

Capitalizing on a teachable moment motivates parents of kids with asthma to quit smoking

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Parents who smoke are more likely to quit smoking after receiving motivational smoking cessation counseling following a "teachable moment" (TM) such as witnessing their child experience an asthma attack.

The study, which appears in the journal *Addiction*, also found that in-home counseling visits, including feedback on their child's second hand smoke exposure (SHSe) and counseling phone calls improved the likelihood of smoking cessation and less SHSe.

Despite a reduction in overall smoking prevalence, parental smoking and pediatric SHSe remain high, particularly among minority and [low income families](#) with children with asthma. More than 40 percent of all children are exposed to SHSe, which increases the risk for asthma.

Led by Belinda Borrelli, PhD, professor of Health Policy & Health Services Research and Director of Behavioral Science Research at Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine (BUGSDM), the researchers compared parents who smoke and have a child with asthma to parents who smoke and have healthy children. They found parents of children with asthma who experienced a TM (child's asthma exacerbation) and motivational smoking cessation counseling were more than twice as likely to quit smoking than those parents of healthy children who received identical counseling. In addition, among parents of children with asthma, those who received long-term in-home and telephone counseling were more than twice as likely to quit smoking versus parents who received short-term counseling. They also had children with an 81 percent lower risk of being hospitalized for asthma and were about half as likely to miss school due to asthma or have [asthma](#) symptoms.

According to Borrelli, interventions or counseling provided during a teachable moment does motivate [smoking cessation](#). "Despite the fact that our sample had a high prevalence of risk factors that are typically associated with difficulty quitting smoking such as lower education, low income, single mothers, etc. we achieved quit rates that were two-five times greater than spontaneous quit rates," she explained.

Borrelli believes that these results underscore the need to develop novel interventions to motivate cessation and augment risk perception among parents of healthy children, who had lower quit rates in the study.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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