

OTHERS

World No-Tobacco Day: Study infers those directly exposed to tobacco at higher risk of Covid-19 complications

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PUNE A Pune-based medical firm, to mark World No-Tobacco Day on May 31, has released results of a sample study of males and females directly exposed to tobacco, either through active use or through passive smoking.

Based on its study, Indus Health Plus, infers that persons with tobacco exposure are more likely to suffer Covid19 complications.

The study was conducted between April 2018 and January 2021. Of the 29,548 people tested in Maharashtra, 4,124 are from Pune.

Across the state, 38% of males and 42% females studied displayed lung abnormalities, while in Pune, 48% of males and 53% of females showed abnormalities.

The report suggests that the increase in the female population is due to a trend of smoking or consumption of tobacco amongst women. Besides that, exposure to passive smoking is also a significant reason.

Amol Naikawadi, joint managing director, Indus Health Plus, said, "Smoking along with pre-existing lung ailments can exacerbate the conditions significantly. Moreover, in the current Covid-19 scenario, the situation becomes critical as it can have an adverse outcome, especially in terms of the time taken to recover from the disease. When we say passive smokers, all of us constitute that group, however, our study found that those who are directly exposed to smokers either at home or in offices for a prolonged period are more likely to show such abnormalities."

He added, "Consumption of tobacco in any form increases the risk of developing severe Covid-19 outcomes. In addition, it also increases the risk of diseases like COPD, brain stroke, heart attack, asthma, lung cancer, interstitial lung disease (respiratory disease), and diabetes. The younger generation consumes smoke and smokeless tobacco due to peer pressure, to make a style statement and due to stress. A strong will power, medical counselling and oral medication help overcome smoking."

"People consuming tobacco or smoking have a higher risk of being infected with the virus through the mouth. If smokers contract Covid-19, they face a greater risk of a severe infection as their lung health is already compromised. Apart from that, the psychological and economic effects of smoking are also very adverse. Therefore, quitting tobacco consumption in any form will reduce the risk of various ailments and will lead to wellness and a healthy lifestyle," said Naikawadi.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), based on multiple studies, concluded that available evidence suggests that smoking is associated with an increased severity of disease and death in hospitalised Covid-19 patients.

Although related to severity, there is no evidence to quantify the risk to smokers of hospitalisation with Covid-19, or of infection by Sars-CoV-2, as per peer-reviewed literature.

Indus Health Plus provides preventive healthcare services and is headquartered in Pune. Indus has also partnered with hospitals and diagnostic labs in 78 Indian cities, across more than 122 centres. The company was set up in 2000 and is ISO certified. It mainly deals with diseases caused by environmental changes and sedentary lifestyles, which have resulted in a rising number of non-communicable diseases, affecting all age groups.