

# Program may help patients with rheumatic diseases quit smoking

7 April 2021



**More information:** Christie M. Bartels et al, Impact of a Rheumatology Clinic Protocol on Tobacco Cessation Quit Line Referrals, *Arthritis Care & Research* (2021). [DOI: 10.1002/acr.24589](https://doi.org/10.1002/acr.24589)

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Smoking increases symptoms and health risks for patients with rheumatic diseases, but interventions to help patients quit are rarely available at rheumatology clinics. A study published in *Arthritis Care & Research* has found that [Quit Connect](#)—a protocol involving electronic health record prompts for nurses and medical assistants in rheumatology clinics—can increase electronic referrals to free, state-run tobacco quit lines.

Implementing Quit Connect led to electronic referrals for 71% of patients who were identified as ready to quit, with referrals taking less than 90 seconds for [medical staff](#) to complete.

"There's a huge opportunity to address smoking as a modifiable risk factor in rheumatology patients, and Quit Connect was 26-times more effective than usual care for delivering evidence-based quitline support," said lead author Christie M. Bartels, MD, MS, of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. "Moreover, Quit Connect leverages free resources available in every state and was cost-effective for quit attempts and cessation."

APA citation: Program may help patients with rheumatic diseases quit smoking (2021, April 7) retrieved 3 July 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-patients-rheumatic-diseases.html>

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