

Cigarettes also bad for old people

Although the health hazards of smoking are well proven, some people still mistakenly believe smoking is less harmful to the elderly, and quitting for the elderly is even life-threatening. Such mis-beliefs make the elderly hesitate about kicking the habit.

Two studies conducted by the University of Hong Kong's School of Public Health and Department of Community Medicine, which kept track of 56,000 old people, aged 65 years or above for about four years, focused on the question of quitting smoking and mortality among the elderly.

The studies showed that habitual smokers -- men and women, including current and former smokers -- were more likely to die from lung cancer or other cancers. Current male smokers had 75 per cent higher risk of dying than non-smokers, but the excessive risk of ex-smokers fell to 39 per cent. Results also showed that quitting smoking can significantly lower the risks of death from all cause by 16 per cent, lung cancer by 42 per cent, all cancers by 31 per cent, stroke by 33 per cent, and cardiovascular diseases by 21 per cent.

These studies showed that smoking increased mortality risks even in the oldest age group, but quitting reduced these risks. Stop smoking, even in old age, has positive effect on life span. The earlier you quit smoking, the greater is the improvement on health.