



Where can I get the best help to quit smoking?

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This is an important question to many smokers. However, as practitioner of evidence-based medicine, you might be able to inform about interventions with high efficacy based on literature reviews, but only after you have defined the kind of smoker who asks, have identified what smoking cessation intervention to look for compared to which control description, and have chosen the outcome parameter (1). However, you would seldom be able to inform about, how these programmes work in real life.

Despite being a relatively simple question, it is often found difficult to answer. One reason is that today, systematic reports on follow-up results from smoking cessation services (SCS) are often inadequate, lacking or sometimes even kept in secret for the users. In addition, there is not an established tradition for documentation of SCS outcomes in daily life - neither in hospitals nor in other settings.

Many countries offer support via quit-lines or websites that disseminate good advices on how to give up smoking (2). The advices can be tailored to the individual smoker and may even inform about SCS in the neighbourhood, but they seldom offer the adequate information about the question in focus.

Some SCS offer evidence-based cessation programmes, based on systematic reviews of randomised trials (3). However, only few nations follow-up or publish on the results of the SCS in order to secure the quality as well as benchmark and base the health planning on local and systematically collected outcomes.

Few examples of nationwide databases, that collect and publish the quit-rates from real life settings, exist around the

world - one of them being The Danish Smoking Cessation Database (SCDB). This database is supported by the Danish Ministry of Health, and all Danish SCS offering face-to-face programmes can use it free of charge (4).

The Danish SCDB is used for documentation, quality assurance and benchmarking on five indicators, namely Compliance, Smoke-free at end of programme, Follow-up rate, 6 months Quit-rate (continuously), and Satisfaction. The national standards are high; 80% for the first three indicators, 50% for the fourth, and 90% for the fifth indicator. The results are updated annually at the public website and available for the smokers looking for help to quit (5). This year one Danish SCS meets four of the five standards, and 35 SCS meet three or less standards.

It is necessary to establish more SCDBs around the world. This way, smokers could easily find the answer to the important question "Where can I get the best help to give up smoking?"

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