitline counseling users and 27 percent for Web-based users. There was a higher likelihood of quitting among people who were partnered, were not living with another smoker, smoked fewer cigarettes, and accessed tobacco cessation interventions more often.

"Tobacco control programs can use these findings to better target their quit-smoking programs to smokers in their area," Dr. Neri said. "The goal is to help [people](#) stop smoking and stay tobacco free - it's the most important thing smokers can do for their health, as smoking causes cancer and many other illnesses."

**More information:** "Use and effectiveness of quitline versus Web-based tobacco cessation

interventions among four state tobacco control programs." Antonio Neri, Behnoosh Momin, Trevor D. Thompson, Jennifer Kahende, Lei Zhang, Mary Puckett, and Sherri L. Stewart. *CANCER*; Published Online: February 8, 2016. [DOI: 10.1002/cncr.29739](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.29739)

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